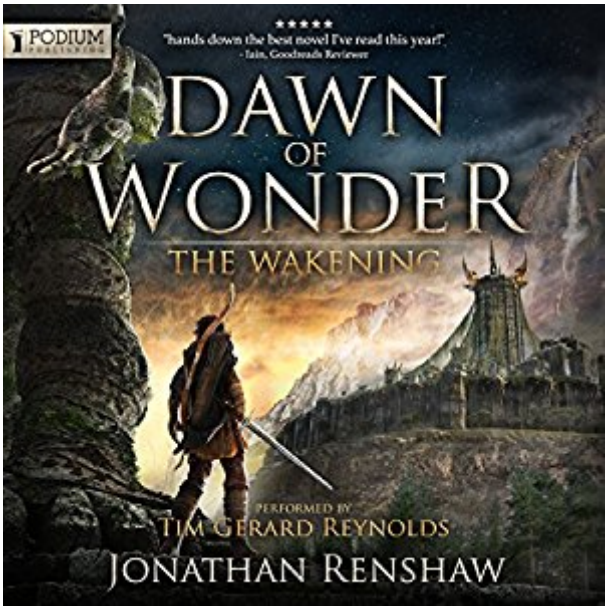
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Dawn Of Wonder: The Wakening, Book 1



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Synopsis

When a high-ranking officer gallops into the quiet Mistyvales, he brings a warning that shakes the countryfolk to their roots. But for Aedan, a scruffy young adventurer with veins full of fire and a head full of ideas, this officer is not what he seems. The events that follow propel Aedan on a journey that only the foolhardy or desperate would risk, leading him to the gates of the nation’s royal academy - a whole world of secrets in itself. But this is only the beginning of his discoveries. Something is stirring in the land, something more ominous than the rising threat of hostile nations. Fearful travelers whisper of an ancient power breathing over Thirna, changing it, waking it. In the very heart of these stirrings, Aedan encounters that which defies belief, leaving him speechless with terror - and wonder.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For those of you not interested in reading a novel before you read a novel, I suggest you skip to the last paragraph for the Cliffs Notes version of my review. For those of you who wish to know how it’s possible that one book can forever change the lens through which you view the genre of fantasy and the metric and standard through which you measure it, read on.Seldom do I ever feel compelled to write a review. In fact, this is (I believe) my first review on Goodreads. But every so often in life, you have the fortune to come across a work so artfully, skillfully and carefully crafted that it can only have been created by someone who has found what they were born to do as an artist. That is precisely what I found in Jonathan Renshaw’s "Dawn of Wonder," and never before have I been so

grateful for deciding to give a name I hadn’t heard before a chance.From start to finish, the story’s slow-burn development builds a perfect level of mysticism behind the all too real moments. Make no mistake, this is NOT high fantasy and it would be an unfair mischaracterization to relegate it to the category of epic fantasy. For a world where impossible things can and do happen, this is absolutely as real as it gets.Renshaw explores some of the most difficult subjects I’ve ever seen an author attempt to address in the fantasy genre. Childhood trauma manifesting in present-day paralyzing fear, a broken home, domestic violence, loss of innocence, and loss of loved ones are just of some of the adversities faced by young Aedan in this novel. This is not, however, your typical coming-of-age story arc. It is instead a daring exploration of the child psyche, somehow, often remarkably, capturing precisely the thoughts and sentiments of a boy of Aedan’s age. Were a boy gifted Renshaw’s incredible ability to convey emotion and thought, I imagine the result would be strikingly similar to the almost impossibly accurate articulations found in "Dawn of Wonder." I imagine that this novel could only have been written by someone that either personally experienced childhood trauma or has intimate familiarity with someone who has. If this is indeed the case, Renshaw’s attempt to convey the reality of those traumatic instances should be lauded for shining such a light in to a genre often defined by the superfluous and superficial, and he has my sympathy for what he experienced.Lest anyone balk at the prospect of facing such realism in a genre many of us seek for the very purpose of escaping our daily reality-laden drudgery, I implore you for a moment to remember what it was to be child. Just as our fears were made exponentially more terrifying and just as our losses and failures were so keenly exacerbated by our lack of maturity, so too were our feelings of triumph, simple joy and wonder made boundless and larger than life by the creativity and impossible (yet no less real in our thoughts) beliefs we allowed our minds to indulge in.In this sense, the title "Dawn of Wonder" could not have been more aptly chosen. The experiences we’re privileged to witness through the lens of Aedan’s young mind allow our own minds to harken back to those days where it was possible to find a pirate’s treasure in your own backyard, and when our worlds were so black and white that we believed our feelings on certain subjects would forever be set in stone. But just as we stood by and watched that black and white blend in to an amorphous gray in our lives, so too do we witness how the forges that are maturity and knowledge temper and challenge everything Aedan once believed defined him.Despite this lengthy (and frankly somewhat pretentious) review, I have only addressed the skill and care through which the story is told and not the story itself. With regard to the plot, once again, the title "Dawn of Wonder" is an apt description of the developments over the course of the novel. Aedan’s own maturation, and consequently the loss of his idealism and the birth of his realism, stands in stark

