



The Soulstealer War

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Fantasy

<http://www.soulstealerwar.com/>

THE FIRST MOTHER'S FIRE is the first book in THE SOULSTEALER WAR series, written by W. L. Hoffman. Kenneth McNary, a recent graduate from law school, has been hiking along the Appalachian Trail when he is contacted by a powerful being named the First Mother (A goddess? Mother Nature? THE God?). She transports him to another world and tasks him with uniting the people to prepare for an upcoming war that threatens to demolish all life. In doing so, Ken finds himself imbued with magical power to aid in his quest.

The quest isn't an easy one. The few humans on the world are treated like slaves to the Eldar, a near-immortal race of beings who have lost their magic. Also, every time Ken uses his magic, it takes a toll on his life force.

Mr. Hoffman, you had me at the Boris Vallejo cover.

I kid, of course. Though I fell in love with the cover, the real treat is the story itself.

The old *fish-out-water* scenario has been a tried and true plot device in a lot of fantasy series. However, the difference here is that Ken isn't a leper, a soldier, or a widower. In fact, he really has no personal baggage. He's just a young intelligent man whose two main skills are surviving in the outdoors and using his brain when it counts.

I really found that unique in the typical fantasy-hero archetype. Ken spends a lot of time throughout the story contemplating how magic and science operate in the world. He strives to unite people to each other not by faith or by brute force, but by intelligent arguments using logic.

However, don't worry dear reader...there's plenty of action to behold.

Clocking in at fewer than three hundred pages, THE FIRST MOTHER'S FIRE is a quick read and never overstays its welcome like more than a few ponderous fantasy books tend to do. What really sets this book off from other fantasy books is that it's a book that has *ideas*.

This is one of the best fantasy books I've read within the past couple of years and I eagerly await the second book of the series.