



League of Dragons

Naomi Novik

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Naomi Novik delivers the final adventure in a *New York Times* bestselling series that has won fans of Napoleonic-era military history, Anne McCaffrey's Pern novels, and Patrick O'Brian's seafaring adventures. Since *His Majesty's Dragon*, Capt. William Laurence and his fearless dragon, Temeraire, have been battling Napoleon and his armies . . . and now the time has come to stop him for good.

League of Dragons Details

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From Reader Review League of Dragons for online ebook

Mark says

Enjoyable end to this brilliantly world building series, but I am left wanting more from this world. Well worth reading the entire series.

Scott Sigler says

Very sorry to see this series end. It's so rare for me to read an entire series, and especially one this long. A real treasure.

Jessica ✿ ⇨ Silverbow ⇨ ✿ Rabid Reads-no-more says

8/7/15 - Cover up:

On sale May 10, 2016 by Del Rey.

Siobhan says

I honestly loved this. It was everything I need from a Temeraire book, and I'm just so sad it's over. Think I'll start rereading now... XD

Manisha says

Temeraire and Laurence... I will miss you so. ?♥?

(I did it! Nine books down! Whooooo!)

Robin Halvorson says

I didn't know when I started that this is to be the last book in the series. I am content with the overall ending but I am very disappointed in the book as a whole. The writing is disjointed and important scenes are skipped. There were jumps in the story, in the logic of the story and in the character of the protagonists. Several times we have a build up to an action scene but suddenly we have skipped the action and are

somewhere else. Lawrence goes from a tolerated out of necessity officer to having a command with no logical explanation of how it happened. Having attained a command he tolerates insolence and insubordination from the officers under him to keep from making waves which is completely out of character for him. He is in the position he is in at the beginning of the book because he does what he feels to be right despite the consequences. One officer under his command even has a sword to Lawrence's throat at one point and suffers no consequences that we know of. Then we spend time on things that are irrelevant to the overall story like the recovery after the duel, the other duelist trying to take advantage of the young woman in the farmhouse etc. I think the author tired of this series but had to finish it. I am sorry to see the end of the series but if this is the quality of what we are left to expect it is time to say goodbye.

Susanna - Censored by GoodReads says

3.5 stars. A reasonably satisfying end to a fun series.

Kathleen says

3.5 stars, with sublime narration. Thus endeth the storied glories of Temeraire the Celestial Dragon and his most honorable companion, Captain Laurence. And thus endeth Napoleon's relentless pursuit of world domination.

A fairly good story. Most of my hopes came true, even though I wasn't completely satisfied. Recommended series!

Quibbles: In Russia, the duel debacle went on and on, yet went nowhere. The pretty peasant girl scenes went nowhere. I'd have rather spent time with key characters from prequels, both dragons and humans. It made little sense for Laurence to get a new crew for the most critical battles ever. We saw very little of Maximus and Lily and the old formation. The writing became choppy, skipping right over some key scenes. Temeraire never got to have his final showdown with the albino celestial, Lien. Laurence was cheated out of a solid gold victory by politics: Hammond, Talleyrand, and Meternich's machinations. Temeraire and Iskierka's egg hatched, but I was disappointed in the dragonet Ning, despite her fearsome abilities.

What did I hope for, you ask? See my original "wish list" below. I won't spoil it by checking off the items that actually occurred, but quite a few did, one way or another.

The long-awaited sequel to Blood of Tyrants. I've been waiting on this frozen Russian cliff for so long, and my talon sheathes offer cold comfort. Why are there NO dragon pavilions in Russia? Only lots of ghoulish ferals, poor starving beasts.

I've been thinking — waiting here so hungry, so cold — where is that annoying Iskierka when we need her? The least she could do is fly over for the weekend and build up a blazing hot fire. In fact, send a whole league of dragons to finally rout Napoleon and his annoying Celestial albino, Lien.

Summon a league! Lily and her British formation, with Kulingile the colossal cross-breed. Arkady and the Turkistani ferals. South African beasts from Tswana. Some brightly feathered Incans from Lake Titicaca,

courtesy of Old Curicuillor and Churki. Call forth canny old Celeritas and clever Perscitia. Muster the sleepy dragons from breeding grounds everywhere, including Dyhern's Prussian heavyweight, Eroica. With the Emperor's Chinese dragons, we'll have a league. A bloody league, to wipe Napoleon right off the map!

Announce the call to muster! Send out Lung Shen Li, that super-fast new messenger breed from Tongues of Serpents. Then we shall see!

