



Love Begins in Winter

Simon Van Booy

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On the verge of giving up—anchored to dreams that never came true and to people who have long since disappeared from their lives—Van Booy's characters walk the streets of these stark and beautiful stories until chance meetings with strangers force them to face responsibility for lives they thought had continued on without them.

Love Begins in Winter Details

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From Reader Review Love Begins in Winter for online ebook

Kaloyana says

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Music allows us to face God on our own terms because it reaches beyond life.

Actually years mean nothing. It's what's inside them.

Trusting is harder than being trusted.

Going back somewhere at night is almost like haunting the world after death.

Grief is a country where it rains and rains but nothing grows.

While lies and deception destroy love, they can also build and defend it. Love requires imagination more than experience.

Solitude and depression are like swimming and drowning. In school many years ago, I learned that flowers sometimes unfold inside themselves.

Coincidences mean you're on the right path.

I wanted the day to rewind itself.

Freedom is the most exciting of life's terrors.

All wars are the external realization of our internal battles.

It's true the people we meet shape us. But people we don't meet shape us also, often more because we have imagined them so vividly.

We think of the world as the place of beginnings and ends, and we forget the inbetween, and even how to inhabit our own bodies. And then in adulthood, we sit and wonder why we feel so lost.

Life had called his name, and without thinking, he had stepped forward.

Elizabeth says

Breathtaking. Beautiful. Brilliant. These are the some of the words that come to mind to describe the prose of Simon Van Booy. When Simon Van Booy writes, he imprints his images upon your heart and soul. The title story, "Love Begins in Winter," is one that will live on in my heart forever. This is the third book I have read

by Van Booy. I am definitely a fan and look forward to reading more from him.

????? says

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Brandon Shire says

Wow, unexpectedly beautiful. HIGHLY recommended.

K.D. Absolutely says

The love stories that do not insult your intelligence.

Sometimes off-tangent but brilliantly and artistically focused to their intention: to show how love can creep into our consciousness even when we are doing menial things like walking on a deserted wet pavements on a rainy day. These stories are magical. I do not mean mushy or you should be on your teens or 20's or 30's to be enthralled by these stories. It is more of the way Van Booy captured the scenes (whether it is winter or summer or in a rundown apartment or park with children playing) and the emotions that those scene trigger. We all have love or in love or will soon be falling in love so everyone can relate to this. To be honest, I became extra-emotional the last few days posting a message capped with "I love you..." on Facebook dedicated to my wife who cooked me a viand for an office fundraising activity last Friday. If a book can make you extra-loving to your spouse, it deserves to get at least a four-star rating, right?

And oh, the wonderful chest-thumping, heart-skipping, brain-splitting, sighs-and-sighs because they are simply beautiful. They are lines that are not only lovely but thought-provoking:

"The most important notes in music are the ones that wait until sound has entered the ear before revealing their true nature. They are the spaces between the sounds that blow through the heart, knocking things over.

We process the sound but I just did not think it this way. Beautiful, isn't it?

"All parks are beautiful when quiet and you see things like a book forgotten on a beach read by the wind."

I liked the image of the book on a beach with its pages flapping back and forth as if being read and this time, by the wind. Beyond words.

"How could two people know each other so intimately without ever having told the old stories? You get to an age where the stories don't matter anymore, and the stories once told so passionately become a tide that never quite reaches the point of being said. And there is no such thing as fate but there are no accidents either."

Imagine holding the wrinkly hand of your spouse who have been the most wonderful person you have met in your life. After all these years, you are still together and the love that you feel is like the first time that you laid eyes on each other. Powerful.

"No beauty without decay. Every moment is the paradox of now and never."

You who still have a pretty or a handsome face, time will come that it will fade. Enjoy it while it lasts. Just saying.

There are also quotable quotes in the **About the Author** section that I really enjoyed but they are thoughts of the author about writing and they are in the brink of being self-patronizing or presumptuous. However, one thing is for sure. I am an Van Booy fan now and will not have a second thought reading another book by him.

