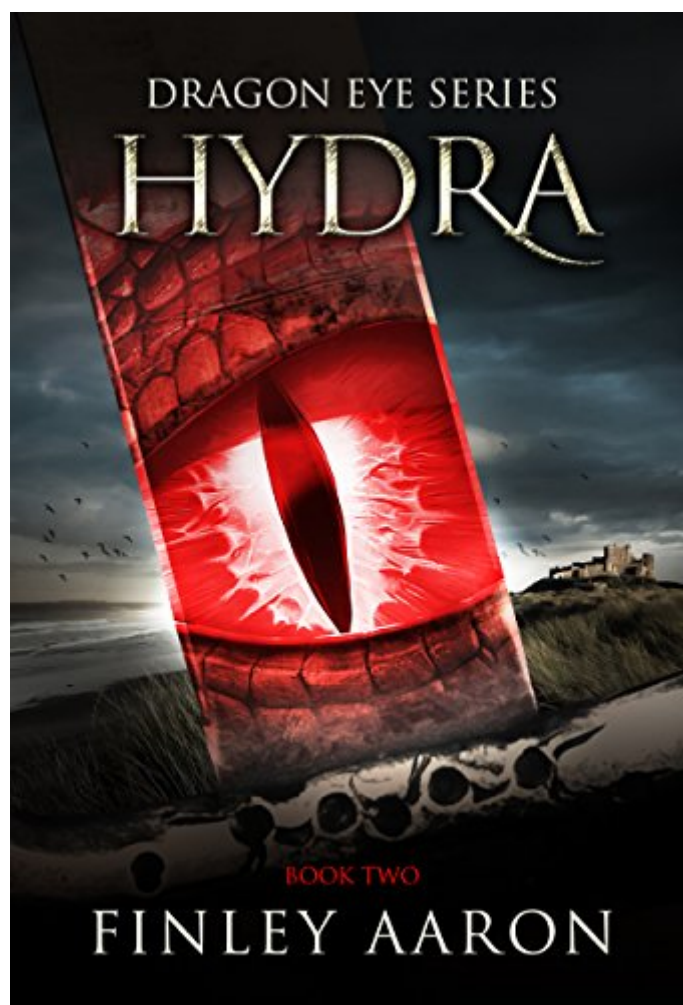


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## Hydra (Dragon Eye Book 2)



## Synopsis

Deep in the Scottish Highlands, near the shore of Loch Ness, lies Nattertinny Castle—whose name, in Gaelic, means “dragon-fire castle.” Before her death, Faye Goodwin mentioned a dragon who lived near the loch. Hoping to find the long-lost dragon, Ilsa brings her daughters to the castle near Loch Ness. Wren, middle child of Ram and Ilsa, has been afraid of deep water and the dangers that may lurk there ever since sinister creatures nearly drowned her in the Caspian Sea. But Ed, the mysterious porter at Nattertinny Castle, knows about deep lakes and the monsters that dwell in their fathomless depths. He promises to keep Wren safe from whatever attacked her under the water—but to what lengths must he go to keep his promise? The Dragon Eye series books: One: Dragon Two: Hydra Three: Phoenix Four: Vixen Five: Dracul Six: Basilisk

