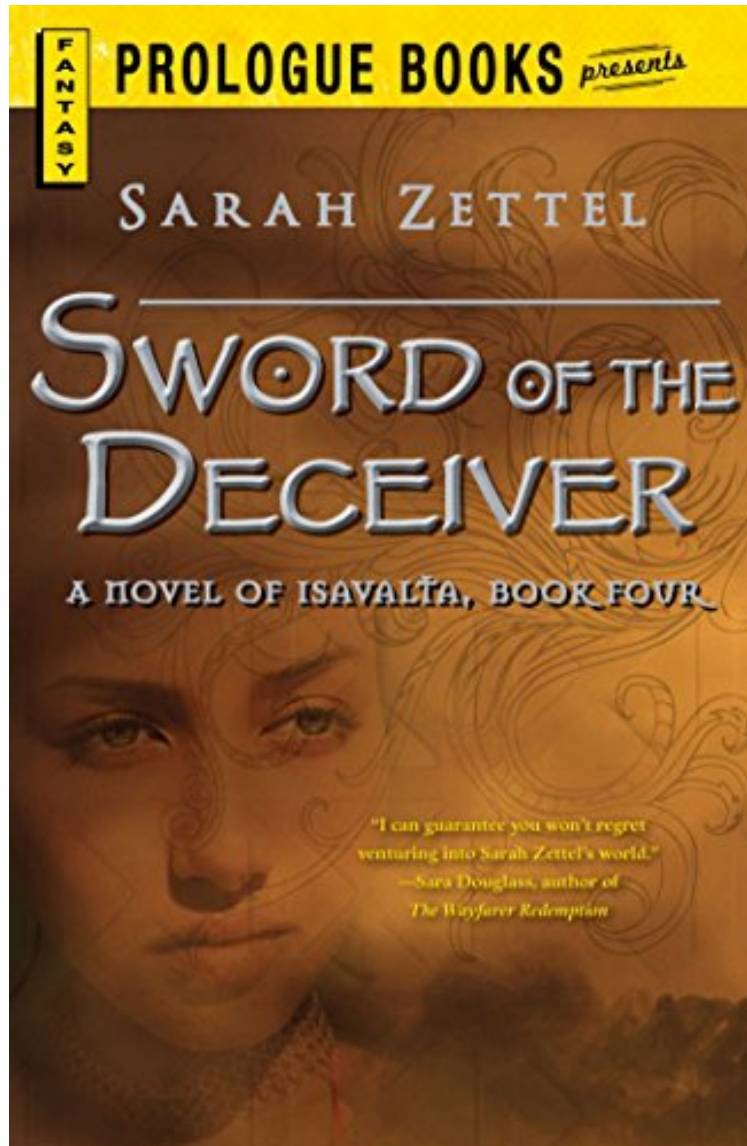


(Library ebook) Sword of the Deceiver: A Novel of Isavalta, Book Four (Prologue Fantasy)

Sword of the Deceiver: A Novel of Isavalta, Book Four (Prologue Fantasy)

Sarah Zettel

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Sarah Zettel : Sword of the Deceiver: A Novel of Isavalta, Book Four (Prologue Fantasy) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sword of the Deceiver: A Novel of Isavalta, Book Four (Prologue Fantasy):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Captivating storytelling!By CustomerI've been a fan of Zettel for years, and her writing just keeps getting better. This novel continues the trend.Set as a prequel to Zettel's other Isavalta novels, "Sword of the Deceiver" tells the story of Natharie, a "willing" tribute from her people to their rulers in

