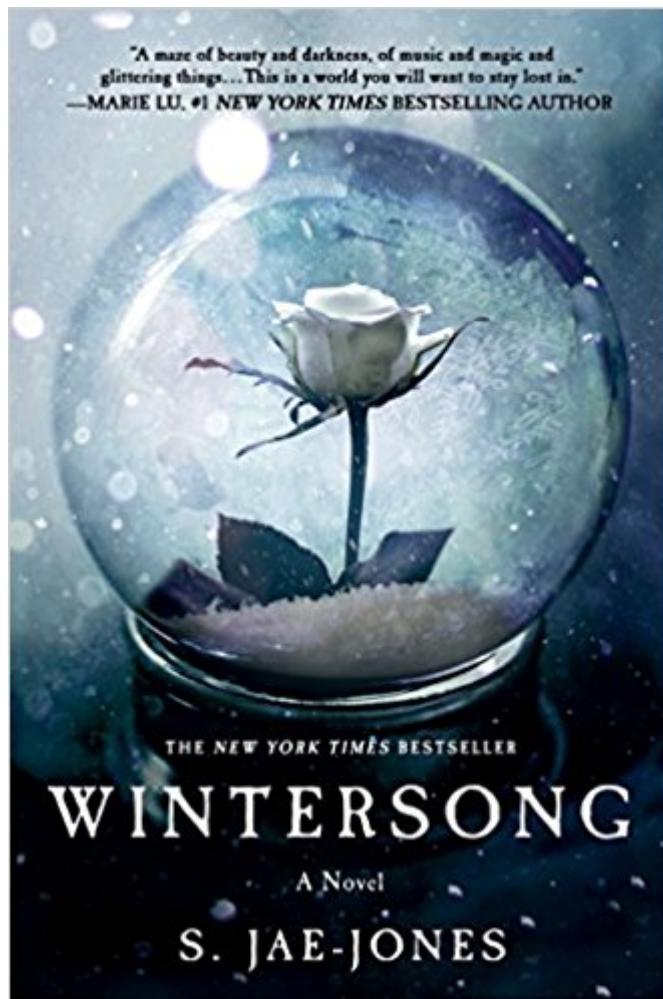


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Wintersong: A Novel



Synopsis

“Wintersong is a maze of beauty and darkness, of music and magic and glittering things, all tied together with exquisite writing. This is a world you will want to stay lost in.”

Marie Lu, #1 New York Times bestselling author

Dark, romantic, and unforgettable, Wintersong is an enchanting coming-of-age story for fans of Labyrinth and Beauty and the Beast. The last night of the year. Now the days of winter begin and the Goblin King rides abroad, searching for his bride. All her life, Liesl has heard tales of the beautiful, dangerous Goblin King. They have enraptured her mind, her spirit, and inspired her musical compositions. Now eighteen and helping to run her family's inn, Liesl can't help but feel that her musical dreams and childhood fantasies are slipping away. But when her own sister is taken by the Goblin King, Liesl has no choice but to journey to the Underground to save her. Drawn to the strange, captivating world she finds—and the mysterious man who rules it—she soon faces an impossible decision. And with time and the old laws working against her, Liesl must discover who she truly is before her fate is sealed. Rich with music and magic, S. Jae-Jones's Wintersong will sweep you away into a world you won't soon forget. "This was Labyrinth by way of Angela Carter. Deliciously romantic, with a nuanced Goblin King and a strong heroine, this story was rife with fairy tales, music, and enchantment." —Roshani Chokshi, New York Times bestselling author of The Star-Touched Queen

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up • This YA fantasy is a richly detailed journey through German folklore and

19th-century Europe. Often overshadowed by her musically talented brother and her beautiful sister, Liesl assists her parents in running the family's inn. When her sister, Käthe, is taken by goblins, Liesl makes a wager to secure her release and travels underground to the alluring Goblin King's world in an attempt to win freedom for both herself and Käthe. This fantasy debut is rife with intricate details and world-building, as well as the charged relationship between Liesl and the Goblin King. Fans of Gregory Maguire's *Egg & Spoon* or E.K. Johnston's *A Thousand Nights* will be drawn to the in-depth depictions of the goblins' realm. Others may find the story's length and its emphasis on description rather than action overwhelming. The slower pace allows for additional character development of Liesl, although Käthe and their younger brother, Josef, remain in the background. **VERDICT** An additional purchase for larger collections. —Jenni Frencham, Columbus Public Library, WI

