



The Solstice Prince

S.J. Himes

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Rescued from slavers, healer novice Jaime Buchanan finds himself alone and free in Pyrderi, a kingdom of magic, mythical creatures, and a culture as open and kind as his homeland was cruel and close-minded.

Despite his rescue, Jaime is not left without scars, both mental and physical. Traumatized by his experience and hiding his gift, Jaime struggles to earn his place in the kitchens of Angharad Palace, the heart of Taliesin City. His former life as a student of the healing arts leaves him at a disadvantage in the kitchens, and his damaged state is becoming more apparent by the day.

One day, when necessity and fate intervene, Jaime meets someone unexpected—Prince Maxim, youngest son of the Pyrderian king, a sword master and a devastatingly kind man. Unaccustomed to powerful people with compassion and heart, Jaime flees. A cascade of events reveals Jaime's hidden talents of healing, and he finds himself not in chains, but at the beginning of a new life.

This swift change of fortune opens Jaime up to new possibilities, including a smitten prince who cautiously courts Jaime, easing him away from his fears and reminding him that compassion and love can make him strong. The winter solstice is quickly approaching, and Prince Maxim shows Jaime the enjoyment and excitement to be found in a land that embraces the ice and cold, and the mysteries of all things magical. He learns to see the man under the royal mantle, and Maxim is more than even Jaime suspected.

The winter solstice is nigh when tragedy strikes, and Jaime learns that his past of grief and sorrow can be a pillar of strength for his solstice prince. If there is one thing that Jaime believes above all else, it is in the healing power of love.

The Solstice Prince Details

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From Reader Review The Solstice Prince for online ebook

S.J. Himes says

Book will be released Nov. 24th, 2017. Exclusive to Amazon through Kindle Unlimited.

Meags says

4 Stars

This fantasy tale is all things sweet and charming, and was an absolute joy to read.

Set in the captivatingly magical land of Pyrderi, this story follows foreigner and healer novice Jaime Buchanan in the weeks after he is rescued from slavers and brought to live and work in the kitchens at Angharad Palace.

Still skittish from his time in captivity, Jaime keeps his head down and does as he's requested, choosing to hide his innate gifts of healing because he's unsure whether his magical abilities will be accepted or shunned in this unknown land.

After one slip in the presence of a kind royal guard, Jaime soon realises that his kind of magical talents are not only cultivated in the country of Pyrderi, but they are greatly respected, unlike in his homeland where his gifts were less widely praised and only accepted in certain circles.

After his accidental reveal, Jaime suddenly finds himself whisked away from the kitchens and moved to the palace's healing ward, where he is taken under the wings of more experienced healers and is plunged back into his studies, picking up right where he left off before he was so cruelly taken by slavers six months before.

While finding his feet in this new and wonderfully accepting land, Jaime unexpectedly finds himself the prime focus of young Prince Maxim's attentions. At first, innocent and inexperienced Jaime doesn't know what to make of the charming Prince's advances, but with every lingering glance and sweet touch, Jaime grows more hopelessly smitten with the dashing royal who seems to think Jaime hung the moon.

This story was for most part just a super sweet and delightful romance tale between a shy and caring healer and his loyal and loving prince. There is little drama or conflict here, but I didn't feel it was needed to boost my enjoyment; it was simply a pure and heart-warming romance tale, with a likeable cast of characters and some fascinating and unique world-building. We only get the beginning glimpses into this increasingly expansive fantasy world, but I have no doubt this will only continue to impress as the story develops across the series.

This book was exceptionally addictive in nature; I found myself reading way too late into the night just to get a little bit more of this delightful story in before I passed out from sleep deprivation... but it was worth it.

The Solstice Prince is the first story I've read by Himes – shocking, I know – but it certainly won't be the last. If she could make a fantasy tale this delectably sweet and romantic, then I'm positively buzzing with

anticipation to try the grittier and more angsty romance stories in her backlog.

