



The Dragons of Decagon: A Dragons Tale

Sandra Kelly

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The Dragons of Decagon is an ambitious fantasy novel for young readers whose principled creatures face challenge after challenge.

In Sandra Kelly's middle grade fantasy novel *The Dragons of Decagon*, a community of dragons faces attacks from menacing creatures.

After a pair of merpeople are kidnapped, and are then found by goblins, the dragons of Home Valley, in Decagon, investigate. They discover that new monsters, Trescopidors, are responsible for acts of terror across the world. The dragons, led by Rainbow, Blaze, and elder dragons, work together to stop the Trescopidors from wreaking more havoc in their community—in addition to other problem-solving acts and adventures.

The dragons communicate with each other using both speech and a mind link, and they try to help the merpeople and other creatures in their world hone such telepathic abilities themselves. Empathy and perseverance are major values in the dragon community, too. Rainbow is a valiant leader; children dragons prove to be adventurous, assuming the stage and injecting the tale with youthful fun.

Meanwhile, the Trescopidors are original monsters who use their resourcefulness for evil. They are an even match for the dragons, who must use critical thinking to overcome them. However, supporting characters enter the story without context, raising questions about their places in the community. The story becomes crowded by the vast cast, even though many beings participate in only a few scenes.

Driven by fast action and musing conversations, as of what the dragons plan to do next, the plot revolves around Rainbow and Blaze exercising authority while the younger dragons banter. But girls are called “stupid” and “cowardly” too often, countering the asserted kindness and community building that the dragons are said to prioritize. Further, the book's explicit and implied violence stands to frighten its target audience.

The book does too much worldbuilding for such a small space. The dragons' complex culture, their interactions with the many creatures of their world, and the speed with which their story moves through events are overwhelming: the dragons traverse mystical caves, solve curious mysteries, heal from Trescopidor attacks, and navigate agricultural changes, among other occurrences. They resolve one issue and move on to the next with sparse transitions, and their motivations shift from page to page, along with their ambitions and circumstances. The book's sense of purpose is lost, and its ending is too abrupt to be satisfying.

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AIMEE JODOIN (October 20, 2021)

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