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## Customer Reviews

Confession: I love the lore that surrounds the Loch Ness Monster and have a secret dream (well, it's not so secret any longer) to visit the loch someday for myself. So I started reading Hydra with a mix of excitement and anxiety, hoping that Loch Ness would be handled really well. I should have known to trust Finley Aaron after the first book and all explanations didn't disappoint. Hydra is told in the same casual narrative way that I loved in the first book, but this time we got to know Wren, Ilsa's middle daughter. Wren is fighting against what she feels like has been expected of her since birth to marry and bring more dragons into the world. She believes that a woman's life ends on their wedding day. That she no longer can have adventures and be daring after she says, "I do." The only way to prevent that is to not fall in love or to deny love when it looks her square in the face. Wren is honest and brave. I enjoyed experiencing the world through her eyes and found her hesitancy believable. The hero is named Ed and he was such a delightful surprise. He's not the typical hero. Ed has slightly deformed hands and has been rejected and has felt alone for much of his life. And yet, he's still kindhearted, still puts others first, and is still every bit of a hero (actually, maybe more so) than the comic book heartthrobs that fill prime time television right now. I cheered (seriously, out loud) for him during the book. He's strong and humble and everything that a true hero should be. Something the author really surprised me with was that the danger in this book was even more palpable than in the first in the series. Which I didn't know was even possible. Man alive. I'm now afraid to get into murky water, the descriptions and emotions were that real. I've found both books in the Dragon Eye Series to be completely charming. Finley Aaron is an expert at tugging the reader right into the story and immersing you within a world where dragons are real and you find yourself cheering on the dragons. I can't wait until book three is released!

OK, I felt like some of the negative reviews were a bit over the top. In fact, I bought the first book precisely because of a negative review! Somebody commented that the heroine was not feminist enough. She went along with traditional values too unquestioningly. So I thought, "Hey, that doesn't sound so bad!" And I really enjoyed the first book. But now, I confess, I'm a little weirded out by the really overt, no let me stress that, the really overheated talk about "hot guys" and "muscles" and the "need to make babies". Holy smokes! Both the men and women characters in these books think and

talk about NOTHING except GETTING MARRIED and PROCREATING. Sorry. I'll stop shouting. But really, there are so many interesting things you could develop in these stories and this is all you can think of for a plot? In the first book, OK. They were down to only 1 female dragon. But in the 2nd book, give it a bit of a rest. Notice what's missing. We never meet the evil nemesis. We never get an idea of her real motivations. We never see anything from the perspective of anyone except the narrating character. And that character's thoughts are almost totally obsessed with dragon love. This isn't a fantasy book! It's a romance! Instead of the dragon eye on the cover, it should be a male dragon ripping his shirt off. These are dragon bodice rippers! And I'm really sad about that because the author is actually a pretty decent writer. The story moves along. I like the characters. Apart from the romantic monomania, they talk in a realistic teen voice. (All the protagonists are teen dragons.) The only other gripe I've got is the over usage of the present tense. Hardly anything just happened, or is about to happen. Everything is happening-right-now. "I run this way. I jump. I pull out my sword and decapitate the monster. I change into a dragon." Phew! It makes me tired to read it.

Hydra is a tremendously fun and page turning read in and of itself. That said it did take the baton from the first book, Dragon, and runs with it. It also reveals that The Dragon Eye series is about a family, starting with Ilsa followed by her children, and the dangers they face than about a single hero. In Hydra our protagonist is a heroine named Wren, the "middle" daughter of Ilsa. She is a couple years older in the book than her mom was in Dragon and it is enjoyable to see the family dynamic played out in this story. Where the first book was an A to B journey in the unknown story this is an A to B to C adventure story that sees Wren having to face her fears. Where Ilsa grew up mostly alone and not knowing who and what she was Wren grows up surrounded by family and she loves being a dragon. Wren enjoys her freedom and the adventure that is life. As with most good stories the protagonist has to deal with some inner and outer conflicts. Wren is no different and she has made assumptions and decisions that are both selfless and selfish depending on how you look at it. In any case those decisions have kept her emotionally safe. Her self denial and inner struggle is quite enjoyable. As for the Outer conflicts Wren proves to be just as much as the dragon her mother is if not more in some ways. In many ways this story is about love and fear and how you face them both. There is little to complain about because it is such a straight forward story set within a bigger story. However I didn't like the sudden ending of Wren's story, because it felt off compared to the flow of the book had taken. I understand that Dragon was a story set 20 plus years before the bulk of series, which is set in the here and now pretty much, so it could have a softer ending of sorts, but the ending of Hydra

still felt wonky. I guess since the next book Phoenix begins around same time Hydra ends it is understandable that shifting POV from book to book in a series is harder than it would be in a book. In any case the quality of the first two books as face one day reads has me looking forward to picking up Phoenix.

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