Isavalta. Once in the Palace of the Pearl Throne, Natharie finds herself in the middle of court intrigues and deceptions where she's never sure who to trust or what their underlying motives might be -- except that she herself is beginning to have feelings for Prince Samudra who, depending which rumors one believes, may be plotting to take over the throne. This is an incredible novel full of intrigue, adventure, romance, and magic. While the first 100 pages are a little slow setting up all the different plot lines (and there are MANY plot lines through every deception), once all the players are in place, the novel takes off. By halfway through, I stayed up all night to finish it. The book leaves open every possibility for a direct sequel, and I hope Zettel writes one instead of hopping around in time as she's done through the rest of the Isavalta novels. (I had hoped the same thing of the first Isavalta novel, "A Sorcerer's Treason," but alas, no sequel yet.) Natharie is a wonderfully complex and determined character, and Prince Samudra is truly heroic. These characters deserve many more tales.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Professor Kala Krishna
Great fun.
3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Wonderfully entertaining fantasy!
By BishSarah
Zettel's writing has improved progressively over the course of her "Isavalta" series, and the latest "Sword of the Deceiver" is by far the best yet. It is a charming, and at times gripping, tale of love, power, and the clash of cultures and religions. Although set in the same universe as the rest of the "Isavalta" series, the events in "Sword" precede the events in the other books, and because the focus is on the kingdom of Hastinapura, it stands well on its own; readers need not have read the other books in the series to enjoy this one. The story follows two main characters: Natharie, Princess of Sindhu, and Samudra, Prince of Hastinapura. Samudra, brother to the Emperor, is sent on a year-long mission to receive oaths of allegiance and tributes from Hastinapura's subject kingdoms. It is on this mission that he comes to Sindhu, where, having demanded a hostage from the royal family, he meets Natharie, who is the eldest daughter of the king and who has offered herself to save the younger members of her family. During her forced stay at Hastinapura, Natharie quickly learns that there is much more to Samudra than meets the eye, and the two develop a tenuous bond. But Natharie is also the target of Hastinapura's High Priest, whose religious fervor has caused him to single her out, as the people of Sindhu worship the Awakened One, and the people of Hastinapura worship the Mothers. And amidst all of this are the political power plays present in any court, and into which Natharie finds herself inextricably drawn. There are also several other side characters whose actions and decisions help shape the outcome of the plot, and this was one of the things that I liked about the development of the story in "Sword". Events did not seem contrived, but rather were the natural outcomes of perfectly reasonable decisions made by half-a-dozen different characters, all of which converged into an explosive ending. All characters were fleshed out well, and even the "villains" had their points that the reader had to respect. The plot unfolded at a good pace, and it was easy to sympathize with Natharie and Samudra as they worked through their respective struggles. The writing was very fluid, descriptive, and often beautiful to read. There were a few references to Indian myth in this novel, which I thought were aptly applied; some of the philosophical discourses were interesting to read as well. The only complaint I really had about this novel was the way the ending played out; I didn't feel like the central characters had much part in it, and considering that most of what happened was in direct response to them, it made it seem a bit disjointed. Also, some of the actions the characters take at the end didn't seem very believable, which was a departure from the way they were written earlier in the novel. But despite this, it was still a satisfying ending, and a read I would highly recommend.

For five hundred years, the great southern empire of Hastinapura has flourished, ruling the world of Isavalta with an iron fist. But nothing lasts forever . . . The day of her womanhood ceremony finds Princess Natharie of Sindhu happily celebrating with her family, joyfully awaiting her marriage to a prince of another realm. However, when the empire demands that her family send someone to court, Natharie realizes that she is the only one who can satisfy the emperors wishes. As Natharie spends time in the Hastinapura court, she learns of the empires bloodthirsty worship of the Mothers and of the intention of their high priest, Divakesh, to spread their worship beyond the empire - including into neighboring Sindhu - at any cost. These plots threaten to pit Natharies homeland against Hastinapura in a disastrous war. Appalled by the power and brazenness of the emperors brother, Pirnce Samudra, she realizes as each day brings war ever nearer, that the powerful prince may be her only hope to prevent a war that could destroy them all.

From Publishers Weekly
Zettel's satisfying conclusion to her Isavalta series (after 2004's *The Firebird's Vengeance*) illuminates the inner workings of the royal court of the Hastinapura Empire through the eyes of 19-year-old Princess Natharie of Sindhu, taken there as tribute from her father, King Kiet of the neighboring realm of Sindhu. Though women in Hastinapura are sequestered, they plot and peddle influence as deftly as the politicians, generals and priests who clamor for Emperor Chandra's attention. Chandra's honorable brother, Prince Samudra, does his best to influence his stern brother, but a year away carrying out diplomatic duties has weakened his own alliances at court. As Isavalta's nations chafe under Hastinapura's rule, Samudra and Natharie are caught up in a web of intrigue that could enmesh the land in all-out war. The fast-paced, complex story works well as a stand-alone and is sure to appeal to fans of both epic fantasy and romance. (Mar.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "I can guarantee you won't regret venturing into Sarah Zettel's world." --Sara Douglass on Sarah Zettel
Characters leap off the page with heart-wrenching emotions and daring choices. Zettel's world-building

continues to be faultless, blending Chinese, Indian and Russian folklore and magic into a cohesive and compelling whole. This is the touching tale of a mother's love, a journey of self-discovery and an enthralling adventure rolled into one." --Romantic Times on *The Firebird's Vengeance*"A finely drawn portrait of a strong woman's devotion to those who love her."--Library Journal on *The Firebird's Vengeance*"Zettel has enjoyed creating this multi-layered world, packed with inventive ideas and characters. Detailed descriptions of spell-weaving, gods inhabiting men inhabiting gods (honest) and a vixen goddess make for memorable images. Similarly, scenes of a city burning beneath a shrieking fire-god while its people flee in terror are punchy and vivid."--SFX on *The Firebird's Vengeance*"Complicated court intrigue is brought alive in a setting, enriched by research in Russian folklore and magiclore, for a very cleverly woven fantasy. A good read indeed."--Andre Norton on *A Sorcerer's Treason*"Ms. Zettel's confident treatment of her ambitious material shows just how entertaining the "grand tradition of Heinlein and Asimov" can be in sympathetic hands."--Gerald Jonas, *New York Times* on *Fool's War*