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Battlemage (Age Of Darkness)



Synopsis

"I can command storms, summon fire and unmake stone," Balfruss growled. "It's dangerous to meddle with things you don't understand." Balfruss is a battlemage, sworn to fight and die for a country that fears and despises his kind. Vargus is a common soldier -- while mages shoot lightning from the walls of the city, he's down in the front lines getting blood on his blade. Talandra is a princess and spymaster, but the war may force her to risk everything and make the greatest sacrifice of all. Magic and mayhem collide in this explosive epic fantasy from a major new talent.

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Customer Reviews

Seriously. It was just okay. I can't understand why so many readers are giving this book five stars but, whatever. If it's the best book YOU have ever read, then good on you. For me, there were too many characters left undeveloped, nothing new with the plot or battles, and an overall sense of waiting for something to happen. And for a book that's titled battle mage, the whole magic thing seemed very weak and secondary to the book. All of that aside, it was a good enough book to read over a weekend....but I certainly don't think it deserves five stars.

Battlemage is a well written fantasy with a familiar but distinct set of magical systems. Vargus was the standout character for me, as I always wanted to stay with his point of view. Balfruss, despite getting top billing, seemed a little under-developed, and I hope to learn more about him in later books. My main criticism relates to the lack of insight into the thoughts of many of the characters. I would have liked to get to know some of Vargus' brothers much better. Instead I had to be satisfied with their few words and actions. They were still more engaging than the characters in 90% of modern fiction. One final note. The spy ring sub-plot seemed a little lack-luster. There were no true threats, no highs and lows. Even the climax at the church was quickly glossed over, as if the author wasn't that interested. Overall, this first novel by Aryan is of surprisingly high quality. I'll certainly be on the lookout for future titles.

The book is not engaging in any way. Except for the first chapter the story develops very slowly and without enough elements to keep you interested. The author keeps revealing surprises as the plot moves along but the lack of a main story and likable characters makes those efforts fruitless.

What a great first chapter this had. But after I was halfway through, it felt rather repetitive and some of the characters lost my interest, as did their individual storyline. Sorry Stephen Aryan. I wish I could have finished it. But after halfway through, you lost this reader.

This book was terrific and I recommend highly. It has great characters that are well written and flawed and not cliches. Great plot. Great storyline. One of the better books that I have read in a long time and I don't usually write reviews. And I read a lot....

This is the first book in the series and what an explosive introduction! Stephen Aryan has created a new fantasy world for us to find out about. He succinctly manages to introduce new characters, ideas, and areas without confusing us. The story flits between different people and places, each one beautifully adding another dimension to the whole story. This is masterly writing, instead of trying to explain each concept, we are lead along a multitude of winding paths with much left enticingly unexplained until a bit later. Saying this, some things are left unexplained - full stop; this just makes me want to read the next book to see what I discover in the future. The main characters are wonderfully described and seem well rounded with many faults - many of which had me laughing out loud. Even characters we only meet once are often briefly described to such a degree that I felt I had met them myself; the story never seemed to falter or drag though which made the book

enjoyable and exciting. If I have one criticism it's that distances seemed to be ignored with some people crossing from one capital city to another within a day - just by walking. This little thing though didn't stop me from enjoying the story to its fullest.

Stephen Aryan writes of an unnecessary war. A Battlemage (trade from Orbit which I bought as an ebook) known as Warlock has given the Mad Emperor a device that heals him instantly and used him to create an alliance to attack the country of Seveldrom. Though out-numbered there are thousands of troops and eight battlemages to oppose the Warlock, who has created battlemage like splinters to oppose them. Balfurss leads the battlemages and can work with their combined powers. The King's daughter, Talandra, manages a web of spies working to create revolution in the countries of the alliance. Behind the scenes are gods, who act as people, including one ordinary soldier whose mere presence builds morale. These are solid people under tremendous stress, striving to keep their very interesting world safe. I hope someone nominates this for an award. Review printed by Philadelphia Weekly Press

I'm hard to please when it comes to sword and sorcery/fantasy novels. What I look for is strong three dimensional characters, info-dump free world building, and a clearly defined magic system with rules and consequences. This book checks those boxes and adds unexpected layers of depth and complexity not normally found in the genre. The story is told from multiple perspectives: the battlemage Balfurss, the mysterious character Vargus with his Band of Brothers in the trenches, the king's spymaster Talandra and her top spy in the field. The transitions between the shifting perspectives are handled smoothly and are not jarring. The choices each character make for both good and ill have consequences both personally and for the world as a whole. The ending is satisfying yet leaves lingering questions and mysteries about what happened to the Grey Council of Mages. How will the separate kingdoms touched by the war rebuild?

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