



# Summerfall

*Claire Legrand*

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In this captivating novella, prequel to the upcoming Winterspell, Claire Legrand weaves a story of magic, political intrigue, and forbidden love.

Rinka is a faery, passionate and powerful, determined to maintain the tenuous peace between faeries and humans.

Alban Somerhart is a human, a reluctant king trapped in an arranged marriage, desperate to prevent war.

Their love could save the kingdom of Cane—or shatter it forever.

This entrancing tale sets the stage for the rise of a wicked queen, and the journey of a lifetime for a human girl named Clara...

## Summerfall Details

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Author : Claire Legrand

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## From Reader Review Summerfall for online ebook

### Di says

This novella had me hooked from the beginning. I am curious how this sets up *Winterspell*, which I will be reading next. If the storytelling is anything like this novella though, I know I'm going to love that too.

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### Lillian says

*Summerfall* by Claire Legrand is the prequel novella to this fall's highly anticipated *Winterspell* and tells the story of King Alban and Countess Rinka. Rinka, fascinated with humans, disobeys her father and follows a group of Elves to Erastadt, the high king's palace. Rinka hopes that while there she will learn more about the humans and build a bridge between their races. Alban Somerhart is the reluctant king, taking over after his father died. Alban, like Rinka, is fascinated with the Elves and hopes to bring his people together. When a forbidden love blossoms between them, their actions could save the kingdom or rip it apart.

### The Lovers

Rinka has a beautiful spirit inside and out. Just over a hundred years old (young for an elf), she is fascinated with the human race and everything about them. In fact, I'd say she's a bit obsessive. But her obsession stems from love for her race and the need to protect both from war.

Alban is very much a reluctant king in a loveless marriage. Forced into kingship at the age of 16 and then into an arranged marriage, he is bitter and often escapes the palace when he can. In fact, he first meets Rinka while he is out on a botched hunting trip. Not knowing who he is works to his advantage as he learns about her. Though he also has a fascination for the elves, his true obsession lies with Rinka.

### Star-Crossed Romance

The plot of this story really revolves around Alban and Rinka, their growing relationship, and eventually affair, but also some world-building on the author's part. The world of Cane is a magical place that exists by itself, apart from the Beyond or our world. I was intrigued by this world and found it enchanting. It was full of Elves, Mages, and humans, coexisting yet not happily. Hence Alban's request for seven elves to be sent to his kingdom.

Then there is the forbidden romance between Alban and Rinka. It is forbidden because the mixing of blood is taboo in their world. Elves and mages, mages and humans, or elves and humans are not supposed to mix. If they do, there are consequences. These consequences are thought to be myth, and Alban and Rinka believe that their love has the potential to heal the kingdom. However, it has the opposite effect.

### My Conclusions

This short story is a gripping tale all on its own though it does set the stage for *Winterspell* nicely. It has an enchanting element that left me intrigued and wanting more. And yes I'll admit that I shed a few tears...I'm a softie like that ;) If you enjoy fairy tales, fantasy, and young adult literature (though in my opinion, this series is not young adult....well maybe mature young adult, 16+), then I suggest you check it out. It's a quick read and will definitely leave you craving more.

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### **Carina Olsen says**

I finally had the time to read this beauty. And I couldn't stop reading until I had finished it all. Also, it was longer than I had hoped for. Which makes me happy. But at the same time, it was also a whole lot meaner and more heartbreaking than I had thought it would be. Sobs. But also so good. I really loved it.

I read *Winterspell* a few months back, and I loved it to pieces. And ever since then I have wanted to read *Summerfall*, which is a prequel novella to *Winterspell*. Though I was also dreading reading it, since I knew how the story would end. And oh, how it broke my heart. It is so sad. Yet it's such a beautiful story. <3

I will try not to write too much about this novella. I just want to say that I loved it so much. And I adore Claire. She is one of the best people I know of. And her writing is stunning. Simply perfect. Which *Summerfall* is too. I couldn't have been happier about this novella. But at the same time, I couldn't have been more heartbroken either. *Summerfall* is told from the point of view of Rinka, who in human years is in her late teens, but in faery years is ninety. Which shocked me a little. But loved it very, very much. I adored getting to know Rinka. She was such an amazing character. Her friend, Garen, I'm unsure about. He loves her. But she feels nothing for him but friendship. In some moments I liked him. In others I hated him. But yeah. I approved of his friendship. There is a bunch of characters in this book. To be honest, they were all awful. Yet I loved reading about them. I got to know so much in this book. And I loved every moment.

