



## To Challenge A Dragon

*G.A. Aiken , Shelly Laurenston*

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*Note: This story was reissued in the book Dragon Actually under the pseudonym G.A. Aiken together with another story!*

## To Challenge A Dragon Details

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## From Reader Review To Challenge A Dragon for online ebook

### Patricia says

I'm currently reading the novel "Dragon Actually" in German and this is the first story in the book. (Read my Dragon Actually review if you want to know what I'm talking about when I say 'more about that one later')

**Before I read it:** I didn't like The Mane Event, but thought I might give the author another try. There are many people who like her writing, reviewers I usually agree with. I also wanted to read something about dragons for a while now; not in the epic fantasy, but the guilty pleasure, paranormal romance, I'm a dragon and a human, yadda yadda yadda way.

Actually I would have loved to get a contemporary/urban fantasy novel with dragons, but I couldn't find one. So, this one's got to do. ;) I'm mentioning this because my expectations of dragon novels are getting higher and higher day after day.

**To Challenge a Dragon:** While, from the two stories featured in Dragon Actually, it was the better one, I still didn't like it. It's not even that my wanting an urban/contemporary setting kept me from enjoying a historical one, but that several things felt very off to me.

- The writing itself seems to be just not my cup of tea. It's silly, but not in the Darynda Jones kind of way. It's unadulterated crack, which is okay in short stories or when it fits the overall tone, but seemed forced here.

- The characters have this fight because of their secrecy. It's understandable to a point, but somewhat stupid, too. I'm editing this part right now because I realise I've been slightly biased about his not blaming her at all. It's possible that it felt off in the story, but in retrospect, I can't imagine a world in which not blaming someone is a bad thing, so there. ;) I'll talk more about this further along the review, but some background information first:

When they first meet he's in his dragon form, though he is able to shift to human; something humans aren't aware of. She's a fighter but weakened when he finds her, and though I can't remember why exactly, she stays with him for a while.

She later mentions she needs someone to train with, which results in him telling her he knows someone just right, secretly shifting to human, and meeting her.

This is where the conflict all starts, and it's so blatantly obvious why I didn't like it now, that I'm not sure why I struggled to verbalise my issues when I first wrote this: It's boring. It's the old "Use your words" issue I've read a hundred times, but it doesn't add anything fresh to it. Instead, it took my brainbaby and gutted it. (Yes, dragons are my brainbabies. I have thousands of things I want to read, and when authors write them, I feel very protective.)

So, she doesn't know it's the dragon and feels like betraying him by feeling attracted to "the knight", aka his human body. Betraying him because while they spent time together, she started to fall for the dragon, started trusting him and would most likely die for him too, based on his saving her life in the beginning of the book. They form a friendship, which was the best part of the entire story. (I'm very partial to fluff, especially this kind of fluff.)

So, it's understandable why she doesn't dare to tell him or the knight about her feelings, and I get why he can't find the courage to tell her about his identity either.

But I did find it somewhat annoying to have her be pissed at him when she finally finds out. Of course, she has a right to be, but given her own secrecy, it felt a little hypocritical.

- Their dealing with this is even more ridiculous and slightly disturbing as well. His demand for her to forgive him or else, as well as the way he deals with shit is plain stupid. It's been two years since I read this (yeah, I'm kind of OCDish about editing reviews when I stumble across them again, meh) and I still remember being angry about that.

Even though the entire conflict is a lack of sharing their thoughts with each other, when their secrets are finally revealed, they instantly start to behave just like before. They should talk about what happened, but while he regrets that she's pissed (which is, even mentally, such a non-excuse, fuck you kindly), he never apologises. He doesn't say "Hey, dude, sorry for not being honest with you."

Instead, he tries to find excuses. Instead of giving her an actual explanation, time and space, he pulls an Old Skool move and practically forces himself on her. While it's not rape in the literal sense, it felt dubious and very "It's not rape if she liked it"-y to me. He's obviously taking advantage of her there, which.. no. Not cool.

