



Winter

Keven Newsome

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Winter Maessen didn't ask for the gift of prophecy. She's happy being a freak - but now everyone thinks she's crazy. Or evil.

Goths aren't all the same, you know. Some are Christians.
...Christians to whom God sends visions.

Students at her university are being attacked, and Winter knows there's more than flesh and blood at work.

Her gift means she's the only one who can stop it - but at what price?

Winter Details

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From Reader Review Winter for online ebook

Amber says

Winter is a story about a teenager who has lost her heart, her rosy outlook on life, and any faith she had in God. With the death of her mother, she lost her heart and her reason to love. With the twisted version of friends that she made after moving to a new school in order to live with her dad, she lost her ability to trust people. In light of the mistakes she made with those friends, she has come to hate everything about herself. To fill the yearning for some type of comfort she wraps herself in the Goth lifestyle and hides within herself trying to block out the pain and help her walk through life with a numbing sense of fulfillment.

Despite herself, God sees her and loves her through it all. He has a purpose for her life that she could never dream of or even see for herself. He desires to take her broken life and remake her into the beautiful woman that He has always meant for her to be. The question is then laid out before Winter if she will trust Him and let Him transform her into what she was created to be. The answer that Winter seeks comes only through the hardships and struggles that she faces during her first year of college. As with all things worth fighting for, these journeys cannot be taken without experiencing pain and growth.

Few stories have gripped my heart and soul as this one has. I walked besides Winter as she went through the most horrible moments in her life. I watched her agonize over the mistakes she made. I wanted to reach out and comfort her when she was at her lowest points. I experienced her emptiness and my heart cried out for her to feel the love she so desperately needed.

I can't count the number of tears that poured from my eyes as I walked in Winter's footsteps. My heart ached for her every step of the way. I cheered her on and watched with bated breath as her story unfolded before my eyes. It was as if I watched one of my own daughters go through her time of decision and change.

This story arrested my heart, destroyed it, and then remade it into a much better version of itself. I could say that it took my breath away, but that would not be giving it the justice it so deserves. The limited words in our human vocabulary seem to fall disappointingly short of what is earned by this magnificently talented author who has birthed this unbelievably amazing story into life. Dare I say that his burgeoning talent could place him on the same level as some of my all-time favorite authors such as Ted Dekker or Frank Peretti. The potential of witting craftsmanship shown in this beautifully captivating story is limitless. I am so excited to hear that a sequel is being written, and to say that I am very excited to read it does not give my eagerness justice. I am confident that we can expect more masterful stories from this author in the years to come and I can't wait to read them!

Melissa says

I was first hooked on 'Winter' by the first quote on the back of the book: "We are all freaks. It is just a matter of perspective." There was also the fact that it is about a Christian goth prophetess. Hook. Line. And sinker. I was sold.

This story was solid and true to itself as a Christian story of a young girl named Winter who was called by God in college. The idea still sounds odd, but Newsome pulls it off with flair. There is a constant back-and-forth throughout as unbelieving Winter, a 15-year-old girl, trades places with her 18/19-yr-old self in college,

but it rarely is complicated to confusion. There is an unexpected detective job tossed into Winter's college life. She coerced her dad into hitting her once in high school. Winter tells of dark and depressing happenings, demon-filled dreams and resounding meetings. But Winter is called to prophecy by God and that fact shines through so much, it effectively provides the counter-weight to the darkness interspersed throughout the novel. Seriously, I was crying delighted tears of joy as I finished. God triumphs over evil. Who can be afraid when God is on their side?

However, the book is exceptionally dark. Corrupted school government, Winter's many blood-filled nightmares, deaths, and night-time near-abductions are nothing to kid around with. Young teens should perhaps read with their parents. That could be a reason why I did not read 'Winter' at night-time. Hehe. But It is definitely worth reading.

Mike (the Paladin) says

I have some things I want to say about the content of this book, but first for those simply interested in it as a novel we'll talk about that. The book is pretty good as a novel, an interesting read. There are no glaring errors in the actual writing and the characters while coming across as very, very young for college students are also pretty well written.