*Summerfall* tells the love story of Rinka and Alban. He is a king. And married. They are the same age. And oh, there is so much happening. It is all so complicated. But I loved the heat and passion between Rinka and Alban. It was very real and sweet too. I wanted them together, so much. But oh. So many awful things are happening. People are tortured. People are betraying. I couldn't help but love every moment of everything. This book was just all kinds of amazing. And I adored the romance. I did.

I will not say much more about this stunning book. Just that I loved it so much. And it broke all parts of me. Claire is awesome. *Winterspell* is coming out late this month, and I need you all to buy it. You should probably read *Summerfall* first, but I'm glad I read it afterward. So that I knew how cruel this ending would be. Sobs. But now I want to read *Winterspell* again. Grrr. I will wait for my hardcovers. <3 Anyway. *Summerfall* was a stunning book. I'm so glad that I read it. You all need to read it right away.

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### **Myth says**

I've read worse novellas. I've read much better novellas too.

It probably would have gotten a solid 3 if I'd had any idea why hybrid babies were so loathed and terrifying, especially since there's no mention of one ever existing before.

Also, I strongly disliked Alban and objected to the demonization of Liane. The book gave me no reason to hate her (I too would object to my husband sleeping with someone else, even if it WAS a political marriage,

without some sort of 'oh so I'm making a decision [with my penis] that could apparently throw the entire nation into civil war'.), but told me I should hate her. Alban is to all appearances a weak king and a weak man, despite his Noble Sacrifice (that he didn't plan on being a sacrifice, given he fully believed he couldn't be harmed).

I'm just saying, Rinka could have been a bit choosier. And smarter. About, like. Everything. Sex in the throne room when your love is apparently enough to cause catastrophe if discovered? In the middle of the day? Really? Not to mention 'oh yes I totally magicked the king into sex with me' being a completely nonsensical lie that doesn't protect anybody BUT the king, let alone the child you say you want. Essentially the politicking made no sense.

Reading over this, apparently I had more problems than I thought. Oh well. The writing was mostly engaging when it wasn't waxing rhapsodic over Rinka and Alban's Twu Wuv, and I DID finish it, so.

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### **Claire Legrand says**

Quite possibly the most fun I've ever had writing a book . . . even though not a lot of fun things happen to these poor characters. I mean, yeah, they go to parties and they use magic and they wear fabulous clothes, and there is banter, and they Fight For Peace And What's Right And True . . . and then there is the kissing. Ohhh yes, the kissing.

But look past the parties and the scandalous gowns and the kissing and you'll find betrayal, violence, prejudice, and nefarious plots. Whispering courtiers spreading vicious gossip behind beaded fans. Royal families at each other's throats. Shadows in dark corners that aren't shadows at all, but something worse. Emotional manipulation, terrible secrets, and lies, lies, lies.

I put these characters through the wringer, and I LOVED it. I hope you will too.

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### **Bobby says**

This elegantly told, darkly beautiful tale whet my appetite for the soon-to-be-published *Winterspell*, while remaining a satisfying story on its own. This is a much more adult story than the author's previous works, and in addition to providing plenty of action and suspense, it explores the main character's inner life with great psychological depth.

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### **Heidi Schulz says**

Oh, how I loved this beautiful and tragic story. I have already read WINTERSPELL, and am a big fan, so this was an added treat. I got a little thrill from meeting characters and thinking, "I know what's going to happen to you..." but I don't think it's necessary to read WINTERSPELL first. This novella both stands well on its own, and as a precursor to the events that will happen in the full novel.

The world in this tale, just like Claire's compelling words, is magical and dangerous. Just the way I like it.