Parts of the story were okay. Well, one and a half part: I liked them as friends. If the author had given them more time as that, if there had been more of a slowbuild "Yo, dude, we like the same shit and make some funnies" relationship, an actual emotional connection that passes lust, I'd have accepted most of the bullshit. I like him as a dragon, (though I can't claim him as one of my babies, ngl) but he isn't the same in human form which leads to the question of whether the author did that on purpose or if she simply couldn't get the nice guy (no, not Nice Guy, just a really nice dude) that he is into the stereotype of the knight who's training the heroine.

I admit that many of my issues with this story are problems I have with the genre in general: Love encompassing friendship? Nah, bro. We've got lust at first sight, and orgasmic epiphanies, and "YOU'RE MINE!". Very romantic. I miss the tingly feels, man. Give me the tingly feels.

Meeeh.

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### **Alarna Martin says**

Iv read this. I forgot she and g.a akin are the same person. :)

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### **Kitlina says**

I had to brush up on some of my Dragon Kin world. And this was the perfect point. If you haven't got the chance to read this series yet then go ahead and read the first book, it's reissued as Dragon Actually and it's AWESOME.

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### **Netanella says**

You can always tell a Laurenston book - the heroines are strong, prone to vulgarity and slight insanity, and would sooner kick your ass than talk to you. And if you can get comfortable with that, then her books are

entertaining and humorous.

"To Challenge A Dragon" is a sword-n-sorcery fantasy with evil warlords, battling armies, dragons, and Magick with a capital M. Our heroine, heroically named Annweal the Bloody, is leading a rebellion against her wicked brother for rule of the kingdom. One slightly nasty battle leads her into the lair of Fearghus the Deadly, a shape-shifting black dragon with a penchant for mouthy girls. Rather than reveal more of the plot, I'll simply say that like Laurenston's "Pack" series, this one left me eager to continue exploring these stories in further books. Recommended.

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### **Francesca the Fierce (Under the Covers Book Blog) says**

I read this in the reissue Dragon Actually by G.A. Aiken.

Why did it take me sooo long to pick up this series? I know G.A. Aiken is Shelly Laurenston. And I LOVE HER! I think in a way it was the fact that I've never been big on dragons as the lead character in a paranormal romance. But whether it's the fact that I was wrong about dragons, or the fact that this series has a really interesting and fun storyline. Or that it was written by Ms. "Aiken". All I can say is that this book was excellent!

Somehow managing to mix incredibly hot shape-shifting dragons, historical war times, battles, intrigue and some hot tumbles between the hero and heroine, as well as a great supporting cast (yes, lots of them dragons as well) I am now officially hooked.

Oh Fearghus the Destroyer! He is a a dragon of roughly over 200 winters. He has lived most of this time alone in a way, having also little contact with his kin. He is awoken by a battle and a dying beautiful female, Annwyl the Bloody. She is a fierce warrior, leader of a sort of rebel group, with the purpose of killing her estranged brother.

When Fearghus finds her almost dying, all he can do is try and save her. He even calls his sister Morfyd, a healer, to tend to her during recovery.

Except Fearghus presents Annwyl with a human knight whom she thinks is different than his dragon form, and now he can't bring himself to tell her they are one an the same, mostly for fear of rejection.

Annwyl's relationship develops with both on separate levels. Her relationship with the dragon is on a deeper level and she comes to care for him, while the knight stirs things in her she didn't know even could, she was a virgin after all!

While recovering the knight helps train her so that she is prepared to defeat her brother. The dragon makes a promise to help her even going against his family, which will soon come to interfere.

There is a bit of a side storyline and sexual tension between Fearghus sister Morfyd and Brastias, first in command in Annwyl's army. I can't wait to read more about these two!

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### **Wealie says**

I enjoyed Fearghus and Annwyl's story a great deal. Annwyl was feisty and fresh as a strong willed and

determined female lead. It was nice seeing the way Fearghus comes out of his self imposed shell to engage with Annwyl.

Overall the storyline was fun, the characters engaging, with inventive and witty dialogue between the protagonists. Well worth a read or listen.

I listened to this on audible in the book Dragon Actually where it was paired with another, shorter novella. Read my review of Dragon Actually here. It was nicely narrated by Hollie Jackson, but the second story 'Chains & Flames' was not particularly good and badly narrated.

