

A  
**FABLEHAVEN**  
ADVENTURE

# DRAGONWATCH

## WRATH OF THE DRAGON KING

PREVIEW  
SAMPLE CHAPTERS  
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# BRANDON MULL

The dragons have declared war on humans. Two of the seven dragon sanctuaries have already fallen. Will Wyrmoost be next?

After a humiliating defeat at the hands of Kendra and Seth, Celebrant, King of Dragons, prepares to unleash his fury and take control of his native preserve. Armed with information from a new ally—Ronodin, the dark unicorn—Celebrant seeks a legendary talisman: the dominion stone.

However, the powerful stone is protected by a cursed castle. Can Kendra and Seth foil Celebrant's plan and beat him to his prize? Will the two young caretakers rally enough support from the creatures of Wyrmoost to quell the uprising and protect the world from draconic dominion? One thing is for certain: dragons are wicked smart. It will take more than Kendra, Seth, and their current allies to outwit and outmatch the wrath of the Dragon King.

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## MARKETING PLANS

Major six-figure national marketing campaign • Five-week Brandon Mull school tour at the end of October through November, focusing on "hotspot" regions including Phoenix, So. CA, Rocky Mountains, Pacific Northwest • Reader's Guide • Posters, bookmarks, flyers, video trailer

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WRATH OF THE DRAGON KING



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ILLUSTRATED BY  
BRANDON DORMAN



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## CHAPTER ONE



## Old Friends

The red-maned dragon coiled in the courtyard, rippling scales flashing in the sunlight, tail swishing lazily. Prowling forward, the lengthy body unfurled, several sets of legs working to bring the leonine head ever closer to the lone boy. Yawning, the dragon displayed a jagged array of yellowed fangs surrounding a fat tongue.

“What’s the matter?” the dragon inquired in a slightly mocking tone. “Speak. Move.”

Large nostrils approached the boy’s face and flared, sniffing. The nearby mouth was probably big enough to swallow him whole. Or at least to bite off the top half of his body.

Seth willed himself to lean away. To lift an arm. To murmur a reply.

His body refused to respond. He could not twitch a

finger. He could not glance away. He was utterly paralyzed by dragon fear.

“Nothing?” the dragon asked. “You’re not really in any danger.”

*I know, Seth wanted to say. You’re my assistant. Marat usually stayed in human form, but he had made an exception today after Seth had requested a chance to test his ability to resist dragon fear. If his sister Kendra could do it, there had to be a way!*

“Come on, Seth,” chimed a little voice from his pocket. Calvin, champion of the nipsies, could keep his composure in the presence of a dragon, and he was only a couple of inches tall. “Try smiling. When I was just a boy, I remember my papa could smile his way out of anything.”

Seth could hear Calvin but couldn’t turn his head to see him. Seth could breathe. He could feel his heart beating. But his mouth refused to form words. His muscles would not budge, not even to pull his lips into a smile. He was a dragon tamer while holding Kendra’s hand. But now he was speechless and immovable. This wasn’t fair. She could maintain her composure while confronting a dragon alone—even in the presence of Celebrant, the Dragon King.

What made all of this even more humiliating was that this encounter was staged! Seth knew the dragon was a friend and meant him no harm. There was no rational reason to fear. Why couldn’t his intellect overpower his instincts? Was he really this spineless?

The long body reeled in as the dragon shrank into a



## OLD FRIENDS

mild Asian man in elaborate silken robes. The climate of fear evaporated and Seth could move.

“I wasn’t scared,” Seth insisted.

“Very few can resist dragon terror,” Marat said.

“Sure, I was frozen,” Seth admitted, “but I wasn’t afraid.”

“Your mind was free?” Marat asked. “That is something. But I still could have killed you at my leisure.”

“Am I just not desperate enough?” Seth asked.

“Petrified people are routinely devoured by dragons,” Marat said. “They remain immobilized throughout the process. Trust me, all of them are plenty desperate.”

“What made the difference for Kendra?” Seth wondered.

“She is fairykind,” Marat said. “She found a way to bring her power to bear. As a shadow charmer, you might in time do likewise.”

“Any tips?” Seth asked.

“I’m no shadow charmer,” Marat said. “And I don’t feel dragon terror. You need a different tutor. Have you asked your sister?”

“No way,” Seth said. “Her power is different from mine. What’s she going to teach me? How to befriend fairies?”