I would almost have gone 4 stars on this one but for on huge flaw which was the death of the 4th star. You will have seen me mention this before. Characters need to develop with the story and while on the whole Winter does develop, she goes on far too long making the same error time after time after time...and the last most disastrous time there is just no reason for it. I was beating my head against the walls and yelling at this YA book!

So, readable and pretty interesting, a bit too young for some of the content. I'd read it first before handing it to a reader much under 12, but I think for most adults and "YAs" it's appropriate for will like it pretty well.

Now what else do I have to say?

Well first I read a couple of reviews where the "reviewers" were ranting that this wasn't a horror or urban fantasy book but Christian fiction, as if it had been "hidden" and they'd been suckered in. **The book says up front what it's about and that it's from a Christian point of view so...**know that going in if somehow you missed it.

By the way in the novel God speaks to and guides our young protagonist in a very fictional way. If the writer had done the same thing but said that "Ra" or "Odin" or "Cthulhu" had been talking to her they'd have been fine with it. It's only that the book is told from a Christian point of view that ticked certain people off.

I will say as I always do that while I don't think there's anything here to offend Christians DON'T get your theology from a novel. The story makes it's/a point but the depiction of our young prophet (or prophetess as she sometimes calls herself) is meant to picture real current prophetic relations with God (of course if God decides to change that it'll be His timing). Anyway read for the story and for the general message/life lesson.

As I said the book reads very young yet it deals with some very violent subject matter and has some potentially disturbing scenes for younger readers. The teenage angst is also dragged out way too much (in my opinion of course) that could have been done better. But while it annoyed me, teenage girls (for example)

might really enjoy those parts...

So, again not bad to pretty good. Enjoy.

David Brollier says

A very real look at outcasts, gifts of the Holy Spirit, what Christianity is really all about, and spiritual warfare make *Winter*, by Keven Newsome one of the best reads of all time. I've actually been waiting for someone to deal with Goths in a way that shows they can go one way or the other. They are seekers, usually borne of desperation, death, and many times forms of abuse. They are not automatically pagans, although do you want to guess who opens their arms wide to them when the "church" slams the door in their faces? In this book, *Winter Maessen* is a Goth who at one time did get into all those pagan and occultic practices, but has since become a Christian. When she arrives at college for her freshman year her roommate is anything but Goth. She's the perky, cheerleader type and wants to do the room in shades of pink. They do, however become close friends. I just loved the way spiritual warfare is brought in and *Winter* begins to have dreams, visions and premonitions, pointing her to the direction to solve a rash of violence on campus. At first *Winter* hates and even fights against the gift of prophecy she seems to have acquired, but as time goes on she realizes that it's the way God wants to use her. She surrenders to God's will and well, I really don't want to tell you the whole story. This is Keven's debut novel, and it is fantastic.

Megan says

This was a different book, because it's a Christian novel but it's written similarly to a lot of YA paranormal/fantasy books. I didn't like how often *Winter* did the same foolish things, but I did like her tenacity. I might read the sequel, but I'm not sure about that just yet.

D.M. Dutcher says

This is an unusual book, to say the least. There's an interesting subtext in it that begs for exploration, but it can be uneven.

Winter is a young goth girl attending her first year at Tishbe College. She has a dark history that she seems to have made some manner of peace with, and expects little more than to be a normal student. However she soon finds herself enveloped in a deadly plot surrounding the college. What's more, she finds that she is having visions that refuse to let her escape her role: she is a prophet, and the unlikeliest foe against a demonic evil...

The good:

- Winter* makes for a decent, nontraditional protagonist. Her goth angle misses a lot of details (U2 poster on the wall?), but gets the spirit right. She has strong motivation, despite some flaws. Definitely a heroine that can draw your interest. Lack of a stereotypical love interest is nice too.

- Her "gift" is interesting and really cries out for more explanation. It's not the usual idea of prophecy, and

there's some implications, especially with the ending, that it might be something different. (view spoiler)

-Nice twists and turns in the plot, and he manages to make prophecy which should be a deus ex machina into something with a lot more uncertainty.