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### **Cassandra Cole says**

If you're interested in dub-con and relationships built on lies with a dash of tragic heroine, then you'll definitely enjoy this.

Or if you're just looking for something pretty looking with no substance?

The porn is kind of flowery and not that interesting... `~`

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### **Desiree says**

Everyone has to read her dragon books!!!! I usually read them in a day and I am often caught taking breaks because I can't see the words through the tears of laughter.

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### **Starry says**

Annwyl&Fearghus

Bratias- a soldier that Annwyl trusts deeply

Fearghus-dragon everyone fears(well one out of many others), fell for Annwyl, can change to knight form(translation:Human form), super hot(from how the book described him..but seriously? no-one can be that hot), and loves to eat people. 0.0 mayb i shouldn't have said that part?

Annwyl-toughest soldier girl anyones ever known, has an evil brother lorcan who she plans to kill(that is not a nice family), starts developing feelings for this guy in her dreams, who she doesnt know but is really fearghus

Lorcan-evil brother, wants to see his sister dead(as in dead dead), wants power and more wealth(well he is already king so he is the wealthiest, really skilled with knives and all, kills females that he dislikes-which is all(witches included), and does not like it when he fails a mission.

Morfyd-dragon(white dragon to be exacted and is very rare dragon), powerful and strong just like her brother(fearghus), has healing powers, and takes care of annwyl while she almost died(right from the beggining where she's fighting and wakes up in Fearghus's den).

each day the more she spends with the dragon, the more she starts tolike him, and she also has a huge desire for the knight, but she somehow thinks she'll betray the dragon by getting together with the knight(which is the dragon..ironic isnt it?)(well, she doesnt know that the knight is the one and the same dragon...yet).

Gwenael-Fearghus's flirtatious brother

Briec-another siblin of fetuues

Rhiannon-featues's mom, queen of dragons

later on annwyl ends up killing her brother in war, and then later on Fearghues mates to her, but does the unexpected thing.....he leaves her, saying that with his as her mate there with her at the castle then everyone will run away with fear.

but then the mother of featues comes and tells her that featues is acting unusally because he missese her(its been over a year) and so she goes to featues and they end up happily ever.....lifetime?

#121

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## **Jess the Romanceaholic says**

Re-read March 19, 2012 (originally read March 24, 2010)

I love Annwyl and have from the start. With a horrendous (and frankly ridiculous) temper, she's not only a terrifying warrior woman, but she's also got a seldom seen softer, playful side that Feargus brings out in her.

I've always been a little iffy with this series in general because I've never been able to fully wrap my brain about the human-like characteristics of the dragons (while in dragon form), nor the very casual use of extreme violence in the series.

Light and entertaining with a touch of ridiculousness, steam, and a sweet love story, this is still one of my favorite "go to" books when I need to re-read a bit of a palate cleanser when reading review copies.

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## **Keziah says**

While not as funny as the *Magnus Pack* and the *Pride* series of Laurenston, *To Challenge A Dragon* did have moments of hilarity. On the whole I found the first few chapters of the book to be a little weak with Annwyl the Bloody and Feargus the Destroyer boring characters. I'm glad I perservered however when the story found its feet and the snarky sense of humour that made me a fan of Laurenston's other series came out.

Bonus WTF points for Annwyl's calm explanation of how the men in the camp stopped harassing her after her tendency to slice their arms off, everyone's determination that Annwyl is insane to her great confusion, and the BDSM dragons in a D/s relationship. All of this actually made me laugh hysterically when I read them!

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## **Madijo says**

Reread June 2013

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## **viva says**

Thank you!

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### **Mary says**

copying my review over from Dragon Actually, since its the same story.

i am actually delighted with this book. i kid you not. it reminds me of.. gena showalters books.. seriously though, its light-hearted, funny, violent as hell, and all with an engaging storyline and a strong heroine. there are, of course some minor issues, but bigger picture- im reading the whole damn series.

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### **Chrizette says**

This book was written under the name GA Aiken (or maybe Shelly Laurenston is her pen-name?) and are called Dragon Actually in book form. I read the electronic version and just loved it. I love her writing style and her heroines are always spunky and tough and sometimes a little crazy. Her books are such relaxing reads and I am trying to find all I can that she has written.

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