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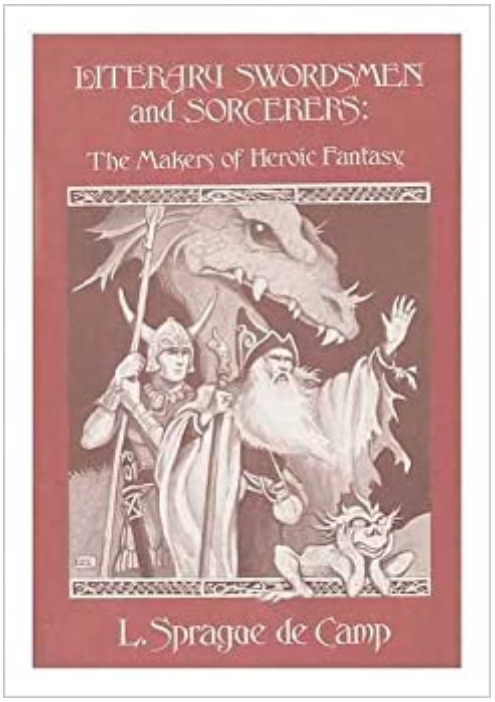

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Customer Reviews

Literary Swordsmen and Sorcerers is Sprague de Camp's history of the fantasy genre. De Camp was a minor fantasy writer himself, best known for his completions of Howard's Conan remnants and his collaborations with Fletcher Pratt. The book focuses on a handful of seminal figures, i.e. Howard, Tolkien, Eddison, TH White, Lovecraft, CA Smith, Pratt, and William Morris, in about 50 page critical biographies. In this way, it serves as a good complement to Lin Carter's Imaginary Worlds, which aims for an exhaustive listing of minor figures and analyzes the trends in the publishing industry.While exhaustive biographies of all these individuals have since been published, excepting perhaps Pratt and Smith, these biopics are useful the reader who doesn't want to get too bogged down in the details of any individual's life. Plus, for me at least, de Camp has an engrossing philosophical mind and reading him is always rewarding. His analysis of the metaphysics of Eddison's Zimiamvia was most amusing to me!Also, this book was published by Arkham House, the legendary small press, founded by August Derleth, that first brought Lovecraft into book form! These books tend to become collectible, so buy with confidence. Mine has already jumped in price from where I bought it ;)

This is a strange book - its quite old and dated (filled with alot of references and language that modern readers will find off-putting) but the content is great, and its a great look into the lives of the early pioneers of fantasy.

Since De Camp's book is over 30 years old it is understandably a little dated but it's still a good and informative read. The only complaint I have is the inclusion of H.P. Lovecraft as a "Sword and Sorcery" writer when it's obvious that he's more of a horror or dark fantasy writer. I suppose De Camp couldn't help but include him since he was in the midst of writing a biography of Lovecraft at the same time he was writing this. One can't help but wonder what De Camp would think of the current explosion in popularity of fantasy in both film and prose. I imagine that he would be amazed by the incredible popularity of Rowling's Harry Potter books as well as the fact that the film version of "LOTR: The Return of the King" went on the win the Oscar for best picture.

This book is a great short introduction to modern authorsof fantasy such as Tolkien, etc. Well-written, short essaysabout these authors are perfect for the modern reader, oftenpressed for time. I can't believe that no one else hasreviewed this wonderful book. Buy this book - a bargain!

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