-Edgy for a Christian book. It's not really what you'd expect. Some ambiguity, too.

The bad:

-Sadly, typical Christian spiritual warfare style villain. To be fair, there's some ambiguity about whether he actually is one, or he thinks he is, but the general concept is drawn straight from the stock character well.

-The plot needs more grounding. The big bad's plans need some explanation why he is going to so much trouble for a small town.

-Prophecy. Part of the reason why I think I like the spoiler above is that there's a lot of implications to it that are hard to explain otherwise. Generally prophecy or any kind of gift that interacts with the future needs serious explanation so that people don't ask "Well, why doesn't she just find the smoking gun two pages into the book?" I think Keven did well with it, but in the larger sense more explanation is needed.

-slightly bad ebook formatting. There's two lines of space between each paragraph on my kindle, not one. It can make for readability issues with single lines of dialogue.

It's really an interesting book, in that it feels like a hybrid of a paranormal book like Mercy Thompson: Homecoming mixed with spiritual warfare. I don't mean that Winter is a werewolf or anything, but if your guilty pleasure is reading books with heroines that are witches or espers, this feels like one of those books but done from a Christian perspective. There's some unevenness due to this heritage, but I'd definitely be interested in reading the sequel, and it's different enough to stand out.

Kat Heckenbach says

Winter is a new Christian, but she's not your ordinary Christian. First, she's Goth. Second, she's having strange moments of deja vu that lead to full-blown prophecies. There's someone out there, though, that desperately wants Winter and her gift out of the picture.

Well-paced and truly suspenseful, Winter has a rich setting and strong characters. The dual story line is woven together quite well, revealing bits of Winter's past along with present action.

Highly recommended!

My Website

Find me on Facebook

My YA fantasy series:

book 1

book 2

Nikole Hahn says

The words drew me in. Phrases like, “They oozed lifeless blood that pooled at their base and coagulated into white scabs. She broke a candle free and continued her ascent, tilting it so it bled on the planks.”

Immediately, the story caught my interest. A girl named Winter—dressed in goth, saved, and trying to figure out why God gave her this special sight. She roommates at college with a girl named Summer. Both are dropped in the middle of a chess game between good and evil.

“I’m sure God led us all to come here,” Kaci said.

“You don’t understand.” It was all or nothing now. She was committed. “God spoke to me. He told me to come! I can’t explain it, but it was the strangest experience in my life.”

“Did God tell you the girl’s name too?” Summer asked.

“What is she talking about?” asked Kaci.

“She knew Angie’s name Saturday without anyone telling her,” Summer said. The others turned from Summer to look at Winter, their expressions sliding from boredom to confusion. - Pg. 25

The author cleverly created Winter and Summer to reflect the very seasons. Winter dresses like a Goth. Newsome goes back and forth between Winter's past and her present. I never thought too much of Goths. He explained how Winter became a Goth. Summer is the opposite—blazing sunshine almost hurting your eyes, flowers, fun, and all smiles. This is Summer's personality. I love how he managed to put them together and how he carefully explored prophecy from the Bible through Winter's experiences. The language cannot help but pull you into her story. You can feel her embarrassment when she trips over a crack in the sidewalk and feel the fear when she begins to understand what's happening at the college.

She spun around and ran back the way she had come. As she rounded the altar and came to the hallway door, the door opened. Two guys dressed in solid black walked in. Winter slid to a stop. Behind them stood the man with long brown hair. He smiled at her. “Hello, Winter. I was hoping you would come today.”

Winter turned and fled. She could hear the heavy footsteps of the two guys rushing down the aisle to catch her. Faster...she had to get away. Winter never slowed as she slammed her shoulder into the front door. Her hand grabbed the deadbolt and gave it a quick twist.

Pressure on the back of her head. She crumpled to the floor.

Blackness.

Pg. 96

The clock read 10:19 pm. My hands pressed against my mouth. The house was quiet. I felt Winter's fear. I felt excitement for the battle God brought her to fight against the demon. The writing was so good that the intensity of the plot compelled you to turn the pages and read faster.