And when you finally publish this book -- my memoirs -- do remember to provide a perfectly lovely life for dear Laurence and Tharkay. And for Granby, of course (but no more gold for that greedy Iskierka!) We must redeem my friend Ferris, too. And Laurence says we must not forget about Forthing, but do give him a clean shirt.

Nor have I forgotten about my cross-bred egg, waiting to hatch in China! Do write a happy future for my first progeny. And pray be kind to dear Lady Allendale, in England! And to Mei, my beautiful and brilliant imperial amour.

If Laurence must marry, I suppose Jane will do. But I'd rather keep him to myself, and he can breed with Jane whenever they wish. Why, whatever could be wrong in that?

Pray, don't forget to pay us, and drape great golden medals on our chests, and pave wider roads for us. Make us full citizens. Give us the vote. And pavilions, with heated floors, and soaring roofs, and — oh — do pray include great spouts of warm water to shower upon us. That would be of all things splendid. (Only go see how they look in China.)

Of course I shall be happy to take a seat in Parliament. Is there a House of Nobles? Perhaps of Noble Dragons.

Jessica says

Of course I loved it. The last Temeraire! How could I not? And Ning! So great! And so many ends tied up nicely! And Jane and Lawrence back together (as much as they ever are)! Yay!

If you haven't read this series, please, please do. It's a must for history buffs, fantasy buffs, dragon buffs, people who just love fun stories!

Kitvaria Sarene says

I can't believe that's the end... I'm gonna miss Lawrence and Temeraire!

I did really enjoy the story, but the end did feel a bit rushed. At first it felt like there was so much left open, and then just like a flick of the fingers it's all over and there's some "what happened after". I wish there'd been some more depth to the last pages as it is the final book in the series.

Also this one has the first written out sex scene. I did like the series for NOT having romance or sex. (besides some implied scenes). And it had me wondering... As he is a bit "fast" and then apologising for being like a

schoolboy (and making up for it with his hands...) - where might he have gained his experiences, as he wouldn't endanger a ladies reputation, hates it when a rich guy tried to seduce a farm girl, and he is against the use of whores... *hm*

I really could have passed on that thoughts. ;)

All in all still a really entertaining read, and while not all I hoped for in the finale it was definitely fun to read!

Susan says

I have NEVER read anything that screamed 'I'm bored of this series and want it to be OVER' as much as this book. I've read books where the author was clearly bored of the universe (hello GRRM, Lynn Flewelling) and it just became kinda long winded or bland, but none of them have actively dropped the ball like *this did*. This was so disappointing it circled around from being a terrible experience to one that was entertaining to bitch about. Like, how much lower could it go??? But that disappoints me too! That's not at all what I wanted from a Temeraire book, let alone the final one.

I have a lot to say, so I will start with the things I liked. I did like how appropriately terrifying Ning was, and the fate of Napoleon, Lien and France. I did like the broad strokes of the ending, where dragons now have seats in Parliament, where the Inca and Tswana Empires ended up strong and represented, and where Novik gave me the 'Laurence, Temeraire and Tharkay live together' fanfic ending

But then there were many, many things that disappointed me. Overall, this entire book was just a lot of... well written, vaguely entertaining nothing, at best, and interminable, badly written nothing at worst. For the final book, the plot should be a tight and focused tie-up of all the loose ends of the previous books, culminating in an exciting climax! Rather, we got a meandering exploration of a bunch of new elements in a half-assed manner.

Part One was the vaguely entertaining, still well written nothing. I expected a much more dramatic portrayal of *that winter*, following through with *that* cliffhanger by giving me a dramatic opening. Instead, it cut to black, Tharkay left offscreen, Laurence had one battle, the aftermath fizzled out... into a strange comedy of manners that went nowhere, had no prior investment from the readers and had no further impact on the plot. Part Two was the most enjoyable, wherein it featured a lot of previous elements while forwarding the plot... but it was less than 100 pages, and it ended in another lazy cut to black. Novik could have easily used the pages she spent on the Lithuanian peasant girl describing their flight across the channel, fighting the Fleur-de-Nuits. Easily.

It all just spiraled into a bunch of boring nothing from there, and the last half of the book. The biggest failings of this book lie in this part, wherein it lacked entirely what made Temeraire an enjoyable series to read - exciting build up and action sequences, and fun moments from the established cast of characters. It should have been so exciting! Like the climax of Victory of Eagles! But it was just meandering and uninterested! I am adamant that Novik should have cut this plot about the mutinous captains - new characters only introduced in the second half of the last book, so, WHO CARES - under Laurence's charge and trying to supply the dragons with porridge and whatever the fuck else, and had it been Laurence (or, maybe, you know, his superior, Catherine Harcourt...) with the formation, Granby, Demane and Tharkay leading the Prussian campaign.

