

# WARPSTONE

The independent magazine for Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay



## DRAGONHEART

(PG) (Rob Cohen 1996)

Reviewed by John Foody

A big-budget Hollywood film, hyped for its computer-generated dragon. Dragonheart stars Dennis Quaid, David Thewlis, Dina Meyer and features the voice of Sean Connery as Draco, the Dragon.

The film starts with a peasants' revolt against the local tyrant king. The king is killed and his son mortally wounded. His life is saved when the Dragon shares his heart with him, exacting an oath along the lines of 'service to all men'. All this has been observed by Bowen (Dennis Quaid), the last Knight of the Code, a chivalric set of mores. When the new King turns out to be a bad egg, Bowen blames the Dragon, abandons the code, and begins killing the last remaining Dragons for cash.

Time passes, and the people are enslaved by the King, while Bowen comes face-to-face with the last remaining Dragon. They join forces to extort money from villages by faking the Dragon's death. Soon they become loyal friends and set out to save the Kingdom. Dragonheart's big plus is the dragon. It looks very good, interacting nicely with the surrounding scenery. Connery's voice does a good job of giving it a personality. This is a step up from Quaid, who plods through the film without ever engaging. Thewlis makes a passable villain but comes across as half-hearted. The film makes passable fare for its PG certificate, neither offending nor challenging the audience I was in. They were all oo'ing and ah'ing at the appropriate points. All except me!

The film was Hollywood by numbers. Amusing sidekick, English villain, feisty love interest, evil villain, peasants who just need someone to lead them etc. Maybe I'm being too harsh, but no, that's not counting a couple of moments so truly cringe-worthy that I won't mention them.

As long as you expect no surprises, the film is worth seeing just for the Dragon. Don't expect to find any help in writing scenarios or creating characters. Apart from swords and big flying lizards, the film is so un-WFRP. Everything is so clean; even the dirt covered peasants seem well-nourished and tidy. When will these fantasy films fall outside the conventional?

However, Dragonheart has packed in the crowds. It was the top grossing UK film in half term week, which is pretty impressive. However, as far as I can tell TSR and GW have done nothing to try and capture this audience, some of whom could possibly be interested. Arcane didn't even mention it. Fantasy films of this mould come along so rarely (especially ones which are actually seen) that it should have been an opportunity. Many role-players moan about kids in the hobby, but the more people that play, the stronger it is for everyone.