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Shadows Of The Empire (War Of The Magi Book 1)



Synopsis

Out of the darkness emerges a young girl who can save the world – if the empire doesn't kill her first. For her entire childhood, Zelda has only known homelessness, hardship, and hostilities toward her and the other magi. Fearing their powers, the empire and its citizens persecute magi without mercy or cause, believing them to be the greatest threat to humanity. But just south of the imperial capital lies an ancient dragon so deadly, legend says it can tear asunder an entire city in a single night. Soldiers cannot conquer it. Dragon hunters avoid it. Even magi fear it. Greed and fear, however, are driving powerful political figures to hunt the dragon. And in doing so, they may bring about their very end – unless Zelda and the other magi can look past centuries of genocide. Should the lust of those in power awaken this mythical monster, the world's only hope lies in the shadows of the empire.

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Customer Reviews

*I received a free ARC of the ebook in exchange for an honest review.**Shadows of the Empire* has everything you would look for in a traditional epic fantasy novel: magic, dragons, an unjust tyrannical ruler, the chosen one, orphans on journeys of growth and quests of legend. What makes *Shadows* particularly stand-out is the introduction and development of the two main characters, Zelda and Eric. The two fulfil all of the criteria for stereotypical fantasy protagonists, but Allen has managed to bring them to life as real individuals. The reader sees their thoughts and feelings; sees their strengths and weaknesses; watches them grow in ability, understanding and maturity as the plot progresses. The relationships depicted are also natural and develop at a realistic pace: bonds are not forged instantaneously but through getting to know people and respect them. The plot is gripping, well-written and well-paced, with plenty of tension, action and intrigue. Background information (such as the history of the empire, and the legends of the dragons) is filtered smoothly into the flow so as not to disrupt the reader's immersion in current events. The plot arc for this first novel in the series follows the characters as they begin to hone their skills to deal with the third greatest legendary dragon their world has to offer. It is evident how this will lead into the rest of the series, but the author also introduces a more subtle series-arc involving the segregation of magi from humans, the individual ambitions of certain individuals, and the question of whether means can justify ends if the final aim is peace for all. Cleverly, this first book ended in raising more questions than the few it answered: what motivates the dragons; how is the dragon-essence linked to the magic of the magi; what really happened to the legendary mage and his wife; why is Zelda different from other magi, and is Artemia telling the truth about what happened to Eric's family? Much like any serial drama, I guess we'll have to tune in to the next installment to find out!

Stephen Allen's *Shadows of the Empire*, book 1 of his *War of the Magi* Book 1 series, is a wonderful series start. It's Zelda is a great leading character, and is well drawn to reflect her young age (and to leave room to grow and develop in later books to come). She and Eric make a great team, and are just the ones to take on a legendary dragon (but I will stop right there as I don't want to spoil anything). This is really a great story, with an action packed and thrilling plot that's very well written and has a cast that's full of interesting characters. Highly recommended.

It is one of those books you can't or don't want to put down. All the characters are well rounded and you can relate to the good and bad in it. Zelda is definitely growing up and has more to do.

Impetuous as most of the young are, she makes some mistakes. Some with good results. :) Eric brings the total sum of being young with an aim to the front. Both Characters help make the book well worth reading! Great for both young adults and adults.

A fun action packed read! Characters are ones you enjoy reading about and the plot really keeps you on your toes. I received an advance copy of this free for an honest review.

ARC,Excellent book. Well written and engaging. Can't wait to read the next.

a must read for all those who love the dark side of magic

I started reading this, and didn't stop until I had finished it (except for a brief catnap) about 24 hours later.

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