## **Kate Woods says**

There is nothing better than a prequel that actually serves a purpose and retains the author's quality of writing. Too often I find that the sole reason a prequel exists was to give characters the reader already knows well some more face time. That's what series and sequels are for. A prequel should give a reader information they previously did not have, or did not understand. It should feature more of the minor characters, or MC's ancestors etc., giving us something that elucidates things we read or will read in the novel that follows it. Claire Legrand accomplishes this with Summerfall. Our main character is Countess Rinka, who, if you read Winterspell, is Anise' mother. We also meet King Alban, Anise' father, a younger Drosselmeyer, and Nicholas' ancestors. The love story starring Rinka and Alban is passionate and fascinating. Rinka is naïve and honorable, while Alban is cheating on his wife, and tends to be weak. In Winterspell we see the cruel side of the fairies, the subjugated humans, and the almost extinct mages, but in Summerfall we're shown the exact opposite. We see fairies trying to promote peace while their people are being stolen and tortured. We see the cruelty that humans are capable of in their fear, and we see the mages dominating the use of magic. I think Summerfall was an incredibly necessary prequel, it shows us how Cane came to be the world we see in Winterspell. It also gives us valuable insight into the history of Anise and why she is who she is. This is by far one of the best prequels I've ever read, if you plan on reading Winterspell, or have already, Summerfall is a must read!

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## **Petra (Safari Poet) says**

Rinka is a faery, but unlike her kind, humans intrigue her. She's been learning everything she can about them since she was a child. It seems like there is war on the horizon between the faeries and humans. Rinka wants to do whatever she can to prevent that.

When Rinka isn't selected — like she expected she would be because of her vast knowledge about humans — to be part of the delegation invited to King Alban's court to help keep the peace between the two kingdoms, she goes against her father's wishes.

When she arrives at the the capital, Rinka and the delegates are met with fear and wariness. She had hoped the humans would be as delighted to learn more about her, as she is to learn about them, but that isn't the case at all. Then she meets a human that is immediately awed by her. This is what Rinka has been wanting — a human as intrigued by her as she as always been by them. A human who she finds out is the king himself, Alban.

I liked Rinka from the beginning. Her father has kept her close since she's his only child, which is why their is an innocent to Rinka. She genuinely wants the best for not just her kind, but everybody and willingly goes into a dangerous situation to achieve that goal.

Alban is a young king who — like Rinka — wants to do everything possible to prevent a war between their kinds. He never expected to fall for Rinka – something which could ignite the war they're trying to prevent if discovered.

Summerfall is an amazing prequel. It's the story of forbidden love and political intrigue with a magical twist that adds a riveting insight into the world of Winterspell while setting the stage perfectly for the events to follow.

## Kaka\_shi says

Happy,sad snippet. Even though it's a prequel. I reckon it's better read after reading winterspell.

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## Libby Stephenson says

This is a review of both Summerfall and Winterspell, so if you saw my review over there, you will be bored. Originally posted at Also Nothing.

Series rating: 4.5

Recommended for: potential fantasy fans who are afraid of getting bored by world building

Summary: Winterspell is an adaptation of the Nutcracker story, mostly taking its cues from the ballet. Clara Stole is the daughter of the mayor of New York City at the close of the nineteenth century. Her father seriously needs to get his act together because he has gotten in way over his head with the city's crime syndicate that probably brutally murdered his wife. Fortunately, Clara is learning how to kick ass from her godfather. Then, on Christmas eve, basically everything bad thing that could happen happens, and Clara ends up in a far away land that makes NYC and its mob look like the county fair. Now our heroine must fight to save her father, and apparently help restore the prince to the throne (who as it turns out, is an actual alive and sometimes naked person, and not a dreamy statue), although that's really not why she came here, guys. Summerfall tells the story of the parents of Winterspell's villain, and provides some necessary background on the land of Cane. Get ready for a lot of forbidden love and a lot of racism.

Ermahgerd, you guys. These books have made me realize how boring my life is. Most of the novels I read fall into one of two categories:

1. Slow, contemplative stories, with a big focus on character development and a touch of mystery, like *The Meaning of Night* or *My Cousin Rachel*
  2. Stories based on witty and clever insights more than plot, with fairly blatant social or moral commentary, like *A Series of Unfortunate Events* or the *Discworld* novels
- But *Winterspell* was an action-packed, fast-paced, emotional roller coaster. I often found myself thinking, "Oh my, somebody's getting punched - this is quite exciting!" like the 80-year British lady that I am, deep down.

