



Crossroads of Draston (DRAGONBAND: Tales)

Joel Norden, Aaron Wulf, Jack Gabriel

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In the Age of the Dracon-esti, darkness and war ravage the continent of Draston. The dragons that once ruled the skies have died off and other horrors have since taken their place. To the south, dark rumors have surfaced of armies being massed, led by the Wicked Eye. The elves are slowly dying off, refusing to change with the winds of time. The dwarves have sealed themselves beneath their mountain, battling creatures from the depths. In this broken land, with the oncoming tides of evil, adventurers still search for lost treasures, companionship and a chance for their names to be put into songs of legend.

These untold tales will introduce you to the bright and vibrant world of Harthx and its adventurers: a curious gnome reads a forbidden book; a nord endangers himself in an attempt to unite the five clans; a vampire searches for a way to regain his soul; two sisters search for a murderer in a forgotten city.

Eleven exciting short stories, four talented young authors, one epic start to the Dragonband Saga!

Crossroads of Draston (DRAGONBAND: Tales) Details

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Roy Hunt says

“Crossroads of Draston”, Vol. 1., Joel Norden, Aaron Wulf, Anna Warkentin, Jack Gabriel, (eds).

Review by Roy Hunt

This is an anthology of short stories by various writers including ‘The Librarian’ by Jack Gabriel, ‘In search for a soul’ by Aaron Wulf, and ‘All about the Adventure’ by Aaron Wulf and Anna Warkentin. “Crossroads of Draston” is well written and creates worlds populated by vampires, monsters, orcs, elves and all sorts of magic mystical creatures. The three I have chosen to review are ‘The librarian’, ‘In search for a soul’ and ‘All about the adventure’.

The first, ‘Librarian’, by Jack Gabriel, involves an elf called Wiggum who works in the library in a town called Evesburg. The library is full of magic books and the insatiably curious elf cannot help himself, he opens one book that has always fascinated him; it contains magic spells. It is a ‘book bound in rough leather with frayed stitching—stamped with faded ruins’. Wiggum evokes one of the spells in the book and inherits a power any human would love to have: the power to totally control another creature by the power of thought alone. Well, not totally control, because the giant winged beast that emerges after Wiggum unwittingly evokes the creature flies with reckless abandon and keeps banging its giant bulk into things. Oh, yes, it also eats people and creates a ‘wet crunching sound’ as it chews into flesh and bone. The evil, ominous creature is beautifully brought to life and sent chills down my spine.

The second story I have chosen is ‘In search of a soul’. There is a message for many in this story, I would think, as the hero, Ryddle, attempts to put right past wrongs. But in his case, this is particularly difficult, because he is a vampire and wishes to give up his power and become human again. But this will put him and his wife, Ismha, who lives with the vampire community, in mortal danger, and with his vampire powers gone, he will not be much help. A moral story, do what is right and suffer terrible consequences, or remain as you are, full of power, but an evil, horrid creature. He does not ‘wish to live as this shell of a man any longer’.

The third story I liked the most was the last, ‘All about the Adventure’. I liked this story immediately because it started with a weary man called Galin, bone-tired and all dirt, making for an inn called the Lucky Millar’s Inn. I love stories about weary men in ancient inns drinking tankers of lovely cold frosty-headed beer; probably because I also love old inn’s and cold beer. He also eats a plate of meat and cheese; simple fair, you can’t beat it. Galin is a monster hunter down on his luck and badly needs a bit of paid work. It soon comes when a man in the inn hires him to kill a monster that is destroying his sheep. While there he picks up Milo, a travelling bard who wants to immortalise Galin by writing songs and poems about him and by extension, Milo as well. They also meet a lovely young girl called Albree, ‘A young woman in a simple blue dress. Her brown hair ... curled softly around her face’; Whom Galin immediately falls for. But Albree has a suitor, a mean, vicious man and a lot more cunning than many of the dumb monsters Galin has killed.

There is probably a full book in many of these stories or even an online game, if you are a games designer. These stories are all well written and create worlds of the imagination which can be great escapism. If you’re into that, this anthology is well worth some of your ever more precious reading time.

Joanne says

An entertaining and varied fantasy collection.

‘Crossroads of Draston’ delivers a varied collection of highly original fantastic tales of elves, dwarves, mages, people and beasts, and of the challenges and struggles they face. All of the stories are well-written and engaging.

As with any anthology, some were more to my taste than others. Of all these Dragonband Tales, those that appealed to me most were ‘The Librarian’ and ‘Magic Within’.

In ‘The Librarian’ the reader is introduced to Wiggum, a delightful gnome burdened with insatiable curiosity, who discovers that even seemingly benign actions can have significant consequences. I really wanted this story to be much longer.

Alaya, the central character of ‘Magic Within’, is the kind of heroine I really love - loyal, brave, and dogged, fully committed to freeing those who are enslaved and serving justice to those who deserve it. I would really like to read the next “chapter” in her story, too.

This collection offers everything from high fantasy to more visceral and macabre stories, so there is something for all fantasy lovers here.

Jennifer says

Stories that contain Elves, Orcs, Dwarves, and Dragons are always going to invite comparisons to Tolkein; I like that the authors of these stories manage to take creatures made famous by him, and make them their own. This is a collection of stories that are all set in a full, developed world, and these give us a wonderful glimpse into slices of it.

I have to say my favorite story is the first, because I could so easily see myself in the same situation as the Gnome librarian. I often feel unread books calling me away from what I am supposed to be doing. Luckily, the consequences to me are never more than a pile of unwashed dishes/clothes, or being tired from staying up reading instead of sleeping.

This a great selection for lovers of fantasy or D & D. That they are offered in snack size bits that let me indulge in between chores is a bonus.

I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Joel Norden says

If you'd like to be a part of giveaways, behind-the-scenes updates on upcoming novels, and a chance to interact with our authors, make sure you join our group! :)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/13220...>

Daniel says

I really enjoyed this book. The stories were really enjoyable. I couldn't seem to put the book down im ready for the next book of the tales series.

Chandra Fry says

If you are looking for some stories of Epic Adventures, then go no further! I thoroughly enjoyed all of the tales in this book and especially liked how they all took place in the same realm! A Great Read!

Shannan Williams says

This is the first anthology that I have read that was in the fantasy genre. With fantasy being my favorite this book was perfect! I felt each short story was great and I thoroughly enjoyed each one. If you are a fan of fantasy you will love these stories.

K. Matt says

This anthology reminded me so much of classic Tolkien, save for the fact that orcs are actual characters, with emotions rather than being Always Chaotic Evil-types. I always appreciate that.
