

THE RIGHTTEOUS



DAVID WRAGG

THE RIGHTEOUS

David Wragg



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Dedication

*For my parents,
Who thought they'd raised me better*

Contents

[Cover](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Previously ...](#)

[Part I](#)

[Chapter One](#)

[Chapter Two](#)

[Chapter Three](#)

[Chapter Four](#)

[Chapter Five](#)

[Chapter Six](#)

[Chapter Seven](#)

[Chapter Eight](#)

[Chapter Nine](#)

[Part II](#)

[Chapter Ten](#)

[Chapter Eleven](#)

[Chapter Twelve](#)

[Chapter Thirteen](#)

[Chapter Fourteen](#)

[Chapter Fifteen](#)

[Chapter Sixteen](#)

[Chapter Seventeen](#)

[Chapter Eighteen](#)

[Chapter Nineteen](#)

[Chapter Twenty](#)

[Chapter Twenty-One](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Two](#)

[Part III](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Three](#)

[Chapter Twenty-Four](#)
[Chapter Twenty-Five](#)
[Chapter Twenty-Six](#)
[Chapter Twenty-Seven](#)
[Chapter Twenty-Eight](#)
[Chapter Twenty-Nine](#)
[Chapter Thirty](#)
[Chapter Thirty-One](#)
[Chapter Thirty-Two](#)
[Chapter Thirty-Three](#)
[Chapter Thirty-Four](#)
[Chapter Thirty-Five](#)
[Chapter Thirty-Six](#)
[Chapter Thirty-Seven](#)
[Chapter Thirty-Eight](#)

[Part IV](#)

[Chapter Thirty-Nine](#)
[Chapter Forty](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Also by David Wragg](#)

[About the Publisher](#)

PREVIOUSLY ...

Aye, right, where were we? So our boys Rennic (aka boss) and Chel (aka wee bear, cub, dipstick) have got themselves locked in the dungeons below the old royal citadel, along with a whole bunch of hapless folk who thought they were on the verge of liberating the kingdom from your good old-fashioned tyrannical regime. I'd say execution at the hands of the murderous red confessors is imminent, on account of the steady procession of corpses that's been rolling out of said citadel in the time since, often in stages.

How did it come to this, dear Lemon, I hear you ask? Ah, well, it all started back in Denirnas Port, where the Black Hawks (the greatest mercenary company the world has yet to recognize) – the boss Rennic, the big lad Foss, the tart Loveless, the tireless Whisper, the tiresome Spider and the wise and scintillating Lemon – were engaged in the blameless act of unregulated commerce. Then out of the clear blue morning, in come the whopping black ships of the Norts from over the sea, blockade the bay and blast the fuck out of the port's various edifices strategic with their heathen witchfire.

It's fair to say some chaos and bedlam ensued. Being attentive and charitable souls, we snatched a prince from the melee: Tarfel, the runt prince, the spare heir. Chel, his sworn man, came too – not my fault, the boss insisted. Plan was we'd shop said wee prince over to the Rau Rel, the great partisan underground, who were gathering their strength to overthrow the hated church.

Course, like any good plan it's fucked sideways from the off. Seems the wee bear has made it his sworn mission to drop a bollock at every opportunity, and boss has to relocate one of his arms to knock off his aggro. We're forced cross-country, chased by a steaming stack of confessors, Mawnish mercenaries, cannibals, and toothy wolves. Fucken wolves, man. At least we saw the last of that prick Brother Hurkel – Loveless took a hand

off him and we left him to die on a mountain. No chance he made it back from that, no chance at all.

Anyway, all's grand in the end. We get princeling to the Rau Rel, they arrange a meetup with his big bro, the dim Crown Prince Mendel, and we're all set for taking the citadel. Off we dutifully march, with nary a pause to renegotiate our fee, and set up guard in the courtyard while the others bust in. Now I don't know exactly what happened next, but friend Spider came steaming out in short order and bellowed a morsel as he passed, to wit: the 'regime' we'd come all that way to perform said overthrowing upon is our bosom pal the fucken crown prince. Except he's not the dim one, Mendel the thickie. He's the dead one, Corvel the bastard – who offed his own twin to lay a trap for the churchy buggers years ago, and has been ruling from the shadows in times since.

Boss and the wee bear didn't have friend Spider's luck, hence their predicament. But where there's life there's hope. Did I mention the wee bear has a sister? Aye, and she's a fuck-sight craftier than he is ...

PART I