

DECEMBER '97/JANUARY '98

BARNES & NOBLE

Explorations

The Best in Science Fiction, Fantasy and Graphic Fiction.



The Spell Song War

L.E. Modesitt, Jr.

Tor/St. Martin's Press

\$25.95; Early Jan.

Anna Marshal was having a tough life. Her snotty husband finally left her. Her oldest daughter has died. The University she works at doesn't respect women. Her gown for a concert for the Board of Trustees gets ruined as the skies open up. She just wished she were somewhere else—guess what? Good guess!

That was the beginning of the first book in this wonderful Spell Song Cycle, *The Soprano Sorceress*. In the sequel *The Spell Song War*, Anna is running the country of Defalk. She is fighting daily with the lords of each land in her adopted country as well as the threat of invasion by surrounding countries and even a country across the seas. Where music is magic, this Opera singer/music instructor is the strongest sorceress in centuries.

Anna has to be tough. Compassion is considered weakness and death is the way of life in the world of Erde. A medieval world of muddy roads, stone castles, poverty, horses, filthy water and bad wine. In this sequel, Anna finds it harder and harder to be a woman in a man's world. Respect has to be forced on the world around her.

Called the "Bitch Sorceress" by the men AND the women, the only thing that keeps her from becoming a cruel leader is that she keeps her word—but how long can she keep this up? To run a world you need money and Defalk is broke. The lords won't pay their taxes and after years of drought, the lands are dirt poor. The flooding that was caused by the war with the Evult caused all the bridges and roads to be all but impassable or destroyed and she is only one woman. A woman that every time she uses her powers becomes weaker and weaker. Needing more food and more rest to be able to go on. She is in the sights of all assassins and conquerors and her only other power is the loyalty that she instills in others and her ability to be as cruel as the cruelest dictator. Only her honesty and straight-forward honor separates her from the evil that men (and women) do. —J.DeM.

The Last Battlemage:

The Dragon Nimbus History #2

Dragons Touchstone:

The Dragon Nimbus History #1

Irene Radford

DAW

\$6.99, \$5.99; Mid Dec., Avail.

I was beginning to think I was completely burnt on dragon related fantasy. Sick of the whole genre. I mean most of these novels are so repetitive. Originality is something that can be shockingly lacking. So needless to say I don't normally read a book where dragons are the focus.

That should explain why I never read Irene Radford's first Dragon Nimbus History, *Dragons Touchstone*. Turns out that was a big mistake. After reading these two novels it's