~Volha~ says

I love SJ Himes writing style. Her descriptions are well written and detailed. You can get lost in the worlds she creates and in this regard this book is the same. She built a wonderful new world filled with magic and ancient fantastic creatures. I loved reading about it. The whole magic healing and mage part was fascinating to discover.

The romance was sweet and sickly sugary. There was barely any inner monologue and I knew nothing about Prince Maxim because this book only had one POV - Jaime's. There was not much character development or any feeling development between them. Just suddenly it was "I love you" and that was it. It was a tad boring.

Another thing I didn't like was lack of any angst. I mean everybody was so bloody kind and cheerful all the time. No grumbling servant, no spurned lover bent on revenge or just plain phsyco with a stake knife from around the corner. Nothing! By the time I hit 60% percent I would have taken a stubbed toe. I mean it was like a little utopia where everyone and all love thy neighbors! Everyone was just too perfect for me. I like human and inhuman imperfections. It was weird there weren't any. I didn't like this aspect of the book.

The intimate scene that was almost right in the end suited the spirit of the book. It was beautiful and lovely. So I did like that. And Maxim's family made this book a little better with some subtle and sometimes not so subtle bouts of humor. I just wish there was more. I wanted something more and I was disappointed. So this book was not for me. The idea was fabulous but its full potential was not realized.

R * A Reader Obsessed * says

4 Hearts! - Group Review with JL and Lost in a Book!

SJ Himes is quickly becoming a favorite of mine, and I really can't find much fault at all with her newest release. Markedly different from her Beacon Hills Sorcerer series, this was simply a feel good love story blending historical, magical, and fantasy elements that will surely pique many a reader's interest.

Kind Jamie, is rescued from a cruel fate, and though he's scared and damaged, he finds some measure of comfort in the place he's now in, a country that is most disbelieving for its benevolence and acceptance regarding all things. Making that transition easier is Prince Maxim who takes an interest in Jamie, and soon learns to his delight that there's more than meets the eye to the timid young man. What unfolds is a seriously sweet slow burn as Jamie and his prince get to know each other, ultimately, falling easily in love.

Low on the angst with great hurt comfort tones that goes both ways, this is surely an unbelievably perfect kingdom Jamie finds himself thriving in. Himes creates a world with many facets since not all realms are as open minded as Pyrderi. Luckily, this is just the beginning, and I for one will not be saying no to more stories from this interesting fictional world!

Thanks to the author/publisher for a copy in exchange for an honest review

For more, please check out the blog!

Melissa says

This was just average. The story didn't DO anything! The narration was fine and I feel it made the story even better because this was boring. What was the point? No drama, no villain, no war, no misunderstanding, no bigotry, no fear about falling in love, no death, no mistakes, no evil eye. Like what even? If you are looking for a story to just pass the time and don't want drama, this is it. It was sweet and the characters were nice to everyone. Sigh, I expected a much different story, and this isn't a case of my expectations didn't meet reality. It's a case of this story didn't have a plot. Wouldn't it make sense that Jaime would need to heal someone under very trying circumstances?

I don't not recommend, if you get me. Average all the way, but this will definitely appeal to those looking to cleanse their reading palate. 3 stars and that's only because the narration was very well done.

Elise ✕ a.k.a Ryder's Pet ✕ says

??????*I tried loving it though...*??????

Not too bad, but *far* from great. It tended to be quite boring, but **S.J. Himes** didn't fail in making me smile. *The Solstice Prince* was a cute, fast forward story with little depth and little action. Meaning; not much happened expect for healer novice **James 'Jaime' Buchanan** (19) and youngest son of the Pyrderian king, a sword master and a devastatingly kind man, **Prince Maxim Amalsan Angharad** (25) finding love in each other. Overall, it's not a book to write home about, yet it's alright read to make the time past and probably easily forgotten.

“Fear is nothing to be ashamed of. It keeps us alive more often than not. Gives us caution, spares us pain. It can also hold us back. Wisdom comes from knowing the difference between listening to our fear, and when to be brave. And sometimes fear settles in us so deeply, the wounds so raw and horrible, that it never truly leaves.”

