



2007

Dragonhaven

Lauren Bangerter

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McKinley, Robin. *Dragonhaven*. Putnam's, 2008. ISBN 9780399246753. \$17.99. 342 p.

Reviewer: Lauren Bangerter

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Science fiction;

Subject: Dragons--Juvenile fiction; Human-animal communications--Juvenile fiction; Animals, mythical--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Dragonhaven follows the experience of Jake Mendoza when he finds a baby dragon deep inside the Smokehill National Park—a park founded and built for the study and preservation of dragons. Dragons in general are a controversial subject and Smokehill has been suffering from little funding and bad publicity after Jake's mom, a renowned dragon scientist, disappeared and turned up dead several months later. The fact that Jake has now become surrogate mother to a baby dragon only adds to these pressures as United States legislature makes aiding dragons illegal. Jake and his dragonlet Lois learn and grow together as they cope with the loss of their mothers, find strength in each other and friends who sacrifice much to help them, and bridge the gap between human and dragon communication.

The story is told by Jake and takes the form of a stream-of-conscious-like memoir. *Dragonhaven* is suggested for an older audience in order to understand this rambling-like tone and serious situations, as well as some language. The story is compelling and Jake's candid voice keeps the reader turning pages, however, there are no battle scenes and intense action like other McKinley novels about dragons; Jake spends much of the novel sleeping, and even though there is some excitement and flying dragons, the story focuses more on the psychological and emotional side of those situations.

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