“Kendra could teach anyone a great many things,” Marat said. “Perhaps your reluctance relates to her being your sister?”

“Of course it does!” Seth said. “Who wants their sister to teach them anything?”

“My sister helped me learn arithmetic,” Calvin piped up from his pocket.

“Big deal,” Seth said. “That’s just math. Kendra can talk to dragons alone! And I can’t.”

“Your nipsie might have ideas,” Marat said.

“I’m not sure I can help much,” Calvin said. “I don’t have techniques like holding my breath or crossing my fingers. My only advice is not to get scared.”

“You don’t get scared of dragons?” Seth asked.

“Not to where it freezes me,” Calvin said. “I can’t explain how or why except I don’t really get scared of anything.”

“Really?” Seth asked.

“I know dragons could kill me,” Calvin clarified. “I don’t want to die or get maimed. The danger makes me alert, not scared.”

“Marat, I want to try again,” Seth said. “Get ready for alertness.”

“Could you perhaps pause your exercises for a moment?” a voice asked from behind Seth.

He turned to find Agad emerging from a door into the courtyard. The wizard, dressed in traveling clothes and a cloak, was followed by Newel, Doren, and Tanu.

The arrival caught Seth so off guard that he hardly knew where to look first. It had been longest since he had seen Tanu, so his eyes settled there. The Samoan potion master wore a large pack, and several pouches dangled from his belt. Still broad and thick, he looked a tad leaner than when Seth had last seen him.

“Tanu!” Seth cried. “Have you lost weight?”

“Not on purpose,” he replied with a pained smile. “I

have been swimming in choppy waters. Things are messy out there.”

“We’re here too,” Newel said with a wave.

“Been eating well,” Doren added, patting his belly.

Seth had seen both satyrs just a couple of days before when he had gone back to Fablehaven through the teleportation barrel. “What are you guys doing here?”

“Things were getting dull without you around,” Newel said.

“We like to be where the action is,” Doren said.

“Since when?” Seth challenged. “You guys run from everything.”

Newel squinted one eye. “We like to be *in the vicinity* of the action. Not necessarily getting our hands dirty.”

“Or chopped off,” Doren added.

“Life can be like television from the proper distance,” Newel explained.

“Bringing the satyrs was my idea,” Agad said. “Seth, I thought you would find value in their companionship during these troubled times.”

“You told us there were acres of food,” Doren accused.

“The storerooms beneath this keep are all I promised,” Agad mumbled.

“Remember our road trip to see the Singing Sisters?” Newel asked Seth. “You introduced us to fast food! And convenience stores! Any time we get permission to leave our designated preserve is a thrill.”

“Especially if the food is good,” Doren said. “And the company.”

“Any news about Bracken?” Seth asked.

Agad exchanged a glance with Tanu. “No glad tidings,” the wizard said. “He had been captured, and we found where he was being held, but he was already gone by the time we arrived. We have no idea who took him.”

Seth hated to hear Bracken was lost, and he knew the news would devastate his sister. “Do you think he’s alive?”

“I suspect so,” Agad said. “A quick examination of the horn he left with Kendra will confirm.”

Seth walked up to Tanu. “Did you help find him?”

“I helped find his empty cell,” Tanu said. “We were trying. Soaring Cliffs has become a perdition of rampaging dragons. We were lucky to get out alive.”

“Sounds like the kind of adventure best viewed from a distance,” Doren commented.

“That’s one way to put it,” Tanu said. “The world is turning upside down. I understand there has been commotion here as well.”

“The dragons tested our defenses,” Seth said. “It looked bad for a while. Kendra and I recovered a scepter that strengthened the keep’s protections.”

“And you made a firmer enemy of Celebrant in the process,” Marat said.

“The Dragon King’s enmity was inevitable,” Agad said. “We are facing a global rebellion.”

“Wait a minute,” Newel said. “You told us there was unrest. Not a worldwide rebellion.”

“Unrest here,” Agad said. “A global rebellion is under

way. We're laboring to stop it. By no means is the uprising complete."

"You can tell because we're not all dead yet," Tanu said.

"But Blackwell Keep is secure," Doren checked. "And the storerooms."

"Locked up tight," Agad said.

A long, low note was blown on a horn, the hollow sound gradually growing deeper before fading.

"What was that?" Doren asked.