Well done, Simon Van Booy!

Patrick Duncan says

This is really more of a 3.5. And it may even wind up being upgraded at some point because I feel like these are stories I will continue to think about. My problem is that the whole time I was reading it, I couldn't decide if I liked it or if I was annoyed by it. Some of the stories felt overly precious and too much like self-conscious attempts to impart a moral lesson or greater thought. At some points it edged uncomfortably close to Alchemist territory, which I know is not a negative for everyone but is not usually something I'm a fan of.

However, there were some really startling turns of phrase and unusual use of language that I really appreciated, and some of the insight, self-conscious as it was, was moving. I will definitely read more from Mr. van Booy.

Gloria says

Do you believe in love?

Whether it be in the form of two strangers who meet but have always known one another;
a woman trying to make sense of her past and present;
an abandoned mother and son befriended outside a Vegas casino;
an Irish boy longing for his secret love;
a man forgotten by life who suddenly is revived by a new role thrust upon him.

I will admit to being a little cynical when it comes to love-- at least in the traditional form. I generally avoid (and often make fun of) "chick flicks," "chick lit," and whatever else Disney or Hollywood spews out touting the "happily ever after" theme.

But Simon Van Booy makes me believe in love. In part because his stories, and their endings, aren't always

sensible or neat. Nor do they end stereotypically.
But the man's words...
I think I could believe in love based on his words alone.

In one story, a letter is described:

The handwriting was full of loops, as if each letter were a cup held fast upon the page by the heaviness of each small intention.

This book wasn't published in Van Booy's handwriting ... but it might as well have been. For each of his small intentions, in each and every word, pulled me onto the page ... and then deeper, into the story itself.

Why didn't I discover him sooner...?

Michelle says

Wonderful.

These stories are written in Van Booy's signature abstract style and touch on different perspectives and versions of love. But they are authentic and not sappy love stories. There is a thread of loneliness and a sense of longing woven throughout these pieces. The author's words paint beautiful pictures and bear testament to his acute power of observation about human nature, each story capturing a slice of life as it unfolds via the characters' or narrator's thoughts.

There is the moody love story between French cellist Bruno and Welsh shopkeeper Hannah who have experienced great personal loss; the odd and obscure 'Tiger Tiger' story with journal entries; the kindness of a stranger towards an abandoned mother and son in 'The Missing Statues'; the love and friendship between an Irish Gypsy and Canadian orphan in 'The Coming and Going Of Strangers'; the final story ends the collection with a sense of hope in 'The City Of Windy Trees' when a desolate man is presented with an unexpected and amazing gift.

The prose is beautiful and I found myself re-reading certain passages from each story.

Caitlin says

I don't read a lot of short stories. I tend to have a fondness for huge tomes that I strengthen my arms with by dragging them around with me wherever I go (they're too hard to read in bed, though - a problem). I like short stories, but sometimes they just end too fast and I want more. There are exceptions to this - I love Hemingway's spare stories and now I'm adding Simon Van Booy to this list.

At their core, these stories are about loneliness, the yearning for connection, the difficulty of making it and keeping it. In many ways these are people who can't quite remove themselves from the center of their own universe, can't quite let go and allow themselves to see what the world has on offer. Loneliness and longing define them and when they find a connection it is one of life's minor miracles for them.

All of this could be sentimental and sappy, but in Van Booy's hands it is not. Although at times it feels like

he's trying just a little too hard, those moments are far overshadowed by his beautiful use of language. Most of all this reminds me of my Mississippi grandmother, Jesse.

My grandfather died relatively young and grandmother continued living her life alone - teaching and, after she retired, traveling all over. She used to always say that she "didn't need an old man to take care of." And then on one of her trips she met her second husband, Vernon. They were both in their seventies and had known each other in college - grandmother and granddaddy double dated with Vernon and his wife. Long story short they fell in love and had about fifteen glorious years together before Vernon died.