So, first things ...er... second, at this point: what order should you read these books in? Normally, I read prequels after the original, but *Summerfall* was published several weeks before *Winterspell*, and I took this as a hint from Ms. Legrand that it should be read first, and I'm glad I took the hint. *Winterspell* is the story of a kingdom that has gone to hell, so you'll appreciate the degradation and misery so much more if you have something to compare it to. Alternately, you could read the Part One of *Winterspell*, which is set entire in New York and not in our fantasy world, then go read *Summerfall* and learn about Cane, then return to *Winterspell*. But you have to promise me that you'll be able to stop reading at the end of Part One - it will be difficult to resist. The world of *Summerfall* is basically straight-up fantasy, with your magic and your elves, but *Winterspell* is more of a hybrid of fantasy and stempunk; you've still got the magic, but there's also video cameras, railways, and drugs. Just imagine a fantastical early Renaissance setting where Leonardo da Vinci turned evil and took over the world. Awesome sauce, right?

But the awesome does not stop there. Claire Legrand gets some many point from me because this series has

an LGBT element. As a bisexual lady, one of my favorite things is when an artist can craft a protagonist who has meaningful and plot-related romantic relationships with people of different genders (see also: Thirteen in House M.D. and Damisa in Ancestors of Avalon - although the rest of that book was crap, so maybe not worth it.) This type of exploration was perfect for Winterspell because it is about sexual awakening and be assertive with your sexual sovereignty (to go all English professor-y for a moment), and limiting that it heterosexuality can cripple the impact.

I'm sure some of you are interested in this series because you love the ballet and you're wondering: how does this compare? I used to be a dancer, and have performed the role of Clara (or "Marie" in our production), so I consider myself qualified to answer this question. As you may know, the last two thirds of the ballet are basically plot-free, so Claire Legrand had the opportunity to go crazy. The main constant between the two interpretations is the character of Drosselmeyer - he was spot on for me: eye-patch, interested in mechanics, loving to his god-daughter, and also not at all pedophile-y, as it can be played (we've got a whole other character to be the creepy sex-offender). The rest of the story was either original or heavily adapted. Our big bad is not the Mouse King, also soem R.O.U.S's do show up at midnight on Christmas eve. Cane isn't populated by candy, but everyone is addicted to sugar. And the one that makes me the tiniest bit sad: Nicholas is in no way a nutcracker. He was a statue for quite a while, couldn't he have falled over at some point and cracked open a walnut someone had left on the floor? Could he like to eat nuts? I'd take anything, really.

But that's not enough to drop my rating, so por que no 5 stars? None of these issues would prevent me from recommending this series, but I do wish to document my grievances for future writers.

1. I got the impression that Summerfall was meant to be a full novel. Scenes would be flowing along smoothly, and then all of a sudden I'd run into "Three months later..." and I couldn't help but think "really, did nothing interesting happen to our characters in those three months?"
2. Winterspell suffers slightly from what I call the "born to die" problem. We get introduced to some characters fairly late in the book, and quickly get some character building thrown at us so that we feel sad when they die. I always say, either have the balls to kill off some main characters or trust the reader to have the compassion to feel sad when some random bloke dies, if you really do need to show some death.
3. As Winterspell progressed I noticed some things about our male romantic interest, Nicholas. He spent about 15% of his screen time, as it were, doing interesting, plot-advancing things, another 15% doing or threatening really horrible things to our protagonist, and the other 70% apologizing profusely to her and saying that he knows she has no reason to trust him, but he would never hurt her again even if it kills him. So, get ready for a several pages of that toward the end

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## Brooke (The Cover Contessa) says

I've been looking for a fantasy to fill my void since reading the most recent Throne of Glass book, and I think I've found it!

Many times I wait until after I've read the first book in a series to read the prequel. But this prequel is really quite a story unto itself. And it gives some great background for the first book. This novella shapes the world of Winterspell, the world of Cane. It sets in motion the events that shape the world Legrand builds for us when we're introduced to Clara.

I can say I really loved Rinka. I love that she's a bit naive, yet also mature at the same time. She has been sheltered but yearns to go out into the world and experience things. Yet, when she gets there, her ideals are shattered and she must begin to reconcile the world she has only learned about through books with what she sees in person.

Alban, swoons. This guy is really not what he seems. I have to say that I was surprised by his maturity, with

the fact that he's only seventeen. He seemed more of a man than a child. And considering he hasn't really taken part in his kingly duties, I don't understand his maturity. This was one of the things I had an issue with when reading this novella.

My other issue with this book was the insta-love. It was a love at first sight kind of attraction and it kind of bothered me. I think mostly because the human and fairy worlds have been at such odds and I found it amazing that a human would accept a fairy so quickly and completely without knowing anything. We get no inkling that Alban has ever studied about fairies as Rinka has about humans.

