

## A Darkness of Dragons: Songs of Magic

**S. A. Patrick**

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In S. A. Patrick's fantasy novel *A Darkness of Dragons*, a delinquent boy turns into a hero as he embarks on a quest to stop a notorious villain.

Thirteen-year-old Patch was a promising piping apprentice. For years, he trained to banish vermin with his flute song. But when his career doesn't progress as he hoped, Patch flees his home, taking to the streets.

Desperate for food and shelter, Patch makes money by playing alluring and illegal flute songs. When he is caught and arrested, he is sure that he is doomed for a life in jail. In his despair, he meets an extraordinary talking rat who claims to be a girl cursed to live in a rat's body. Patch vows to help her, and the two set off in search of a cure. Along the way, Patch evades the law, meets fantastical friends, and learns that an evil piper is at large; Patch vows to stop the villainous piper before he incites war.

Patch's rich fantasy world is steeped in whimsy and magic. The setting is established with descriptions of a harsh winter landscape; later, Patch and his companion's wide travels are captured with poignant imagery and concrete details. There's immediacy to the action, too, as when Patch wanders into a village half frozen. And the novel maintains a swift pace for its entirety, filled with surprises and the introduction of new people that pique continual interest.

In the imaginative adventure novel *A Darkness of Dragons*, a troubled boy summons the bravery to help his friends and save his country from war.

MELISSA LANCE (March / April 2022)

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