Book provided by the publisher

Kelly says

This book was such a great book that when I was finished I went onto Keven Newsome's website to see when or if there was another book in progress! The best thing about this book is that it has a "Christian" base with strong theology presented in an unusually fun way. I highly recommend this book!

Jacob Proffitt says

This book is very much a "Christian"* sub-genre book. I mean by that, that it partakes of, and depends on, certain aspects of culturally "Christian" norms to be operative for you to engage fully with the protagonist and some of the events of the novel.

It's an enjoyable novel, despite the overt Christian pedagogy. Winter is a great character and her path to her current Christian beliefs is sufficiently nuanced to feel real and valuable. Having a Goth/Christian hybrid come into a calling as a prophet(ess) was a fascinating story to explore and I really enjoyed her faithful examination of what her dreams and premonitions meant and how to figure out God's will and follow it. Indeed, Keven Newsome's real strength is portraying believing Christians realistically—warts and all. Not all the faithful live up to their own ideals even as you can see them striving to do better.

Unfortunately, Newsome's weakness is in not portraying opponents with the same depth or realism. The bad guys are pretty shallow and end up reinforcing certain dogmatic Christian tropes. All obstacles flow from this relentless determination to destroy all that is good and participate in all that is evil. Good people can be weak and give in to the occasional evil action (or inaction) but bad people are simply bad, ever and always.

Add that some of the events are aimed squarely at tugging the heartstrings of a devout Christian audience and you get a book that feels almost deliberately off-putting if you do not share in that cultural background. Conversion stories, sermonettes, inspiration to set a friend aright, discussion of doctrinal questions, etc. all serve to reinforce a Christian audience's worldview with little to invite outsiders' understanding or sympathy.

That said, I *did* end up enjoying the book all the way to the end. Yeah, the premonitions sometimes worked or failed awfully conveniently for what seemed more like plot reasons than anything else. And (view spoiler) But in the end, I liked Winter and her friends and they were relatable enough for me to enjoy even if I don't fit their exact cultural milieu.

* I use the word "Christian", throughout this review to refer to that particular strain of Protestantism common in the U.S. This strain identifies itself as "Christian" to the exclusion of other faiths that are also based on the teachings of Jesus Christ (such as Catholics or Mormons). As they are a specific strain of belief and have specific cultural identifiers, the designation is useful, even if somewhat misleading.

Cindy says

I just finished reading Winter and just let me say "Wow"!

For a first book by this author it is a great read and I would imagine that the next ones in this series will probably be even better.

Winter Maessen is a 19 yr old going for her freshman year at Tishbe University. She has no idea what God has in store for her or the gift that He has bestowed on her. She is a Goth but also a Christian who somewhere along the line went into witchcraft. She doesn't understand the dreams she has been having or what seems to be deja vu occurrences that she has been experiencing. She just thinks that she has a brain

tumor just like what her mother died from. But through other students at the school, she begins to get glimmers of understanding.

Winter's character in this book did get on my nerves occasionally but when I tried to imagine how I would react to what she was experiencing I was able to get past it. She sees herself as someone that no one will listen to or believe based on her appearance. She makes a few close friends at the school who help her to start understanding the gift that God has given her and how it can be used to help with the troubles that have been happening at the school.

The book alternates between Present Day and 4 years previous giving us an idea of what Winter's past was like and how she got to where she is now. I'm not really a fan of books when they do this but it weaved in and out pretty smoothly. Kept my attention throughout. Even by the end of this book, there is still plenty that you want to find out about Winter and what she experienced before becoming a Christian.

One interesting fact concerning the author is that he studied Supernatural Theology at seminary. I had never heard of such a thing but one of the topics covered is the study of angels and demons which definitely comes into play in this book.

I would most definitely recommend this book and can't wait for the next in the series to come out.

