

The Draconeian

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Three companions lead the Resistance against the evil forces of Gorillian, a warlord who is amassing his huge armies to impose his dark rule over the once peaceful realms of Elënthiá. What ensues is a brotherhood's urgent quest to find an ancient tomb containing treasure to be used to fuel the Resistance. They must race to unravel the secrets of an arcane map to a forgotten city before Gorillian gets his hands on it. It is their only means to uniting the people in the realms from falling under Gorillian's "black plague."

In *The Draconeian*, the first in a trilogy, Jake and Luke Reaume have crafted a profusely rich and inviting world fantasy readers will certainly want to explore. The essential elements for a successful quest story are all there in colorful detail—imaginary lands with maps for reference, fantasy races (humans, elves, immortals), constructed language, worlds within worlds, illusion, magic, evil warlords, and vivid battle scenes.

While the authors have let their imagination soar in creating fantastic worlds, there is much more here at the heart of the story. The central character is an immortal who has spent his entire two thousand years searching for others of his race. Two knights of adventure help him on the perilous journey to find Dohenheer, the lost and forgotten land of Draconeans. As the journey unfolds, each of the heroes must face up and overcome their own internal demons and conflicts before they can succeed in their worldly quest. Not surprisingly, their journey summons all their strength to fight the dark external forces.

The companions forming the alliance are each from different races: Drake Sorzin, the Immortal Draconeian (but who can be killed in battle), complex ("destined to serve, but to stand apart") and last of his kind, the princely son of the last Draconeian king; Lathaniel, the half Elven, half human Forsair who chooses to forswear his pacifist nature and his own family's plight to train as a warrior devoted to a greater cause; and Juga Framir, a teenage human, brigand, prankster, and Drake's devoted apprentice. This is a story about coming of age, friendship, "brotherhood," and destinies closely entwined. The heroes possess the necessary common character traits to connect the reader to their human virtues and fallibilities. And despite similarities to the *Lord of the Rings* (the gold standard for all fantasy books is unavoidably measured) and tendencies to fall into a few predictable tropes (as did *Star Wars* and many other fantasy classics), the authors have skillfully designed a fast-paced and satisfying tale. The storyline is easy to follow, though the reader will need to consult the glossary to sort out a few confusing choices of names for races and characters. Slight enlargement of place names would make the map easier to read.

The Draconeian bodes well for more great adventures to follow. For the remarkably talented twin brothers, Jake and Luke Reaume, the future indeed looks bright for a long and promising career of writing.

GARY KLINGA (October 4, 2010)

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