"The legend of the cruel and pitiless Erl-king anchors a darkly lush and dangerous tale of a stifled young woman's creative awakening. Beautiful writing evokes powerful emotions in this journey into the meaning of sacrifice and the power of love." —Kate Elliott, *New York Times* bestselling author of the *Crossroads* and *Crown of Stars* series "Wintersong is a maze of beauty and darkness, of music and magic and glittering things, all tied together with exquisite writing. This is a world you will want to stay lost in." —Marie Lu, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Legend* and *The Young Elites* "Spellbinding and sexy, *Wintersong* is a feast for all the senses. I didn't want this beautifully written book to end." —Renée Ahdieh, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Wrath and the Dawn* "This was *Labyrinth* by way of Angela Carter, and I think my soul has been aching for a book like *Wintersong* for the last decade. Deliciously romantic, with a nuanced Goblin King and a strong heroine, this story was rife with fairy tales, music, and enchantment." —Roshani Chokshi, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Star-Touched Queen* "S. Jae-Jones has a great grasp of emotion in her writing, and plucks your heart-strings from the very first pages. This story will make you hurt in the most fantastic way. It is captivating. A very strong debut." —Charlie N. Holmberg, bestselling author of *The Paper Magician* "This is an exquisitely and lyrically crafted tale of longing, sibling loyalty, and the importance of women in a time when women were so often overlooked. Eerie, unsettling, and above all, full of music." —Booklist (starred review) "Jae-Jones writes beautifully about the magic of love, the power of music, and the importance of free will." —Publishers Weekly "Structured as a sonata, the final movement culminates in a bittersweet sacrifice that will leave readers... savoring the delicious tragedy." —Kirkus Reviews "[R]ife with intricate details and

world-building, as well as the charged relationship between Liesl and the Goblin King. Fans of Gregory Maguire's Egg & Spoon or E.K. Johnston's A Thousand Nights will be drawn to the in-depth depictions of the goblin's realm." *School Library Journal*

Home wintersong ARC Review: *Wintersong* by S. Jae-Jones
ARC Review: *Wintersong* by S. Jae-Jones
The Book Voyagers 2:48 PM
Title: *Wintersong*
Author: S. Jae-Jones
Publisher: Thomas Dunne
Release date: February 7, 2017
Book synopsis: Beware the goblin men and the wares they sell. All her life, nineteen-year-old Liesl has heard tales of the beautiful, mysterious Goblin King. He is the Lord of Mischief, the Ruler Underground, and the muse around which her music is composed. Yet, as Liesl helps shoulder the burden of running her family's inn, her dreams of composition and childish fancies about the Goblin King must be set aside in favor of more practical concerns. But when her sister is taken by the goblins, Liesl journeys to their realm to rescue her sister and return her to the world above. The Goblin King agrees to let the go for a price. The life of a maiden must be given to the land, in accordance with the old laws. A life for a life, he says. Without sacrifice, nothing good can grow. Without death, there can be no rebirth. In exchange for her sister's freedom, Liesl offers her hand in marriage to the Goblin King. He accepts. Down in the Underground, Liesl discovers that the Goblin King still inspires her musically, physically, emotionally. Yet even as her talent blossoms, Liesl's life is slowly fading away, the price she paid for becoming the Goblin King's bride. As the two of them grow closer, they must learn just what it is they are each willing to sacrifice: her life, her music, or the end of the world.
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Wintersong is a luscious tale of a king and a brave maiden. The story enchants you with its characters and the winter-y setting. But also pulls at your heartstrings with some really great writing. *Wintersong* deserves songs and poems in its name. It is a masterpiece and it's only the first sweet melody of this world I have come to love. It's definitely one of my favorite fantasy books of this year. And I don't think I've read a lot on these first two months? *Wintersong* exceeded my expectations. When you find a book that has one of your favorite tropes while having a bit of royalty in it and some sweet romance but very very angst as well, one really is happy. With its fascinating world-building and setting, *Wintersong* made me fall in love. To be honest, it wasn't so hard for me to fall head over hells for this book. The writing for one is gorgeous and lyrical and simply you will sigh because you are in love. It talks about a Goblin King first of all. This is a legend/myth/bedtime story in this world where Elizabeth lives. The Goblin King goes out in winter to pick a wife from the human world. Elizabeth has always been fascinated and enchanted by this figure and you get to

know in the first part that once upon a time those two were friends when they were kids. Let me just tell you that the Goblin King has loved Elizabeth for so long, my heart gives out, my skin clears up, my crops are growing. It's sort of a hate to love story but also a bit of enemies to lovers, I guess? I saw it that way anyways. It definitely has passion. This book is A+ level of steamy and sexy. It also has some really great things in it like: Liesl mentions her period at some part of the book, which is amazing because not a lot of YA books mention periods. I literally loved this book so much ~ I just bought my copy and I cannot wait for it to arrive and reread. I have not watched *Labyrinth* tho. I don't know how close this book is based on it? Either way, this book has some epic stories and characters. It definitely has a love story that will make you bleed (probably? definitely?). I definitely got destroyed by S. Jae-Jones. I was listening to my *SKAM* playlist and lit every song fit and every song hurt me so much?? The conclusion: This book will hurt you. But it will be worth it. You want to know what happens believe me. You want to find out how the Goblin King and Liesl's story ends in that final chapter. And then come running and tell me all about it so I can relive all of the emotions, please.

My feelings are extremely mixed when it comes to *Wintersong*. I wasn't quite disappointed by it, but I was frustrated at what I thought were a lot of missed opportunities and drastic ups and downs that could have been smoothed out with another few rounds of edits. I've seen the author do some really good, sweet things for her readers, and I truly admire that about her. I loved the cover art and the way the book starts out, so I was sort of hesitant to write this review. Even so, I have to be honest. Let's start with the good! The imagery and tone of this book (while lost a couple of times) is overall a real strong suit of the story. The rhythm of the words and the descriptions used evoke the original Grimms Fairy Tales, full of dark, romantic notes and tension (separate from the actual moments of romance present in the novel). The best description that sticks with me is a scene where Liesl's sister eats a peach, a scene full of multi-layered symbolism that catches the reader's attention. The mystery within the novel is also compelling. This centers around the Goblin King, of course, as well as the world of the Underground. As for her world building, the Underground is quite fascinating and easy to picture in one's mind. The creatures of the Underground are also thoroughly entrancing and easy to picture, though they weren't always consistent. The Goblin King himself reminded me powerfully of Howl from *Howl's Moving Castle*, both in appearance and behavior, which is certainly not a bad thing...however, continue reading this in the bad. On the Goblin King, the romance in the book was wonderful. Though confusing at times (especially the timing, which is discussed in the next section), I thought it had an organic sort of growth and Ms. Jae-Jones did a

great job balancing tension with loads of emotional depth and history on both sides. The BadOne of my first and most glaring issues with Wintersong was the lack of clear placement in time. The argument can be made that this is a fairy tale/fantasy and therefore exists out of time, but even so, there were enough places in which modernity crept in as to distract me from the flow and structure of the story. This happened quite often with the language being used, particularly with the Goblin King himself. Jae-Jones wrote these beautiful passages of dialogue and thoughts, then sort of tossed that tone out the window for a couple of lines before returning to it. Again, this could have been fixed with more rounds of edits. On the time frame, this could have been more of a personal issue than one inherent with the book, but it was enough that it kept me frustrated for the first 2-4 chapters. There is no clear time period or setting given, though German names and terminology are used. Again, I understand this might have been meant to set it vaguely in the time frame of a Grimm fairy tale, or to give it that tone, but it failed for me. I was more and more frustrated until I finally saw some detail about her father performing around the time of Mozart and was able to settle my mind in that regard. The pacing of the story was another issue for me. Not only were some characters inconsistent (in a non-purposeful way), and perhaps this is what Jae-Jones intended (for there to be long lulls with rapid action), but it just didn't work that well. The most memorable scenes for their utter confusion are those in which Liesl is either attempting to enter or escape the Underground. I believe there is a way to add that frantic tension and raise the stakes without completely confusing the reader as to where the character is and what is happening to where they lose their place in the story and have to reread a passage several times. Obscurity has its place, but shouldn't be used to the point a reader gets lost in a story (and not in a good way). In the end, the story just felt insubstantial and bloated at the same time. The really solid, deep sections full of emotional depth and challenging thoughts were flung through the story in odd sections, dispersed among bloated passages describing the underworld, Liesl's struggle with music, finding dresses, and other such things. Each element was important, of course, but the odd jumping back and forth between such sections caused a lot of the pacing problems and allowed me to set my book down for days at a time, something I normally do not do when reading a new story. Final Thoughts I really wanted to like Wintersong. I found it popping up all over bookstagram, and I wanted so, so badly to fall in love with it like so many others where. Unfortunately, that just wasn't the case. Although certain parts had my heart pounding and my feet dancing around. I really wish this story, like so many other young adult novels these days, could have had at least 2-3 more rounds with a good editor. There were some parts scattered throughout that were so, so good, they were just hidden behind all the meh moments to the point I lost interest time and again. Read the book if you want, but if you're

after a story with sisters, a mysterious bigger-than-life figure, adventure, darkness, and romance, go for *Caraval* (which I'll be reviewing soon). Rating 6.5/10 Magpies

I'm not sure I have the words yet to describe my experience reading this book. But I will try. No spoilers. Lyrical prose, beautifully complicated characters, and a vivid, richly woven setting create something infinitely magical here. Dark and poetic, shocking in places and rife with longing, I could not put this book down. It all centers around the main character, Liesl, a fully realized heroine with her own dreams and sorrows. My heart ached with Liesl's; I cried for her and raged with her. Her questions and doubts about her place in two vastly different worlds (the world above and the Underground), and her fears that she never belonged in either, are so brilliantly voiced on the page by Jae-Jones. Her primary antagonist, the Goblin King, isn't necessarily that; he is nuanced and complex, and my feelings about him (as a reader) begin to twist and contradict as he slowly reveals himself throughout the course of the novel, echoing Liesl's complicating feelings as she continues to interact with him. *Wintersong* is gorgeous. I finished it in one evening, and my immediate instinct was to return to the first page and begin the journey all over again. A haunting, musical, unforgettable reading experience.

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