Tracy Krauss says

The novel Winter by Keven Newsome was a treat to read. It is a paranormal thriller with a Christian message – ‘Christian horror’ if such an oxymoron can exist. Winter is a young ‘Goth’ who is off to college for the first time. She has a past riddled with hurt and trouble, but she is now a Christian, despite her continuing espousal of Goth dress. This is one aspect of the book that I especially liked. The author has set out to completely destroy stereotypes in how his heroine should dress, behave, or even think. Winter has been plagued with recurring nightmares and once at college these escalate. She also starts having waking visions and premonitions. At the same time, disturbing events start taking place at the college. Someone is terrorizing the campus, culminating in a brutal murder. The student president is framed for the deed, while other controversies start to wrack the college as well. Winter and her new college friends begin to see a correlation between her visions and events at the school. Although a reluctant recipient, she seems to have the gift of prophecy, and believes she has been sent to the school to help solve the crimes that have been taking place. A Satanic group seems to be at the center of all the conflict and so Winter and her friends are toppled headlong into a twisted plot of mystery, intrigue and danger. Skillfully woven throughout are flashbacks to Winter’s traumatic past where she learns important life lessons which she draws upon to deal with her present predicament. Although sometimes brutally descriptive, the book never reads as sensationalized or gratuitous. Read this book for a thrilling ride into the occult where good triumphs in the end.

Steven says

Going to college can be an overwhelming experience. It’s new places, new faces and new points of view. Winter Maessen’s world has already had its tragedies and going to Tishbe University brings her headlong into a world that at first seems stranger than fiction. A clash of lifestyles happens the very first day when

Goth Winter discovers she's now roommates with Pretty in Pink Summer. That's right, her roommate is named Summer. And thus, we are entertained and pulled into a world that will bring back college memories for those readers who have been there.

Newsome's debut paranormal novel is a gutsy move into Christian fiction and into the world of Christian literature as a whole. Make no mistake, this is a Christian paranormal book that takes a close-up look at the supernatural happenings in life and the unseen things behind the scenes that move the everyday happenings of men, women, teenagers and society in general. Newsome skillfully uses flashbacks to intertwine Winter's past with her current life as a freshman at this prestigious Christian university. Winter must deal with her past and confront the demons that have risen on campus. Winter, Summer and their other college friends find out that these demons are real and dangerous. Campus life takes on deadly consequences when the death of one girl changes the entire atmosphere at the university. Winter is portrayed beautifully and honestly as a struggling young Christian trying to find purpose in her life and how to cope with a gift from God that she is in a quandary to understand. That gift will lead her into danger and Winter must learn she serves an awesome God.

What I found most appealing about this book is the honest and gut level attachment to Winter and all her struggles. At first I wasn't too sure about this book, thinking it was strictly for teens, since I might be classified as one of the Over The Hill gang members. But as I kept reading, Winter grew on me and so did her friends. I found that I wanted to know more about this determined young woman and was cheering for her with each turn of the page. This is a compelling book and will draw even the older crowd into its dark and nail biting story. It will even make you cry. This is not a read for the stuffy religious types. It is for those who really believe God and all that He can do and all that goes on in the supernatural world that is swirling around us. I'm looking forward to reading the next exploits of this brave young woman.

Maureen Koeppel says

Amazing, awesome and awe inspiring

I think the title sums up how I feel about the book. It is amazing, and powerful and a really good read.

Kerry Nietz says

What I like best about Winter is its uniqueness. The setting, the story, and the heroine are all quite original. Refreshingly so. I especially like the title character. She (Winter) is fully flushed out and real. As unlikely of a heroine as you'd find in a Christian novel, and I applaud that.

Mr. Newsome also does a great job of describing his characters and settings. He clearly has given his story world lots of thought and shares it on the page. None of this slows the story, though. The book has a compelling storyline. I literally stormed through the pages.

There is a good share of flashbacks in the story, and I have to admit, I groaned at the first one I encountered. I thought it too soon, and wondered if it moved the story forward enough. As I continued reading, though, the flashbacks grew into a parallel story. And also grew on me. There are some genuinely touching moments there, and they help fill out the main character. (Which I already said I'm a big fan of.)

Overall, this Winter is as unique as a snowflake—and like skiing downhill—exhilarating. I recommend it.