They were both amazing people - kind, loving, and giving. I can remember always thinking of them at times in my life when I was alone and lonely and felt like that would never change. I'd think, "Remember grandmother - it ain't over 'til its over." They taught me a lot about being open to love and connectedness and living in the joy of that. It's a lovely memory and was quite happy to read stories that evoked that for me. Thank you, Mr. Van Booy.

Erik says

So maybe Van Booy appears a bit pretentious in the "About the Author" section. And maybe here and there I found a line I thought was trying much too hard to be profound in one way or another. And maybe I want to grab Van Booy by the lapels and smack him around a little for being three years younger than myself and writing the way he does. But all is easily forgiven after reading this collection of five stories.

His writing was simply beautiful: in its eloquent use of metaphor, its well-timed detail and efficiency, and its excellent portrayal of the old "show don't tell" preferred method of writing where it counted. The stories were steeped in emotion without having to wave at the reader and shout "Hey, this is DEEP here! Are you FEELING this?"

I haven't cared much for short stories for quite a while now. For the most part, I was likely just reading the wrong short stories. I might not give each of these stories five stars, but the best ones make up for what I felt the one or two less enjoyable stories might lack.

Michael says

Another lovely collection of love-themed stories--earnest, gentle, graceful, and profound. It manages to pull this off without resorting to cliché or cheap lachrymose theatrics. (And yes, I love the word "lachrymose" and have been waiting for some excuse to weave it into a review!). I'm really warming to this author and look forward to more.

Samir says

I began to love this book, even though winter is far away... Ironically, Bombay (Mumbai), the city I reside in, doesn't actually have an elaborate winter season. Winter here is similar to European summer. But love somehow manages to visit and leave me from time to time. Let me focus on the object of my literary love at

the moment.

Love begins in Winter

In the book 'Love begins in winter', the season is a metaphor for the state of mind of its protagonists. Love finds two strangers in the midst of their blues.

Rarely has text induced goose bumps on my rigid skin... 'Love begins in winter' managed to do just that. A short simple story where the moody poetic writing style makes the story special. At the very start of the book, the protagonist is playing his cello to the audience. Simon Van Booy elaborates that single line in such a way that the reader can actually feel every emotion the protagonist feels while playing his music. Nothing much happens in the book in terms of a plot and yet so much keeps playing on minds of the characters that it doesn't matter whether there is a plot or not. This is one of the rare love stories that touch the reader with it's raw emotional power without being melodramatic.

Love begins in Winter is one of the five books in this series of stories by Simon Van Booy

Some of the gems from the book:

Grief is a country where it rains and rains but nothing grows.

Music is what language once aspired to be.

The only authentic memories find us—like letters addressed to someone we used to be.

Music, paintings, sculptures, and books of the world are mirrors in which people see versions of themselves.

Music helps us understand where we have come from but, more importantly, what has happened to us.

Larry H says

Some of the most beautiful short stories I've read in a long time. This collection is not very long but each of the five stories packs an emotional wallop and has definitely stuck in my mind more than a week after finishing the book. As you can tell from the title, each of these stories has to do with love--and each approaches the subject from a different angle. I've never read anything that Simon Van Booy has written but I'm definitely going to find his other book now. If you like short stories, I'd encourage you to read this book. It will make you look at love--and those you love--in a whole new light.

Masoud says

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Kiwi Begs2Differ \ says

Breakdown:

Love begins in winter 3 stars

Tiger, Tiger 1.5 star

The missing statues 3 stars

The coming and going of strangers 3.5 stars

The city of windy trees 2 stars

Lovely evocative language!

Solitude and depression are like swimming and drowning.

Every moment is the paradox of now or never.

Every adult yearns for some stranger, but it is really childhood we miss. We are yearning for that which has been stolen from us by what we have become.

The rain tapped gently against the window, magnifying the backyards in long watery lines. The roofs of the buildings glistened black, and a tiny alphabet of birds hung motionless in the sky