"Start of the satyr hunt," Tanu said with a grin.

"The proudhorn," Marat said, turning his gaze toward the sky. "An unexpected dragon approaches."

"I think I may have left a scarf back at Fablehaven," Newel said, edging back toward the door. "A real important one. Striped."

"I'll lend a hand," Doren offered.

"The dragon can't harm us," Agad said. "I told you the keep is protected."

"What dragon?" Seth asked.

"Let's find out," Marat said.

## CHAPTER TWO



## Invitation

When the prouhorn blew, Kendra was sitting cross-legged atop the keep's outer wall, her back to the battlements, facing a semicircle of nine fairies. All but one had dragonfly wings. The other was the stockiest, with wings like a beetle. They all seemed generally hardier than the Fablehaven fairies, still lithe and lovely, but somewhat more muscular and noticeably warier.

Most of the fairies took flight at the sound of the horn, wings becoming a blur. The others were on their feet, ready to spring. Kendra stood and looked outward to find a gleaming dragon, smaller than most, gliding toward the Perch—a tower at the edge of the keep designated for conversing with dragons.

"It's just Raxtus," one of the fairies chirped.

"He's acting strange lately," another remarked.

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“Almost like a dragon,” a third said with a giggle. The other fairies tittered.

“I should go,” Kendra said. “He must have come to talk.”

“I thought *we* were talking,” one of the fairies complained.

“It could be an emergency,” Kendra said. “Thank you for attending. We’ll meet again tomorrow. You have your assignments. Spread the word to the other fairies—I want to know about any suspicious dragon activity.”

Kendra turned and started trotting toward the Perch. Behind her, she heard fairies murmuring about how bossy she was but decided to ignore them. Fairies were hard to manage, but they could move around Wyrmoost with relative freedom and were small enough to be practically invisible to dragons. Because of Kendra’s fairykind status, they had to obey her, and so they could make excellent spies. The situation with the dragons had become critical. It really didn’t matter if the fairies complained about her, as long as they did their jobs.

Henrick the alcetaur, gamekeeper of Wyrmoost, came loping along the top of the wall to Kendra. He had the shaggy body of a moose, but from where the neck would normally be sprouted the torso of a man with broad shoulders, strong arms, and a stern face. Kendra had grown to trust Henrick when he had helped her and Seth retrieve the scepter and return it to Blackwell Keep.

Reaching down, Henrick scooped up Kendra and deposited her astride his back. “This is the dragon you know?” he asked.

“Raxtus, yes,” Kendra said. Normally she would have been thrilled to see her old friend, but during their last conversation, she had found he tended to side with Celebrant, his father, on the subject of the dragon rebellion. “I wonder what he wants to tell us?”

Air rushed past Kendra as Henrick zoomed along the wall. He clattered to a halt at the Perch just as Raxtus was about to land. The original Perch had recently been demolished by Celebrant, but Seth had used a portable tower obtained from the giant Thronis to replace it. Kendra slid off the alcetaur.

Quiet as a whisper, Raxtus landed with a graceful swoop. Kendra knew firsthand that the dragon was a talented aerialist. Unusually small for a dragon, his body was comparable to the dimensions of a large horse, though his wings, neck, and tail added to his size. His glittering armor of silvery white scales reflected a prismatic sheen that hinted at his unusual origin—Raxtus had been hatched by fairies.

“Hi, Kendra,” Raxtus said without his usual enthusiasm, his voice like a group of teenage boys speaking in unison. “Can the moose guy go? I can speak more freely if we’re alone.”

“Could be a trick,” Henrick warned, one hand straying to his bow.

“I’ll take that risk,” Kendra said. “Can we have some space? What’s an arrow supposed to do? I’m not sure any dragon has tougher scales than Raxtus.”

Henrick gave a humph and clomped away.

Raxtus brought his head close to Kendra, the



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streamlined surface gleaming brighter than chrome. “Thanks for the compliment, but I know my dad has harder scales, and suspect several other—”

“Stop being humble,” Kendra said.

“Are you doing all right?” Raxtus asked.

“I’m not hurt,” Kendra said. “Dragons all over the world are rebelling. Bracken went missing when Soaring Cliffs fell.” She clenched her fists at the mention of Bracken, willing away her tears and the sudden clogged feeling in her throat.

“Sorry to hear that,” Raxtus said. “I tried to warn you.”

