

Temeraire by Naomi Novik.  
Voyager 2006.

Every so often a work of fantasy fiction comes along which is fresh, exciting and leaves the reader craving for a sequel! Temeraire is one such novel.

Set against the background of the British struggle with Napoleon, Temeraire has two heroes: one, Captain William Laurence, is human, and an illustrious naval sea-captain, the other, the eponymous hero, is a very rare breed of dragon known as a Chinese Celestial.

How the two meet, how they develop a close practical and emotional bond, how Laurence's life is changed by Temeraire, and the daring exploits in which they are involved, is the stuff of this book. To say more would be to give away details of the plot that each reader should encounter for themselves, but I can say that the story is rich and satisfying, and the major battle sequence is incredibly exhilarating.

This is a marvellous debut novel by a great talent and I eagerly await the follow up; there is much scope for Laurence and Temeraire, separately and collectively, to develop further.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh