



Winterling

Sarah Prineas

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“We live here, my girl, because it is close to the Way, and echoes of its magic are felt in our world. The Way is a path leading to another place, where the people are governed by different rules. Magic runs through them and their land.”

With her boundless curiosity and wild spirit, Fer has always felt that she doesn't belong. Not when the forest is calling to her, when the rush of wind through branches feels more real than school or the quiet farms near her house. Then she saves an injured creature—he looks like a boy, but he's really something else. He knows who Fer truly is, and invites her through the Way, a passage to a strange, dangerous land.

Fer feels an instant attachment to this realm, where magic is real and oaths forge bonds stronger than iron. But a powerful huntress named the Mór rules here, and Fer can sense that the land is perilously out of balance. Fer must unlock the secrets about the parents she never knew and claim her true place before the worlds on both sides of the Way descend into endless winter.

Sarah Prineas captivates in this fantasy-adventure about a girl who must find within herself the power to set right a terrible evil.

Winterling Details

Date : Published January 3rd 2012 by HarperCollins (first published January 1st 2012)

ISBN : 9780061921032

Author : Sarah Prineas

Format : Hardcover 248 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Childrens, Middle Grade, Young Adult, Magic

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From Reader Review Winterling for online ebook

Maud says

Second read: 2018/ 4 stars.

I decided to reread this book because I was participating in the ReRead-A-Thon and I also recently bought the sequels to this series. I knew vaguely what happened but not enough to feel ready to just jump into the second book. So a reread was needed.

I think I enjoyed this book more the second time I read it. I still really enjoy Fer, I really like that she is a vegetarian. It's not something that you see often in middle grade and if you see it, it can be a bit preachy which is not something that like even though I'm a vegetarian. Sarah Prineas weaves it into the character of Fer seamlessly though, it's part of who Fer is and I really enjoyed seeing it.

The world is really interesting though I kinda would have liked to see more of it. Most of the book is Fer walking around the camp with either the Lady or Rook. I feel like we have just scratched the surface of this world and I really hope that the sequels will let us explore it a bit more.

The plot was a lot of fun to reread to my amazement. Knowing what happened and what is going to happen made it so much more fun to see it all unfold slowly, seeing characters pick up hints, connect the dots, act upon the things that they learnt.

First read: 2015. 4 stars.

Watch my full review here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVeu5...>

Such an interesting world with such an interesting main character! Fer was great to follow around, I love her as our main character. She has interesting thoughts, rituals and motives for doing the things that she does. The world where she is sucked into is also pretty amazing, with loads of different creatures! The whole mystery about her parents was pretty obvious to me but even though it was cool to find out how it all exactly went down.

Jasmine says

Excellent serious middle grade fantasy, full about loyalty and family and healing. (I say serious not because it's grim but because it's not a laugh-a-minute, you know.) If you're looking for a fae book with tricky, murderous fairies, which as I know is a subset of genre that always needs more entries, this is a good one.

Mari says

This was a solidly OK book. The characters had potential, but felt flat. The flap told me to expect "boundless curiosity and wild spirit" from Fer, the main character. Honestly, this description had more spunk and energy than I felt while reading the text.

I'm having a hard time writing this review because I REALLY wanted to love this book. After all, both Ingrid Law (author of Saavy) and Kristin Cashore (author of Graceling) said lovely things that were quoted on the back cover. I'm a librarian, and of course, I know not every book is going to be a great fit for every reader. However, when 2 stellar authors recommend a title by writing a bit that gets used as publicity and marketing, I expect something more than just OK.

I am totally open to hearing from other avid fantasy readers who have read this one and loved it. Change my mind about it, please! Did you feel Fer's wild spirit as you read? Why was the plot compelling for you?

Maria Tag says

Winterling is a wonderful book that everybody should read. It's about a teenager named Fer who is an outsider in her own world. She has always felt like she hasn't belonged- in school, she has no friends, and kids relentlessly bully her. At home, she has an odd, strict grandmother under the name of Grand-Jane who doesn't let Fer go out and do anything, even explore the farmlands and woods safely in range of her own house. Fer is a prisoner to her own home. Fer, a free spirit, wanders off one day, sick of Grand-Jane's oppressive rule. She finds a normal-looking pool surrounded by normal-looking terrain. Nothing special. But when she looks more closely at the moonlit pool on that one fateful night, she notices something out of place. The moon reflected in the pool is a full moon- not a crescent moon like the one actually hanging in the sky. Fer dips her fingers in the pool, and feels electricity, power pulse through her veins. Suddenly, a dog, pursued by several hideous wolves, tumbles out of the moon pool. Fer makes the connection- this pool is a portal, a way, to another dimension. She fights off the wolves, feeling some type of spiraling connection to the dog. Once the wolves are taken care of, Fer discovers who this "dog" and what the world on the other end of the moon pool actually is and embarks on an epic adventure. Winterling was an epic read. Nuff' said! Now onto Summerkin....

Brenan says

I seriously read this book in one day flat (I just couldn't put it down!). It was a really bad idea to fly through it so quickly, because now I've got that hollow "I know the length was perfect for this story, but I'm so hungry for more I wish it was two or three times longer" feeling.

As you may have guessed by now, I absolutely LOVED Winterling! =D I really, *really* hope she writes a sequel (or two or three, or maybe five or six) because I just have to know more! It's apparent that Sarah Prineas is very adept at giving you *just* enough info to whet your appetite, while leaving the story open enough that you're on the edge of your seat waiting for what's coming next. She's also excellent at utilizing third person to let the readers know more about what's going on than the main character does, which is an excellent way to increase tension. It worked perfectly!

The writing style of this book was a little difficult for me to adapt to at first (it's so different from the styles of many of the books I read, and enormously different from my own voice as a writer) but it only took me a few pages before I was hooked. I think adjusting to her unique writing style is the only complaint I have

about this book, and it really isn't much of a complaint at all seeing as I got used to it in only a few pages ^.^

As far as the story itself goes, the plot was fast paced, exciting, and incredibly imaginative. I loved every minute of it, and it kept me turning the pages. I'm writing a faerie story myself, and have therefore done a lot of research on traditional faerie folklore. Since it's so fresh in my mind, I can tell that Winterling was influenced by the traditional folklore, and I love how Prineas adapted it and used it to her advantage. The part the folklore played in the book was very faint, but it gave the story an authentic air that really brought the world in Winterling to life.

The characters were deep and complex, but this depth lied under the surface. She didn't put all their secrets and inner emotions out in the open, but you could tell that these secrets were pushing them to act. In other words, the characters were excellent. I could tell that Prineas knew a lot about her characters, and because of that she was able to write them in a very believable manner. They felt like real people, which is excellent.

All in all, I loved this book and I definitely recommend it. Winterling is the first book I've read by Sarah Prineas, but it definitely won't be the last =)

Karissa says

I got a copy of this book for review through the Amazon Vine program. It was a wonderful and magical middle grade fantasy full of adventure and magic. Something that can be enjoyed by anyone who loves fantasy and adventure.

Fer has always felt like she doesn't quite belong in this world. In the woods one night she rescues a boy, except the boy isn't exactly human. The boy invites Fer into the Way and into a dangerous fairyland. Fer feels strangely at home in this other place but senses that something is out of balance with the land and the huntress, Mor, who rules the land. Now Fer must unravel the mystery behind her past if she is to help prevent eternal winter from gripping both sides of the Way.

I loved this book. Fer is such a wonderful character, with her wandering in the woods she seems a bit fanciful at first...then she finds out this strange quirk is exactly what is needed on the other side of the Way. I loved the quirky elements like Fer's strange patchwork coat and her strange type of magic. I also enjoyed the fact that Fer is a strong heroine but different in her strengths than many heroines you see in fantasy literature.

Many of the other characters are a lot of fun too. Puck is a fun and complex male lead and some of the side characters (especially the Wolves) added a lot of fun to the story. I enjoyed that all of the characters were a little quirky and different.

I also loved the description in the story. Prineas writes in a way that really brings the mysterious wood alive. The plot was a bit predictable, but it was fun to read all the same. The story has such a dark fairy tale vibe to it. I love it when authors can imbue a traditional fairy tale feel to a book, but it comes off as something new and exciting.

Although the main part of the story is nicely tied up at the end, there are still a number of questions for Fer and Puck to answer. I look forward to seeing more of their tales in future installments of this series.

Overall I really enjoyed this book. It is a quick, fun, and magical read. Fer is a fun heroine, that is strong but

in a quirky way. I loved the fun characters, the way magic was blended with nature, and how the story had such a wonderful fairy tale feel to it. Fans of fantasy adventures with a fairy tale feel to them and a strong quirky heroine will find a lot to love in this story. For some reason this book reminded me a bit of *Plain Kate* by Erin Bow in tone and feel. This is an appropriate read for anyone middle grade or older.

Gergana says

Read on February 28, 2015

A very quick and cute read. My only problem with *Winterling* is that it's just too unbelievable for me. Oh no, not the magical world or the creatures inhabiting it. I found it very difficult to understand the characters who kept switching their mindset to conveniently further the plot.

For instance, in the beginning, Fer's Grandmother tells her she is in danger and that she shouldn't wonder around on her own, but wouldn't share why or from what Fer should be afraid of. Obviously, it's something awful, but you know how adults are - they just glare at you and act all mystical. Then a few pages later, when Fer decides to leave, her grandmother doesn't put any fight whatsoever, it's like she never really cared whether Fer actually goes to this magical place. She even shares all kinds of useful information and we still don't know what exactly changed her mind.

You might think that I am being too picky since this is a children's books, and you are probably right. *Winterling* is an enjoyable and fun read and **I am really glad to find a book with a strong-minded, adventurous and kind female protagonist**. Although it's not my cup of tea, I would definitely recommend checking it out if you enjoy children's books as much as I do.

Other middle-grade books that I enjoyed:

K says

I loved every moment of this book, and really the only thing holding it back from a four-star review is a lack of polish. Fer is an engaging character, and the world she inhabits has that magical, fresh quality about it I treasure so much in middle grade books. The world-building feels authentic, almost like if you look at the world in a different way it might even be real.

However, the book suffers from a lack of polish. Fer's situation with her grandmother, called Grand-Jane, is difficult and stifling and perhaps even slightly abusive: Fer is not allowed outside, and she never goes anywhere except for to her school, then to her bus, then to her home. Grand-Jane insists it is for Fer's protection, which sets up a really interesting conundrum where Grand-Jane genuinely believes she is keeping Fer safe, but at the same time she is harming her by, you know, keeping her isolated from the rest of the world. This is all well and good, but then, when Fer feels the need to run off to save the world, Grand-Jane acquiesces with little to no fuss. Fer's escape into the other world comes too easily.

A lot of things in *Winterling* come a tad too easily. I'm not sure how much of that is due to the page constraints on a middle grade book, and how much of that is due to slightly lazy writing, but half the time

Fer struggles and half the time Fer is almost handed things, making the book feel uneven and inconsistent. On a similar note, while Prineas writes gorgeous prose, she tends to use the same descriptions over and over and over, making the book repetitive.

Which, once again, isn't to say it was a bad book at all! I enjoyed it thoroughly, and I eagerly await the release of the sequel! It was a great story, rife with magic and power, as well as a coming-of-age narrative expertly woven together with action sequences. I intend on making most of my friends read the book.

Ahmed Ejaz says

Spring is about life and green buds and birdsong, not about hunting a living creature to a bloody death

Enjoyed it. Sarah Prineas wrote this book in such an imaginative way that.... Just WoW! Her imagination is great.

WORLDBUILDING

In this book we are not introduced to the world upto my expectations. As much as I remember, this book doesn't even tell us the name of the world. But still author has given enough to keep reading this book.

Rules of the World

This world has the rule of THREE. Three has the power. Like: the question asked three times must be answered, order given by someone three times must be obeyed... or many more. I don't want to spoil more.

World's Entrance

The entrance of this world is the pool named, Moon-Pool. This world is underneath the Pool.

This world contains Ways. Ways are like the doors to enter from one place to another inside the world.

CHARACTERS

Jennifer (first lead)

She lives with her Grandma near the Moon-Pool. Her Grandma is a Healer and Fer also.

Rook (second lead)

A puck, who can't befriend with anybody except for his own kind. Pucks don't trust anyone except for their own kind. They are not ruled by anyone. They are tricksters. They just make trouble and don't stay at one place for so long.

Mór (Villain)

She is huntress and the ~~illegal~~ ruler of the lands of the other side of the Moon-Pool.

Rook is sworn to Mór, for a reason. He has to do what she wants him to do. No matter he likes it or not.

OVERVIEW

Fer doesn't feel right about living in the human world. She thinks she doesn't belong here. One day she came across the Moon-Pool and finds that wolves are attacking the boy who is Rook. She saves his life. Rook offers Fer to go to the lands of the other side of the Moon-Pool. But she refuses as her Grandma warns her. But during these she finds a box in her house which is her dead father's box. She comes to know from the box that her father went to these lands. Her father was in love with the ~~true~~ Lady of these lands and hasn't returned yet. Now she is eager to know where her Parents are? Are they alive or not? Or moreover when she goes to these lands, she felt wrongness as well as attachment to these lands.

Wrongness is:

The winter is lingered for soo long. More than enough. Because of Mòr's evil deeds. Now Fer tries to right what is wrong.

RANDOM FEELINGS

=> Author should have given more details on the world. I was so intrigued by the world's concept. I liked reading it. I would have liked more if the more details were given.

=> Both leads are exactly the opposite. Fer is caring but Rook is not. Fer is friendly but Rook is not. Fer is reliable but Rook is not. And still they have feelings of friendship.

=> ***One thing I liked about Pucks*** : they are faithful to one another. They help one another in every matter.

One thing I hated about Pucks : they don't care about anybody except for their own kind. I think author was showing us that we should also be true to one another. To our own kind.

CONCLUSION

This book is just the beginning of Fer's journey. I think that's why author didn't give away more details on the world. This book was ended well and I think 2nd book will also be good because I will get to know more about the wordbuilding. I am hopeful after reading the synopsis of next book.

Thanks for your attention ! (^__^)

October 17, 2016

Hallie says

2012 you say?? That's a looong time from now. 2011 needs some Sarah Prineas!

[Dec 2011 update] has been preordered, from the US. November 8th in the UK? Sorry, Quercus, not a chance.

(See my profile for my 'policy' about rating books.)

I hadn't quite taken on board that this was a portal fantasy, rather than completely invented world like the Magic Thief books, so was very surprised when the protagonist thought about whether there'd be tofu for dinner. :) It's nice to know that Sarah Prineas can write this kind of world just as well as the invented kind. The book is full of familiar mythology redone in a slightly different way, or tilted - maybe the best way of describing it (for those who know the book) is the way Maree talks about looking through the magical glass in the windows in her uncle's house. Sorry - that'd be *Deep Secret*, by Diana Wynne Jones. I also loved both Fer and Rook, if not *quite* enough to steal my heart away completely from Conn. Yow though - it's depressing when you're reading a book and identifying painfully with the *grandmother* of the protagonist.

Can't wait for the next book in the series.

Cheryl says

Meh. Hits all the right buttons, what with the bold female lead, who is a healer and a vegetarian, the cute mysterious boy, the portal, the noble dead parents, etc. But, um, workmanlike? I never felt the heart. Not sure the author actually loves her characters and the world she's building, or if she just writes books.

And the fact that we always know more than Fer does is confusing; it's like one spoiler after another; we don't get to figure things out as we go along with Fer.

And I don't understand why the bringing of Spring needs an act of Power - is Winter default mode?

The ending is sufficiently tidy that if you're interested, you can read this without fretting about a cliffhanger that will push you to buy the next in the series.

Kathryn says

An enjoyable read. I felt immersed in the fantasy world, and really enjoy Prineas' style of writing. The characters were interesting, and Fer makes a good heroine--strong and confident (without it feeling like the author is trying too hard on the "girl power" front) but also empathetic and questioning. I really liked the character of Grand-Jane and wanted to know more about her; it's nice to see a book with an older character being such a central figure. The ending was a bit anticlimactic and unsurprising, and I was left with many of my questions unanswered. I realize it's a series, but I still felt some of the magical rules and world-building needed tidying up. But, all in all, it's a pleasing middle grade fantasy. Good for a winter read! I liked how much of the "magic" was with herbs and the focus was on healing. I also like how Fer is a vegetarian* and feels a strong connection to animals and a desire to help and protect them.

*I recommend this to vegetarians or other animal lovers with the caveat that there are two scenes of animals being killed that might be upsetting to sensitive readers.

Lisa says

When I asked my daughter how many stars to give this book, on a scale of one to five, she said ten. Thinking she'd misunderstood, because, well, she's eight, I reiterated that it was a scale of one to five. She exclaimed, "I KNOW! I meant it's OFF THE CHARTS!"