juxtaposition to the mysterious and wonderful elements building behind the scenes.It is these very elements that permit the book to be characterized as fantasy, but this is not a farm boy leaving home to fulfill an impossibly important destiny through the use of magic blades and dragons. Instead, the careful manner in which Renshaw applies the elements of myth and mysticism to the world he created is akin to a master painter’s sparing choice of color or a master chef’s discerning measure of just the right amount of spice. As a person who self-identifies as a member of "The More Swords, Magic and Dragons The Better" club, rest assured that the story progressively and selectively incorporates more fantasy as it develops. I promise that those of you seeking to scratch their fantasy itch will find themselves satisfied and practically begging for more by the end of the novel.As my unfortunate friends have now become aware, I could go on forever about this book. The dialogue is so witty and richly rewarding that at times I found myself jealous, as though it were unfair that other humans were capable of this level of verbal mastery. But these petty sentiments only led me to respect the nearly flawless and never lazy way in which Renshaw crafted a mind, a world and a story in perfect synchronicity. The story is exciting, satisfying, poignant, fun, touching, whimsical, mystical, and all too often capable of tugging on your heartstrings. I’d be lying if I said I didn’t shed a tear in both laughter and sadness at varying points throughout this novel.The wonderful world and colorful characters that inhabit "Dawn of Wonder", and Aedan’s interactions with both, challenge the notions of what it means to be family and what it means to find love and friendship. You’ll find yourself remembering those times that just the very presence of your friends made you feel as though you could tackle anything life could throw your way. And even in those moments where you didn’t and couldn’t believe, they did the believing for you. They picked you up and carried you through adversity, and you found yourselves made closer by the experience. The impact of the bonds formed among our peers that are built through childhood friendship, support, squabble and mutual maturation on the type of man or woman we ultimately become cannot be understated.Long story short, five stars out of five, ten points out of ten, whatever you want to call it. I doubt I will find a more compelling and poignant mixture of storytelling and character development in my reading adventures, and in that sense by the end of "Dawn of Wonder" I found myself saddened, when I would ordinarily be excited, at the prospect of searching for another book to read. It is clichÃƒÂ© to say I wished it would never end, but when an author achieves an impossible standard, sometimes clichÃƒÂ©s are all we have. After all, as the above review will show, there are both too many and not enough words for how much I enjoyed this novel. Lovers of the fantasy genre, I cannot recommend this book any more. Anyone interested in a daring exploration in to the themes of family dynamics, child psyche and loss of innocence, I say the same to you. And anyone

just looking for a terrific story and an engrossing read, well, you know the drill. Just read it.

I was amazed by this new fantasy coming-of-age novel, which exceeded all of my expectations. The book is HUGE, but I read the whole thing almost non-stop in two days, constantly intrigued by the mysteries of the created world and life of the main character and supporting characters. The story is told entirely from the main character's point of view, which I really enjoyed, as the constantly switching perspectives of most new fantasy works often annoy me. Although the main character is a young teenager for the whole story, his occasionally childish perspective makes me think of that age more with nostalgia than annoyance at the MC's immaturity (which usually happens in books with young MCs). All of the characters are realistic in their actions and motivations, and, although there is typically a clear line between the good guys and bad guys, no character is perfect and struggles with various faults and temptations. The book even addresses on more serious topics such as abuse, cultural intolerance, and religion, though never in a way that feels preachy or overdone (more in the way of addressing serious topics that are real and need to be addressed in the life of the main character). The main character (though young) has enough faults to be relatable but enough strengths to be admired and someone I would like to be (an important and difficult balance that many books have a difficult time maintaining). Additionally, you get a TON of reading material for a cheap price, with no discernible editing errors (very unexpected and amazing in an indie author). Also, despite handling some heavy topics, this book has content suitable for all ages of readers (no cursing, sex scenes, or gratuitous violence), although the writing style is in no way simplistic or dumbed-down for younger readers. When thinking of what the target audience of this book probably is, I realize that I can't imagine an age past 10 that I would not immensely enjoy this novel.The only possible faults with this book that I can come up with are that it follows a very overdone fantasy trope (a gifted young boy's coming-of-age in an academy) and that the next books in the series are not out yet. Despite following an overdone theme, this book brings me back to why that theme is so popular, and in my opinion is second only to (if not even with) Rothfus' Kingkiller Chronicles, one of my all time favorites. Even following standard rules of this genre, everything feels very realistic for youths of that age (I especially liked the way the young romances were handled). This is also very much the first book in a series, and there are many potential mysteries and avenues for development of characters and the created world that are hinted at in this book but left to future books to encounter more thoroughly.All in all, I LOVED this book, more than any I've read in years, and can't wait for the next in the series. I will soon be recommending this to both friends and enemies: friends to share in the enjoyment of this first book, and enemies to share the suffering

of waiting for book 2.

This will drown in the thousands of other reviews but I truly enjoyed this fantasy novel. After reading the whole thing it had the feel of a prequel book that went back and told every detail I wanted to know about the main character and supporting characters and what happened before they became heroes. Not to say that the next book could be read without this one but just pointing out that the dawn of wonder doesnt really happen until the end. The protagonist is still a boy, learning, failing, succeding and becoming the legend we are excited to read about.

I don’t write reviews generally, but this one deserves at least a small modicum of effort on my part. It deserves more, truth be told.I read a fair amount of fantasy, and like many readers I’m a fan of Martin, Rothfuss, Sanderson, Gaiman, Jordan, and the like. With Dawn of Wonder, Renshaw has perhaps leapfrogged to the front of that list for me. I’m not sure what to say about it that won’t spoil it, but I’ll try. It blends some of the best "young hero in training" aspects of the genre within an intriguing and believable world. Like game of thrones, there are glimpses of magical pasts and futures, but for the most part the world is mundane (in a good way) and familiar. Characters are lovable and despicable. Story pacing is patient without dragging. Writing style is accessible yet at times almost poetic. Bottom line: I can’t wait for the next installment!

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