Overall, the writing was really great. I loved how quickly this novella read. I wanted to keep turning the pages to find out what happened. And the theme was touching and heart breaking with more tragedy than I could have thought possible for such a short read.

With this background in place, I hope I will understand Winterspell just a little better. I can't wait to see where the story goes.

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### **Isa Lavinia says**

Umm... Not the best prequel.

I don't know if it's as poor as I thought it to be, or if Legrand's writing has filled me with too high expectations.

I must say, though, that I disliked Rinka, the blatant Mary Sue, the talk of ~destiny~, and the New Adult vibe that permeated the whole novella - I honestly wasn't expecting something like this from Claire Legrand...

Let us hope Winterspell is better...

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### **Stephanie (Bookfever) says**

*Faeries, the stories said, must always keep moving, must always keep changing, just like the southern seas and their high, hot winds.*

Okay... wow! Summerfall blew me away! I think I even liked it a bit more than Winterspell, which is saying a lot because that book is one of my top favorites. Not only did I adore Claire Legrand's amazingly gorgeous writing, she totally sucked me once again into the kingdom of Cane's world of intrigue at court, enthralling magic and power, the forbidden but passionate whirlwind romance of Rinka and Alban and it was all just so very intriguing and captivating and very tragic to read.

This novella sets the perfect setting for Winterspell. If you haven't read the book yet then I would absolutely recommend you to read Summerfall first to get a feel of the world and read about how Anise came into the world. In my case, I don't think it would've mattered if I had read this novella first because I've always felt somewhat... let's say... considerate to Anise and all the things she did. I even understand her more now. And maybe it was just me but I could kind of sense some small comparisons between today's world and this fantasy one because the humans and faeries were pretty distrustful of each other which only resulted in a lot of treachery, political as well as personal. Ah, the intrigue!

It was sad for Rinka but she came to court after leading a pretty sheltered life with so many hopes and

dreams about humans and faeries being one front and not to be so weary about one another, thinking they would be so amazing. She was a bit naive in that, but I did love her enthusiasm in her beliefs. And of course there was no denying her attraction to Alban. Even though he's married and I knew only bad things would come of it, I was still shipping the hell out of them. Their chemistry was so intense! Yes, I was a fan of their love and rooted for them through the end. I'm a sucker for forbidden love.

Like I mentioned before Summerfall is tragic, and it truly is. I knew it wasn't going to end well but I still wasn't really prepared for the sadness I felt. However, this doesn't take away any of the brilliance that I thought this story had. I truly love stories about faeries, though there aren't that many good ones, in my opinion. So this is one is obviously ahead of that list. Really, the world of Cane is just so alluring and fabulous to me... I want, no I need, more!

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## **Pili says**

When I first heard of this prequel novella for Winterspell, I preordered it as soon as it was up for it on Amazon. Then I got approved via Edelweiss for Winterspell and I kept wondering if I should read it or wait for the novella, and in the end I decided to wait. And it turns out it was the right choice!

Summerfall is a prequel and as such we are introduced to the world of Cane and to characters that won't probably be in Winterspell, but we are given an insight into the events that shaped what will be going on in the book and we are introduced both to the world of Cane and to Claire Legrand's quite beautiful writing!

Summerfall is the story of Rinka, a naive and sheltered faery that has a fascination for humans in a world where the relationships between both races are not at the best of times. She believes in understanding and getting to know each other to destroy prejudice and restore peace. She finds her chance to meet with the humans and try to work towards peace and soon realizes things are not that easy and soon her life and probably the entire realm's change.

Rinka is a wonderful character that starts as really naive but soon learns that she's way in over her head, but I loved that she never backed down, she took challenges on ahead and wanted to work for peace, even when the road was tough. That she might just lose her head for love and risked everything might seem silly, but it could be seen as another way to show that peace between the two races was possible, if love could be found.

The treachery of power and politics taking advantage of the differences between people and the fear that can generate is nothing new, and seeing it at play in Cane is a dire reminder we'd all do well in taking to heart. Facing the consequences of our choices and not shrugging away from responsibilities are also themes explored in this novella.

Quite some strong themes, a good foundation to the world of Cane, well developed characters and a really swoony romance all mixed up make this novella a must read! Now I cannot wait to read Winterspell! Well deserved 4 stars!

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