Literally no familiar characters were around from the last 40% of the book to the last 20 pages, and that was so disappointing. So, so many characters and subplots have been put into this series and weren't at all satisfyingly resolved. The Harcourt Formation got crumbs - sorry, how did Granby get Admiral over these guys, all his seniors and/or direct superiors? and where DID Granby go? I'm stunned Laurence didn't get a nice final scene with him, like, no character other than Tem and Laurence have been around as long as Granby. Ferris disappeared by the second half, to my immense disappointment - I had really hoped this book would have him finally get some NICE THINGS in his life. Emily and Demane were being very nicely built up in the previous books and we get nothing about how they're doing. Siphos was not even mentioned - even a line from Laurence about how amazing his essays are at school, ANYTHING, to maybe resolve the fact that for about FOUR BOOKS we got snippets from the books Siphos wrote as an adult.

The most blatant non-resolution was Tharkay. Sorry, I mean Tharkay the International Super Spy???? I had to check with a friend that I hadn't literally forgotten or skipped this info being given in a previous book, because... ??? what? sure I can *believe* he's been a spy all this time but... it's been six books and *he's been a spy all this time* and IT NEVER CAME UP? OKAY? for who? how long? nope none of those questions got answered and never will. And never mind that, Tharkay *literally* disappeared after part 2! altho clearly that is why he kept leaving without saying goodbye, or the book even mentioning him leaving, is because he is a sneaky spy!! I guess it's nice that this lawsuit got resolved I GUESS.

Oh wait never mind Tharkay. LIEN. The main antagonist! Even more dastardly than Napoleon! She had ONE SCENE with lines in this book, I cannot BELIEVE.

So, there's all these characters I can think of off the top of my head who got hardly any mention, but...

Dryhern got loads of page time and *Edith* got a lovely final scene with Laurence? Okay? Sorry, but who the fuck asked for that. I doubt anyone would have read this book and gone 'wow where is Edith, why did we get all those scenes with Maximus and Lily - really dropped the ball there Naomi!!!' What are these priorities?

I was glad Perscitia and Requiescat came back, though, that was nice.

So, okay, Novik, you're obviously into military history, and so am I! But the ninth book of a series should really resolve things for characters too! This really lacked the lovely and funny character moments this series usually has loads of, and really lacked a satisfying conclusion of all of their arcs - hell, even a furthering of their arcs. The only big, significant development and resolution for me was that Granby was confirmed to have long hair at last. Amazing.

Speaking of disappointing, the amount of jumps and cut-to-blacks happened in action and plot scenes. There was no huge thrilling climax. Novik, if you're going to go full on military fiction on me, make it interesting - instead it was genuinely poorly written. Tharkay disappeared, Granby teleported across the British Isles within a chapter... the final confrontation between Temeraire and Lien, built up from the *second book* CUT. TO. BLACK. I believed that was solely the kind of genuinely *bad* writing for self-published M/M "fantasy" books like *Crescendo*, not *Temeraire*.

So where do I think it all went wrong? I think, honestly, Novik had way too many characters plot points to resolve and absolutely no interest in resolving them. I genuinely wondered how she was going to resolve everything in this book, but I didn't expect it to be resolved like THIS, with a kind of "_(?)_/" shrug. I think that's a fault of the trajectory in which she has been taking the entire series since ToS, wherein increasingly she has been failing the balance the three big plot themes: the Napoleonic Wars, Dragons Rights and European Colonialism. I've always said this, but the series was at its strongest when the Harcourt Formation and the Napoleonic Wars were featured most predominately; and not coincidentally, these were the most important plot points in the first book. Now, I really liked the plots exploring colonialism, and Dragons rights! I thought they were a good touch, and liked how the books after VoE, while not being as high in quality, built on what was explored by Tharkay's character in BPW and the Tswana in EoI - that Novik committed to and carried out this examination of non-European countries in the 19th century to the point where Western Imperialism and Dragon exploitation became the secondary antagonistic forces in the

series, alongside Napoleon and Lien. While not the most compelling parts of the series to me, I appreciated it. It challenged our protagonists' values and beliefs, and it created a fun alt-history dynamic to the series. But... they *were* mostly travelogues, to explore how dragons lived all over this alt-history world. Which was... cool? but could have just been put in a 'Dragonology' type side book, instead of ultimately creating a bunch of... filler books, where nothing was *really* progressed other than one or two major things, like Anahuarque and Ning. (I did ultimately like books 6-8 because of the really fun *character moments* we got, *though*)