“I remember,” Kendra said.

“You could still get away,” Raxtus said. “This is just getting started. It will only get worse.”

“That means somebody has to stop it,” Kendra said. “It’s my job now. I’m the caretaker of Wyrmoost.”

“Find a replacement,” Raxtus said.

Kendra sighed. “Do you think they would be using children as caretakers if they had replacements?”

“What they are doing is criminal,” Raxtus said. “Humans were never meant to run these big sanctuaries. Let alone young humans. Aren’t there laws against endangering human children?”

“Probably,” Kendra said. “But people do what they must in emergencies. We can’t let dragons take over the world. There would be no going back.”

“It’s too late,” Raxtus said. “Soaring Cliffs already got things started. More sanctuaries will follow. The dragons have waited a long time for this. They will not give up.

People had their turn running the planet. Things are about to change.”

“People allowed dragons to live in peace on sanctuaries,” Kendra said. “Will dragons do the same for people?”

“We don’t know what dragons will do,” Raxtus said. “They have been imprisoned in these giant cages you call sanctuaries for too long.”

“Dragons used to roam free,” Kendra said. “What did they do then?”

Raxtus looked away and spoke sulkily. “They killed just about everybody they met.”

“And then?” Kendra asked.

“Dragons fought to take over the world,” Raxtus said. “But that was after people started hunting them.”

“People hunted dragons because dragons were already hunting people,” Kendra replied.

Raxtus bowed his head. “True.”

“Dragons can’t be let loose,” Kendra said. “They were placed inside sanctuaries for a reason.”

Raxtus brought his head near again. “Maybe dragons wouldn’t be the best caretakers of the world,” he admitted quietly. “But do we deserve to live out our existence trapped like prisoners? And more importantly—it’s too late to stop us.”

“Then why is Celebrant still here?”

“It’s only a matter of time, Kendra. We will be free.”

“You’re already free, because we trusted you. The other dragons are the prisoners.”

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Raxtus drew himself up straight. “My father has asked me to stand with him and our kind.”

“I know,” Kendra said. “He assigned you to his personal guard.”

“I’ve never fit in, Kendra,” Raxtus said, almost pleading.

“The timing is interesting,” Kendra said.

“I knew you would say that,” Raxtus said, wounded. “This is a crucial time. Father is mustering all who will answer the call. But it’s also because I did well at Zzyzx. I finally proved myself.”

“And you’re scared to risk what you gained,” Kendra said.

“Sure, we’re friends, Kendra. But am I asking you to turn against your family? Your people? What would you say?”

“Did my family start including me for the first time a couple of months ago?”

Raxtus stretched his wings and shook his head. “I know it might not be real. I’m starved for acceptance but not stupid. I know Father sent me today because he thinks it will help convince you.”

“Convince me of what?” Kendra asked.

“I have a message at the base of my neck,” Raxtus said. Only then did Kendra notice the small cylinder attached to the slender chain. “You’ll need to unclasp the chain.”

Kendra approached, pulled the delicate chain until she found the clasp, and unhooked it. She started trying to open the cylinder.

“Don’t bother,” Raxtus said. “You can read it later. It’s an invitation to the Feast of Welcome.”

“What? Where?”

“Skyhold—my father’s castle. Not his private lair at Moonfang. This is where he interacts with other dragons. Where he rules.”

Kendra laughed in disbelief. “I can’t go there.”

“I agree,” Raxtus said. “And you can’t turn down the invitation. So you should leave.”

“I can’t leave,” Kendra said. “Seth and I are the caretakers. We have to hold back the dragon uprising. And why can’t we turn down the invitation?”

“Because no caretaker ever has,” Raxtus said. “The dragons have the right to hold a feast once each year for the leaders of Wyrmoost. It would be an enormous insult to refuse.”

“It was a bigger insult when Celebrant tore down the roost and attacked this keep,” Kendra said.

“Father can be a bit extreme . . .” Raxtus muttered.

“That seems like enough reason to revoke his privileges as caretaker,” Kendra asserted.

“Keep dreaming,” Raxtus said. “You’re brave, Kendra. I watched you strike down the Demon King. And you stood up to my father. Your defiance did more than enrage and embarrass him. It hurt his credibility. Already he has been challenged twice for his crown.”

“By other dragons?”

Raxtus nodded. “For the first time in hundreds of years.”

“What happened?”