Gina (My Precious Blog) says

I'm s sucker for beautifully illustrated middle grade cover art. In fact, this was the draw for me to pick up this book. Luckily, the story was solid, too. Pitched as a middle grade fantasy, Winterling didn't fail to entertain, with evil villain called "The Lady", pucks, shape shifters and a magical land of fairy-like creatures, this story oozes fun. World building worked perfectly for the age group the story is intended for, not overly complex

but not completely simple either. The main character Fer is the perfect heroine. She's easy to like has a heart of gold and is quite fierce. A bit of an odd ball in her own world, once she's transported through the way, she becomes a completely different girl. I liked her determination and strong will. Fer was perceptive with a strong intuition. She knew wrong from right. Fer is very kind to animals too. The horse she's given by the lady, Phouka, is a bit unruly in the beginning. The Lady would like Fer to use a whip to make him mind. Fer refuses and instead wins Phouka over by kindness. They develop a sweet friendship over the course of the story. Puck, the shapeshifter, bound to The Lady, was a very loyal subject. He was a boy who held true to his word. This boy was witty and I admired how he would twist around his orders to help Fer, even though he was bound to The Lady. I felt sympathetic towards Puck because he always tried to push Fer away, not because he didn't like her but more because he was bound to the Lady and he knew he posed a terrible danger to Fer. Writing in this story felt magical. Vocabulary was moderate to advanced. This is a story which could easily be enjoyed by adults as well as children. Both boys and girls will find something to relate to in this story. It was a fast paced action packed read. There was a bit of mystery surrounding the disappearance of Fer's parents, plenty of suspense and little bits of magic. It was fun that Fer was a vegetarian, which is something I've not seen in other middle grade fantasy reads. Even though this book is the first in a series, I felt it ended very conclusively. My questions were all answered and the story resolved nicely. It certainly could be read as a stand alone, but I'm excited to be able to continue with the series so I can return to my favorite characters to see where the next story will take them.

Barb Middleton says

There's nothing like a nasty villain. A witch queen? A crow lady? Mor, the villain in this story, is all of those things, murdering the true heir to the land and stealing her magic thus causing the seasons to stop. Winter is constant and the only way to bring spring is to sacrifice an animal or human in a ritual known as The Hunt that renews Mor's power. Don't be fooled by the constant winter and thinking this is another Snow Queen. Mor is more closely linked to Morrigan from Celtic mythology, the battle Goddess who appears on the battlefield in the form of a crow and returns later to feed on the dead. This story is a potluck of myths and folklores that might have you thinking of the White Queen in Narnia, or Puck from A Midsummer Night's Dream or Sisters Grimm, or Odin's Hunt in Norse mythology, or Artemis from Greek mythology, or the Mother Goddess from ancient myths, to name a few.

The heroine, Fer, goes to Mor's land when she accidentally opens The Way pulling wolves who are chasing the shape-shifter Rook, (or Puck), into her world on Earth. Fer has never felt that she belongs on Earth and when The Way opens she is determined to visit it. She is living with her Grandma and knows that her parents went through The Way only to never return back to Earth. After traveling through The Way with Rook she meets Mor and discovers Mor not only knew her parents but was an ally.

Mor is covered in glamor, a magic that hides her true self, and allows her to manipulate people or animals by using crow feathers, touching skin, or binding promises. Fer can feel that something is wrong with the land but cannot figure out what it is. When people start to seek Fer's healing powers, she sees that they are turning into wildlings and losing their human-side completely. She knows something is wrong with the land and she is determined to find out what it is as well as what has happened to her parents.

Girl power abounds in this story with female characters of Fer, Fer's mom, Grand-Jane, Leaf woman, and Mor. The female-dominated roles made me think of myths of the Mother Goddess. Fer, the spunky, strong female heroine, is willing to stand up for what is right. She also insists that Rook has a choice even though he keeps telling her to not trust him because of his bondage to the Mor.

Rook is an interesting character who struggles internally because he's under the power of Mor. We find out that he's with the Mor because of Phouka but I never completely understood why except that Phouka helped Fer's father escape with Fer to Earth when she was a baby. I wanted to know more. I did want more answers to my questions such as how did her grandma become a healer? How did her mom become a healer? What really happened between her mom and dad? It would seem that the book is the first in a series.

This is a quick read compared to other fantasy books.
