

Raid by the free dragons (preview)

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<http://maurits.vanrees.org/weblog/archive/2010/11/dragons>

1 The story so far

In the first few chapters we have encountered Michael, a young dragon. Dragons are the main actors in this story. Here is a short summary.

Eighteen years ago, a dragon called Firehead successfully revolted against the dragon king Richard, who did not survive. Michael was still in his egg at that time. His father was killed by Firehead, but his mother Sophia managed to escape with him. They sought a safe haven away from other dragons. When Michael was twelve years old, by chance he met Lisa, the daughter of king Firehead, and played with her until he had to flee from the soldiers of the king. With his mother, he sought refuge with the free dragons, supporters of the former king, who had built their community in the far north.

Michael is now eighteen years old. The council of free dragons has decided to launch a small raid into the realm of king Firehead. They want to send a clear message that they are not defeated. Hopefully this action will inspire the resistance of the oppressed people against their dictator Firehead. A small guerrilla group is sent on its way deep in hostile territory to make a maximum number of casualties. Michael is one of them.

Here is the beginning of Chapter 7 (according to the preliminary count). I think this is a suitable piece to share as a teaser.

2 Raid

They left early in the morning, when it was still dark. Peter was the group leader. He had the same group with him that he had when Sophia and Michael crossed the river a few years back: Harry, Paul, Ingol and Miro. There were seven others, including Michael. He was the youngest of the bunch. They flew all day and the following night, only occasionally stopping to pause and hunt. The next day they went to sleep, to avoid detection. Of course they put up sentries, though they did not expect to come across soldiers of Firehead here already. During the night they flew again. It was cloudy, so they felt safe; the risk of discovery was small. In the distance they saw a number of fires. That had to be an advanced camp of the enemy. They had found their goal.

During the day they again went in hiding. They used part of the day to collect weapons. They looked for large stones which they still could bear. They pushed down trees and broke branches and made them into pointed spears. When darkness started falling, Peter sent out two groups of scouts. Michael and Miro were a team.

Miro was used to this. Twenty years ago, he had already spied on Firehead and Judge Julius. Since then, he had gained much more experience. He had become a sly old fox, even though certainly you could still not actually call him old. Miro managed to get very close to the enemy camp, with Michael right behind him. There were about fifty dragons. Six guards were keeping a watchful eye on their surroundings from the ground. Four hovered over the camp.

Suddenly there was a loud noise: "CRACK!" Michael held his breath, and closed his eyes. He had placed his hind leg on a tree trunk, which had cracked. Miro looked at him a bit angry and alarmed. The two nearest guards had heard it too and came towards them to investigate the sound. They signaled a flying colleague and he began patrolling above the forest. Miro motioned and withdrew. Michael followed his example. Miro took one half of the snapped trunk. He looked at Michael. He got the hint and got the other half. The guards would not find the broken tree and would not need to wonder how it got broken. Michael saw another trunk that was snapped, possibly by lightning or wind. Hopefully, the guards would also see it and draw the same conclusion. Some moments later the guards indeed saw it, and apparently drew the desired conclusion, because they went back to the camp and continued their round without alarm. Miro and Michael went on and returned in their own camp.

The other reconnaissance team had also just come back. They had reached same conclusion: about 50 dragons with an alert guard. It would be hard to beat that group. But this was why they had collected their weapons that day. Arrangements were made, weapons distributed. That night they would ruthlessly strike.

They started their advance, twelve dragons against fifty. It would be

difficult, but they had the element of surprise on their side. They would rush their enemy. Before the enemy soldiers knew what was happening, they would be irretrievably lost. That was the plan, anyway.