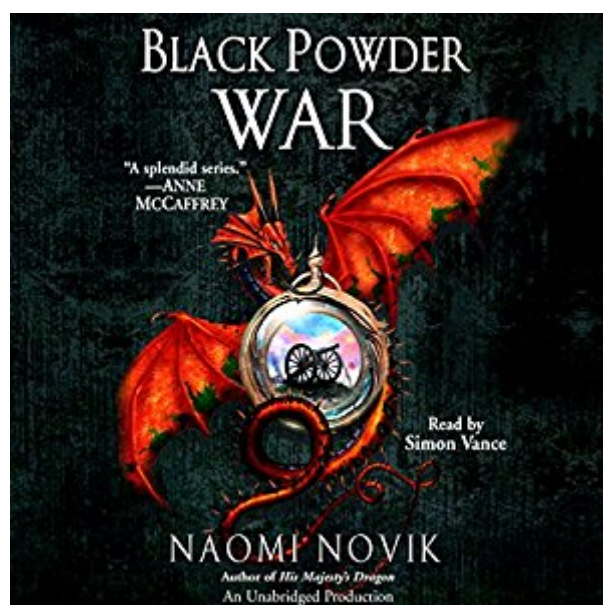


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Black Powder War: Temeraire, Book 3



Synopsis

Limited to 500 signed numbered illustrated copies! --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 10 hours and 22 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

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Whispersync for Voice: Ready

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Customer Reviews

Easily the best of the bunch, "Black Powder War" is the third in the historical fantasy Temeraire series. We start as Laurence and crew are leaving China, Laurence having just become the adopted son of the Chinese emperor so that he is worthy of a dragon of Temeraire's class. All our friends are on a slow ship heading back to Britain when a fire breaks out on board, nearly gutting the ship and causing a possible three month delay while its repaired, The dragon crew considers going overland, but are forced to when an urgent message comes from England-three dragon eggs have been purchased from the Ottoman empire by England and they need Temeraire to pick them up and deliver them.Of course the journey overland is hard, and involves a meeting with a large group of feral dragons-who turn out to be not so feral after all. While they tell Temeraire a soap opera story about dragons he continues on his quest to get better treatment, including city residences and pay, for the British dragons. Laurence is worried about such thoughts, because he knows that nothing like that will ever come to pass and he doesn't want Temeraire to desert for China and a better life.Once in the Ottoman Empire there are problems, and the shadow of the mad and evil white Celestial dragon hangs over Laurence's head as she follows them west. Soon problems from Napoleon and the eggs overthrow any of Laurence's concerns about Temeraire, and everyone's lives are thrown into peril.Temeraire really gets a personality in this book, and even

Laurence's worrying and duty bound personality begins to improve. The feral dragons are a riot, and the action in this book is breathtaking. This one actually had me up all night reading, and it won't disappoint anyone who even sort of liked "His Majesty's Dragon" or "Throne of Jade". This book ranks an easy four stars, and the letter at the end of it, from an unknown person talking of the dragons as stupid beasts casts a great shadow of drama for future books, as does the prequel for the next.

I was hesitant in buying this last one because the reviews I was reading seemed to dwell on the military campaigns of Napoleon (yes, he makes a cameo appearance). I supposed the title of the book didn't help. But really the Napoleonic War doesn't start until Page 200 of a 365 Page Book. And I was surprised to see how skillfully and plausibly the author wove the dragons into the war. It was a WORTHY and Most Exciting finale to the Temeraire Trilogy. Do not miss any of it. You will see how expertly the dragons are used in battle. How Lien, the outcast albino dragon, who lost her captain, the perfidious prince Yongxing (read THRONE OF JADE), defected to the side of the French, in order to effect a most ingenious revenge on Temeraire and Laurence. Most noteworthy is the development of the dragon psyche. We are introduced to the feral dragons of the Turkish mountains . . . dragons in their natural state who have never known the harness but consequently aren't that well-fed either. (Comic relief after a particularly intense journey through the desert). And Temeraire beg us to consider the emancipation of all dragons through his fascinating discussions with Laurence concerning the issues of choice and freedom. There's also the dragon eggs themselves-- whose value-- figures a great deal in all the books. How do the dragons feel about separation from their eggs? 5 Stars! (Some heartbreak in the fate of some members of Temeraire's crew.) I do so hate these moments when I have to whip out a hanky for characters in a Fantasy! But I guess that tells you how well-written this book truly is! I look forward to more, Ms. Novik! Consider me a life-long fan!

While the third volume in the ongoing series (not a trilogy as it initially appeared) sticks fairly closely to the mold of the first two, there is enough novelty and interesting development here to keep the reader eagerly reading. The end is only disappointing insofar as at the finish of this volume there appears to be no real end in sight. On the one hand, that is cause for minor celebration, since it means that the characters who have been introduced in the first three volumes will be around for some time -- I wouldn't be surprised if this draws out to nine or ten volumes. On the other hand, some kind of real closure would be nice -- even if it were to begin again with another trilogy. What

distinguishes this fantasy series from many other popular fantasy pieces is that it is tied to historical events (that are reimagined and tweaked, to accommodate within an alternate reality like our own the existence of intelligent dragons). That means it can't have some kind of artificial ending (Harry Potter finishes at Hogwarts, and/or he or Voldemort die; the Ring gets destroyed; etc.), but only the relative kind of ending that is possible in real history (a battle ends and there is a time before a new one begins; a king is crowned; a revolution takes place, etc.). This one ends, it seems, with no more certainty than the series began with. Temeraire has greater ambitions for dragonkind, but it is gradually becoming clear that these ambitions will have to take second place to the war with Napoleon. While that makes sense, and the war even in this reality took a long time, I'm not sure how much patience I will continue to have with the series if the plot continues to be, roughly: crises leading to character development and then some drawn out battle after which they need to rest and there are crises leading to character development and then another drawn out battle ... in this one, especially, she found ways to introduce a great deal of variety into this general schema, but at least this reader can only get so far interested in battle formations and dragons and ships and infantry fighting back and forth. What is really interesting in the story are the various characters, and the insights into dragon intelligence and ways of thinking and especially Temeraire's growing understanding of the world and increasing dissatisfaction with the position of dragons in the West. I can't help but wish, like Temeraire in the story, for the war to end soon so that these other issues can become the focus. While this theme is the most intriguing, and gives the whole series a political and social edge that serves at least allegorically to encourage thinking about the kinds of oppressions with which our own history has been replete, it still continues to stretch credibility the extent to which the abilities and intelligence of dragons are, it seems, only just becoming known. The parallel with slavery, that is alluded to here, and the delusions about slaves that for so long justified the practice in the minds of their oppressors makes some sense of the way dragons are treated here -- and if you combine that with the idea that in their affections dragons are something like dogs, who become attached to the first person they imprint upon, and therefore less likely to revolt than they might otherwise, it can be further explained, but the dragons are not stupid and it is really difficult to credit that human beings would not know more about such powerful beings. Still, there is inevitably some need to suspend disbelief in a story about dragons, and Novik treads a fine line between immersing us in a fantasy realm and developing parallels with our own history. It remains much more fun to read than most science fiction/fantasy I have seen in some time, and it is a bit silly to complain that there is more to come.

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