Raxtus snorted. “They got destroyed. Wasn’t even close. They are resting in pieces.”

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“Can any dragon take him?”

“Probably not for hundreds of more years. He is still in his prime. The dragons that tried were a couple of the most ambitious, but not the strongest. Father has been the undisputed king of dragons for so long for a reason. You shook that up. He wants you in pieces, too.”

“Hey, Raxtus,” Seth called, running up to the Perch.

“Hi, Seth,” the dragon replied.

Seth leaped over the parapet and dropped to the Perch. He adjusted his caretaker’s medallion around his neck. “At least you’re one dragon that doesn’t freeze me with fear.”

Raxtus gave a chuckle. “Most dragons can increase the fear effect with willpower. When I try, people tend to relax.”

“Really?” Seth asked. “Do it!”

Raxtus looked around, then spread his wings wide and gazed intently at Seth. The surfaces of his scales shimmered like sequins.

Kendra took a deep, refreshing breath and felt tension ease from her body. She wanted to sit down. Or maybe lie down. Seth slumped a bit and started to look drowsy.

Raxtus folded his wings and assumed a regular posture. The shimmering ceased.

“Not bad,” Seth said. “Perfect around nap time.”

“And another way I don’t fit in,” Raxtus said.

“Not all dragons are the same,” Kendra reminded him. “Glommus was powerful enough to guard the Dragon Temple, and his breath put people to sleep.”

“Glommus was huge,” Raxtus said. “He put large groups

and powerful creatures to sleep so he could devour them. But I see your point. Thanks.”

“Are you still on the wrong team?” Seth asked. “Kendra told me last time you were siding with the dragons.”

Raxtus gave a nervous laugh. “I want you guys safe. I really do. I’m not sure the dragons can be stopped.”

“But you’ll help us,” Seth said.

“The best help I can give is advice,” Raxtus said. “Don’t fight this battle. Leave Wyrmoost. Lie low.”

“You really got fooled by them,” Seth said.

“They are my kind,” Raxtus said. “Celebrant is my father.”

“The Dragon King just invited us to a feast,” Kendra said, holding up the cylindrical container.

“Are we the meal or the dessert?” Seth asked.

“You will be honored guests,” Raxtus said. “Your safety is guaranteed.”

“Guaranteed by the dragon who wants us dead?” Seth asked.

“Guaranteed by the hospitality laws of the preserve and of all magical folk,” Raxtus said. “Including dragonkind.”

“It has to be a trap,” Seth said. “He doesn’t want to honor us.”

“All of Wyrmoost is a trap,” Raxtus said. “You should leave. I tell you because I care.”

“Do you get a promotion if you scare us off?” Seth pressed.

Raxtus shifted his forelegs uncomfortably and swished his tail. “I’m helping you as best I can.”

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“We’re trying to help your father,” Kendra said. “And the dragons. We didn’t come here to hurt them or to insult them. We are here to take care of them. Celebrant attacked us. He is supposed to be a caretaker. He is supposed to help us, not work against us.”

“Dragons aren’t meant to laze around in cages like some shabby old declawed circus lion,” Raxtus said. “You can’t give a Dragon King a menial position and expect him to act like a human.”

“You don’t think he can be a real caretaker?” Kendra asked. “His duty is to watch over the sanctuary and take care of the creatures here. Is he unfit?”

“You’re twisting my words,” Raxtus said.

“You’re backing the aggressors,” Kendra said.

“Is the lion in the cage the aggressor?” Raxtus asked. “Or is it the prisoner?”

“Maybe not the lion,” Kendra said. “But the convict is an aggressor. The convict goes to prison for a reason. Dragons were placed here for trying to destroy the world. They are the original aggressors. They live comfortably here. And now they want to fight.”

“Actually, at the moment, they want you to feast,” Raxtus said. “You have your invitation. Agad has attended in the past. Go ahead and ask him. You will give great offense if you refuse to attend. My father will use it against you. Your safety is guaranteed. And if you think nothing about it is safe, you’re right. I better go.”

“Yeah,” Seth said. “Before I throw up. You used to be our friend.”

“I love you too,” Raxtus said. “I’m still trying to help. Leave Wyrmoost.”

Raxtus sprang into the air, wings heaving down, making air rush over Kendra and Seth. Sparkling in the sunlight, the dragon swiftly rose into the sky.