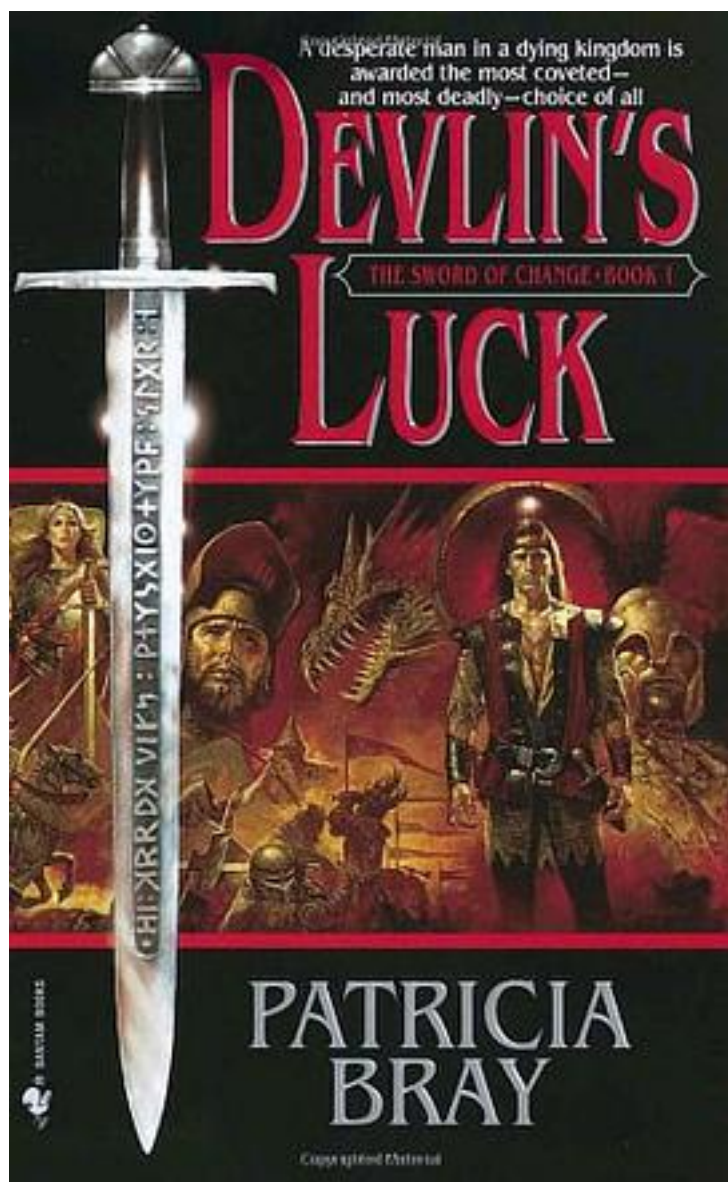


Devlin's Luck



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The once mighty kingdom of Jorsk is in decline, its borders beset by enemies, both worldly and otherworldly. The king has retreated to the capital, abandoning the far-flung provinces. The only hope of the people lies in their Chosen One, blessed by the gods as defender of the realm. But of late every Chosen One has died, targeted by the harshest of the enemy attacks.

Only the most desperate of men now seek that post. Devlin Stonehand is a desperate man. Overwhelmed by grief at the death of his family, he has lost the will to live. But he has vowed to provide for his brother's widow and children, and the post of the Chosen One carries with it a substantial reward.

For Devlin, a farmer and metalsmith, it is the answer to his prayers—prayers that include a yearning for the oblivion of death. After he has won the post, though, Devlin discovers that sometimes the hardest goal to achieve is that which had once seemed the simplest. For unlike the other Chosen Ones, he persists in surviving. Are the gods just tormenting him further, or does he have a greater destiny than he imagined? Can a man who courts death ever truly come to embrace life?

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