Honestly, I think the ending of this series would have been vastly better if the first two parts of BoT were cut, and we had two final books focusing entirely on the Russian Campaign and the eventual defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. I'm tempted to say the same of CoG and the Incas, even though I really like Anahuarque. The entire series has always wandered between being a character-driven post-colonialist travelogue and straight up military alt history, but it hasn't been very well balanced in the last few books at all. Novik put a lot of odd emphasis on elements that weren't really present beforehand, especially in this book - she really should have recognised what made the first few books successful, like, dramatic fight scenes, rather than military planning, and mad sure this book really capitalised on that. But I don't think she cared.

I'm also going to Discourse over Laurence/Jane and Laurence/Tharkay. Because I'm a huge queer and *goddamn it* Novik.

I'm sorry, there's literally no way to see Naomi Novik's fanfiction account - in which she's written over 300 porny male/male slash fics - and then look at the multitude of scenes between Laurence and Tharkay and think 'she was writing these with the intent of portraying them solely as good friends'. Any other author, sure. But Novik was very deliberately writing scenes with queer subtext. and you know what, I thought that was great fun! I need my fantasy books to be gayer - what a pleasant surprise!

Funnily enough, these scenes increased in frequency around the same time as all romantic/sexual elements of Jane and Laurence's interactions seemed to disappear. In my review of BoT I said I was genuinely surprised when a character referred to them as lovers in present tense, because I had stopped thinking of them as such *books* ago.

so, I genuinely believed this story would end in a very open ending in regards to romance - if not actively having Tharkay and Laurence, like, settle down together, at least have their futures going along the same path. Which did happen! I was vaguely pleased with that! However, it would have been amazing for Novik to have actually *gone there*, because it's 2016 and portraying a queer relationship shouldn't be shocking - and she was clearly building some kind of subtext.

I did NOT expect Naomi Novik to actively go 'no homo!' and resurrect the Jane/Laurence plot, that no one really cared about anymore, with the series' *only* explicit sex scene, halfway through the book, with no build up or any follow through. I tend to read too fast, and when Laurence got his huge erection for Jane at the end of their pages-long discussion of military matters I had to double-take. Um?? it was not well executed at all. And you know what, this is actually the textbook definition of queerbaiting, and shame on Novik. Even with the ending it was still crumbs for the ~shippers compared to, once again, as always in the history of the universe, what the straights get. Even though she ended this series with Laurence deciding to live with Tharkay, did she place this elaborate explicit sex scene mid-way through the book just to assure us all there's NO WAY Laurence could be queer nah? What was the actual point? No endgame romance actually resulted from these explicit sexy times, and it wasn't very interesting. Napoleon expressed more deep affection for Laurence than Jane. It didn't develop anything, we're just right where we were in book 1.

How dare she pretty much exclusively write gay porn for her fanfiction yet actively reject the possibilities of queer protagonists in her published works, lest it possibly affect her professional prospects! queer stories are clearly only worthy of being published in a dark corner of the internet! god I lost a lot of respect of her over this. I genuinely do not know what her intent behind these scenes were.

And in addition, I honestly don't know why we cut a cut to black on Iskierka and Temeraire vs three Fleur-

de-Nuits and Temeraire vs Lien when this unnecessary sex scene was so lovingly written out. It was a few hundred words that could have been used better elsewhere.

This is way too long and in depth critical, how embarrassing. This review is my Tyra Banks rant. I'm just really disappointed; it was a boring, ill-resolved, queerbaiting mess, and I *know* Novik can do better. All in all I'd still really, really recommend this series to people (I even did so at work the other day, hah) but genuinely, stop reading at Tongues of Serpents and pretend Laurence and Temeraire retire in the Blue Mountains. Or at the end of Blood of Tyrants, and then pick up some non-fiction about the final years of the Napoleonic Wars, insert dragon battles mentally, then go read some post-canon Laurence/Tharkay on AO3, Naomi's very own website!

EDIT: for everyone reading this thinking/commenting saying I'm reading too much into Tharkay and Laurence's relationship, Novik pretty much confirmed there was *something* from Tharkay's side in Golden Age and Other Stories. There is nothing heterosexual about this.

K. says

Trigger warnings: war, death as a result of war, death of a parent. I think that's all?

3.5 stars.

I always forget how long it takes me to get through these books... I picked this one up expecting to fly through it, and then LOL NOPE it took me four freaking days to plough my way through. It probably didn't help that I read book 8 approximately forever ago and had forgotten almost everything that happened in books 4-8 due to only owning books 1-3. But whatever.

