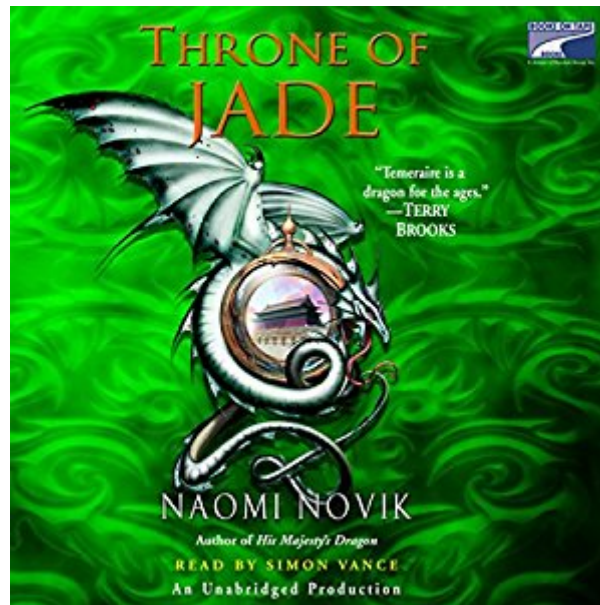


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Throne Of Jade: Temeraire, Book 2



Synopsis

When Britain intercepted a French ship and its precious cargo, an unhatched dragon's egg, Captain Will Laurence of HMS Reliant unexpectedly became master and commander of the noble dragon he named Temeraire. As new recruits in Britain's Aerial Corps, man and dragon soon proved their mettle in daring combat against Bonaparte's invading forces. Now China has discovered that its rare gift, intended for Napoleon, has fallen into British hands, and an angry Chinese delegation vows to reclaim the remarkable beast. But Laurence refuses to cooperate. Facing the gallows for his defiance, Laurence has no choice but to accompany Temeraire back to the Far East, a long voyage fraught with peril, intrigue, and the untold terrors of the deep. Yet once the pair reaches the court of the Chinese emperor, even more shocking discoveries and darker dangers await.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Novik succeeds admirably in creating a novel which follows on neatly where 'Temeraire' (US title 'His Majesty's Dragon') left off - and yet which could be read very satisfyingly as a stand-alone by anyone who had not read the previous tale. I was very impressed by the elegance and clarity with which she provided the whole 'Previously, on Temeraire' information in the first few pages without ever resorting to obvious expositionary tactics. The opening scene drops us into the thick of things and immediately wins the reader over to worrying about the future for Lawrence and Temeraire, and when they *are* reunited - well, I for one was quite choked, and rooting for them, and wanting to *punch* the wretched idiots who were treating them both so badly. And the story had barely begun,

at that point. Other reviewers will tell you that Novik evokes an alternative history with verve and clarity through her attention to period detail, and they're right. They may also praise the fascinating way that she envisions her dragons (and similar beasts) interacting with humans, whether in Europe, at Sea, in Africa or in China. And they're right too - she gives us thoroughly intriguing and carefully considered glimpses into this unpretentious fantasy world, and raises real questions about how humans would interact with other sentient beings - and how they do interact with other people. But the thing that I enjoy most about both 'Temeraire' and 'Throne of Jade' is how very rounded and real and touching are the relationships that Novik delineates.

Second in the Temeraire trilogy, this story begins shortly after the events in the preceding novel, His Majesty's Dragon. Novik again captures the period perfectly, seamlessly introducing her dragons into the Napoleonic Era. Temeraire is a Celestial dragon, the most highly-prized of all draconian breeds; famed for their intelligence, agility, and most of all for the Divine Wind--their earth-shattering roar capable of sundering the heavy timbers of warships. He was meant to be the companion of Napoleon himself, not to be a companion for a mere English officer. The Chinese are very angry, and demand his return, forcibly separating him from Captain Laurence. Temeraire balks at the separation, and in a show of power, demolishes the building in which he is being held. In the end it is decided that Laurence will accompany him to China, where it is assumed that Temeraire will come to his senses. On the journey, several attempts are made on Laurence's life to no avail. The plotting and machinations only become worse once they arrive in China as the Chinese use means both fair and foul try to come between Laurence and his dragon. Eventually a resolution is achieved that allows the pair to remain together formally. Temeraire is astonished to find that dragons are honored members of society in China, earning their own money, and taught literacy. Being of a philosophical bent, this encourages him to speak out against the injustice done to the dragons of England much to Laurence's chagrin, as Laurence can't deny the inequity, even though Laurence is afraid that attempts at change will be futile. Having discovered how much nicer life is in China for dragons, will Temeraire willingly return to England?

There are parts of this book I really enjoyed and then there are parts of this book that totally bored me. Naomi Novik's writing is always beautiful and detailed and had I not read Uprooted before starting this series I might not have had such high expectations but alas I did and so I wanted something more. Throne of Jade is a lot more about cultural differences, social acceptances and politicking. Unlike His Majesty's Dragon which involved getting to know the dragon culture and

being in quite a few battles, much of the time in Throne of Jade is spent traveling to China and the focus is more on the bond of loyalty between Teremaire and Laurence. There are a few battles in this book but a lot of the action comes at the very beginning and the very end. Those were my favorite parts. The Sea voyage is the part that became a bit tedious for me. Teremaire spent much of it brooding and there were many different discussions about slavery, dragon rights and why things are done a certain way in England. Teremaire seemed to have a lot of very specific ideas about all of it. There was some extraneous information about what everyone was eating including Teremaire and a funny bit when he caught a cold but it turned a little bit into what to feed a dragon for awhile and I started wondering when we would ever get back to the crux of the story. I did appreciate how things changed once settled in China and it was interesting to see how the Chinese incorporated dragons into their everyday society and how that changes both Laurence and Teremaire's opinions of the practices of raising and keeping Dragons in England. It will be interesting to see if anything comes of that. I also loved seeing the tale of Mulan weaved in with a dragon twist to it.

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