

# Firethorn



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Introducing a mesmerizing debut in the rich tradition of Marion Zimmer Bradley—a passionate tale of love and war, honor and vengeance, in which the gods grant a common girl uncommon gifts…

Before she was Firethorn, she was Luck, named for her red hair, favored by the goddess of Chance. A lowborn orphan, Luck is destined to a life of servitude. But when her mistress dies, Luck flees to the forest. There she discovers the sacred firethorn tree, whose berries bring her fevered dreams, a new name—and curious talents. Transformed, she emerges from her exile a young woman with powers beyond her ken.

Firethorn has changed, but her world has not…until one chance encounter alters her destiny forever. In the chaos of the UpsideDown Days, when the highborn and the low trade places, Firethorn couples with Sire Galan, a highborn warrior. Emboldened by desire and her own restlessness, she follows fate and Galan to camp with the king’s army. But their unspoken love has no place in a brutal world ruled by caste and violence, and a dark future threatens from the shadows. Living among soldiers, concubines, and wastrels, and faced with a series of tormenting challenges, Firethorn will have to rely on the enigmatic gifts Fate grants her to survive—body and soul.

“A sweeping adventure saga as mystical as it is raw…this hypnotic tale of passion and survival will resonate with sophisticated readers of both sexes.”

–Publishers Weekly (starred review)

“A great piece of gritty, feminist fiction, distinguished by a heroine whose vulnerabilities and fresh voice as narrator make her easy to love.”

–Booklist (starred review)

“Engrossing, suspenseful and uncompromising…will seduce even reluctant readers.”

–SciFi Weekly, A-pick

“Micklem’ s majestic and powerful debut, the first volume of a fantasy trilogy, introduces a compelling heroine with a strong, original voice. A sweeping adventure saga as mystical as it is raw, the novel is also a biting commentary on violence and its effect on relationships defined by a caste system. Enriched but not defined by the influences of many cultures (Celtic, Norse, Egyptian, etc.) and authors as diverse as Marion Zimmer Bradley, Ursula K. LeGuin, Mary Renault, Jean Auel, Margaret Atwood and, yes, even Tolkien, this hypnotic tale of passion and survival will resonate with sophisticated readers of both sexes.”

–Publishers Weekly (starred review)

“Gritty, sinewy, exceptionally well researched, and highly impressive.” – Kirkus Reviews

“A great piece of gritty, feminist fiction, distinguished by a heroine whose vulnerabilities and fresh voice as narrator make her easy to love.”

– Booklist (starred review)

“Engrossing, suspenseful and uncompromising, this is a novel that sets a great story into motion, leaving readers eager for the next chapter.…Its story is so complex and compelling that it will seduce even reluctant readers.”

– SciFi Weekly , A- pick

“ ‘Expect the unexpected’ may sound like a stale cliché, but applied to the future volumes of this trilogy, and the future career of Sarah Micklem, it becomes both a lure and a promise.” –Locus, New & Notable Book

“A fully realized world, full of grit and beauty, hungers of every kind, and gods who are either remote or meddlesome. She takes the time to let relationships develop and events unfold, giving us the sense of having lived and loved our way through Firethorn’ s world. Micklem makes a worthy bid to be ranked with Robin Hobb, Mary Renault, and George R. R. Martin as a brilliant creator of realistic, character-centered fantasy. My only complaint is that the second book isn’ t out yet.” –Orson Scott Card, author of *Ender’ s Game*

“This is a stark and splendid novel. But the most astonishing thing about it is the suppleness of the style—almost no one writes a first novel this graceful. I look forward

to whatever she does next.” –Robin McKinley, author of Sunshine

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