Was it a satisfying conclusion to the series? Yes and no. Yes in that it wraps up the Napoleonic war side of things very nicely, and I actually really enjoyed the way Napoleon's story played out. But no in that I wanted more of the characters I knew and loved from the first three books and a more conclusively happy ending for the protagonists in particular, but also a bunch of the secondary characters.

So in short, it came out at enjoyable but largely forgettable, unfortunately.

Marina says

3.5

C'est fini.

I'm not entirely sure how to feel about this series. It has been a mixed bag of nine books, some of which were fantastic and others so bad I nearly gave up the series. Overall, however, I think I like the idea of the Temeraire series better than the actual series. Because while I really, really liked the concept, the execution left a lot to be desired.

This final novel, League of Dragons, was just okay.

The readers who have stuck with the series for the last ten years will mostly likely be slightly disappointed after waiting so long. It has been a long journey and while there is closure for a lot of the issues that our heroes have faced along the way, I definitely felt cheated out of others.

For example, the Western governments are finally willingly to recognize that dragons are sentient beings that deserve respect, and not just brutal beasts to be used as you would a trained dog. On the other hand, the reader does not get to see the final showdown between Lien and Temeraire. I thought maybe it was left out of the ARC, but I noticed other reviewers saying the same thing. Novik just skips forward in time just as they're about to engage and we are only told that Temeraire defeats her, but not how, or what it involved. Which is a real cop-out on Novik's part, considering we have been building up towards this event since book two. Besides, I'm fairly certain Lien would have fought to the death rather than be captured. It feels like Novik just didn't know how to write it, which is really strange considering she spent over a decade on this series. I mean we get a stupid duel and waste the beginning with a peasant girl and Novik spending half the book reminding us just how tragically honorable Laurance is - only to later have him undertake something criminal. It was a real let-down.

Besides that, there was again a lot of politics - some of which were really fascinating and others really boring. And not really enough action, I was expecting for the final stand to take most of the book, but it barely takes a 1/5, with other skirmishes here and there, meant to distract from the main plot - which I thought was really unnecessary at times.

There also appears to have been only slight character development overall for the heroes. The dragons remain somewhat petulant yet intelligent toddlers, while Laurance is stubbornly, at times, stupidly honorable - which was sometimes more irritating than endearing. There's a difference between being honorable and a doormat. The strange thing was that we barely see very important characters from earlier on in the series and instead (once again) get a bunch of new ones that no one needed or appreciated. Lily, Max, Kulingile, Arkady and the Turkistani ferals, where were they? They barely if at all mentioned. Where is Demaine? What of his relationship with Emily (who even if she is practically an officer, was barely mentioned and you forget she's even there!)? I mean Jane mentions that she's fine with it, but others might not be, and that's that. His brother isn't even mentioned once the two brothers leave. I mean, she felt the need to bring back Edith and hint that she and Laurence may pick up where they left off, but we don't get to see loyal friends and people who have stuck by Laurence?

Overall, I'm somewhat mollified with the ending, but I expected more. So much more.

Okay, okay, I feel like the luckiest reader in the world. You know why?

Because I literally just started reading this series a month ago. Then I find out it's not done yet and I panic mildly, but then I relax when I find out that the next book comes out in June. But something makes me check and I look at when the last book was published, and the wait between them was three years!!! I can't believe early fans had to wait three years for this book!

And here I am, a boob, just got into the series and then I see the Arc of this one after I finished the 8th one and I'm like Holy Shit. So, I request it, then go on twitter and subtweet my hopes to the publisher in hopes

they'll approve me, and VOILA. They did.

I'm a lucky, lucky girl. Will post review as soon as I finish, probably a couple of days.

Dianne says

Okay, just weird...I KNOW I read this....and yet....????????????????

Emily says

I really wanted to love this book, and parts of it were great (like Temeraire and Iskierka scheming about saving their egg), but other parts were so long and drawn out and ultimately had no point (like the duel and the stay at the farmhouse). I listened to 80% of this as an audio book and then when I started on the ebook I was shocked that the end was so close and it didn't seem like anything was ramping up to an ending. Sure enough, the ending felt rushed and I didn't get the closure I wanted (view spoiler).

I also wish that we got more of a goodbye with some of the characters like Iskierka and Granby and Emily/Demaine.

PS - the guy that reads this series for the audiobooks is fantastic. It's the only time where I have gone out of my way to listen to a book versus reading one.