Quick basic facts:

Genre: - (New Adult?) Paranormal Romance (M/M)

Series: - Series, Book One.

Love triangle? - (view spoiler)

Cheating? - (view spoiler)

HEA? - (view spoiler)

Favorite character? - Prince Maxim Amalsan Angharad.

Would I read more by this author/or of series? - Yes.

Would I recommend this book/series? - Unsure.

Will I read this again in the future? - No.

Rating - 2.5 stars.

BWT (Belen) says

This could be the start of a beautifully romantic fantasy series.

Jaime Buchanan was captured by slavers during one of the darkest periods in his life. Reeling from grief, he contends with horrible abuse before being rescued by a twist of fate. That twist brings him to the Angharad Palace and eventually into the arms of the youngest Prince, Maxim.

The story actually begins after Jaime is rescued, and the reader/listener is only given slight anecdotal glimpses of the cruelty he lived through. When Jaime perceives a threat through a small misunderstanding he runs, but is found and elevated quickly from a kitchen boy back to a healer apprentice.

S.J. Himes and Joel Leslie continue their audio partnership and it serves them both well. They complement each other greatly with Joel bringing out a lot of nuance to S.J.'s stories that might be missed by simply reading. Joel's rich character voices, accents, and timing serve this audio beautifully.

The story moves quickly and has some time jumps, and while it has an interesting premise and world building, it suffers a teeny bit from too much telling and not enough showing. The romance is insta-love, and while I personally like instant romances I prefer to see a reason as to *why* the characters fall for each other so quickly, and I feel like this was missing that component.

In the end there is a lovely HFN and the story itself is a setup for a potentially much larger series. **I enjoyed it overall and will definitely be back** for the next installment, which I believe will follow a different couple before eventually circling back to Jaime and Maxim in a later book.

It's a fun, wonderfully narrated fantasy romance listen, that's lovely and quietly romantic, with low angst, and a HFN ending. It's a sweet beginning, but it's obvious this is mostly to set up for a series.

Story = 3 Stars, Narration = 4.5 Stars ; Overall = 3.75 Stars

Audio copy of The Solstice Prince (Realms of Love #1) provided by Tantor Audio in exchange of an honest review.

This review has been cross-posted at Gay Book Reviews.

Shin Mon Thway says

First of all, I can't even say how much I'm grateful that I was presented with the opportunity to review this novella in advance. ??? Everyone knows that I'm a diehard fan of S.J. Himes and I got giggly and excited like a 5 years old in a candy shop every time she comes out with a new book. ? I mean her works are **just**

exceptional. ? However, you can be assured that my reviews always **are and will be** unbiased. ? Anyhow, let's get to the actual reviewing.

Jaime was once a student learning to be a healer in his country but unfortunately fell into slavery upon his father's death. However, he got really lucky and was rescued by the palace guards while the slave ship was docked in Pyderi and now working as a kitchen servant in Angharad palace, the heart of Taliesin city in Pyderi kingdom. The term of the slavery was short but the wounds, **physically and mentally** ran deep. And things started to get really messy for better or for worse when he met the sweet, handsome prince Maxim of Pyderi and the whole palace learnt his ability as the gifted healer.

Prince Maxim is the youngest and the third son of king of Pyderi. He's the sword master in all of Taliesin city before the age of 25 and he's strong, passionate, sweet, charming and kind. And he felt a very strong particular attraction and pull to timid and shy Jaime when he came to Prince's bedroom to deliver breakfast for the first time. You can say it was love at first sight .. or is there a twist? ?

Maxim has to work real hard to heal the beautiful and timid healer's heart and soul. Meanwhile, our healer is surely and gradually falling in love with the prince charming. ? And he also learnt that under the façade of a brave young man, Maxim has the vulnerability that he never shared with anyone and it's up to Jaime to help him overcome the agony which will be one of the hardest things he has to endure in life.

This is the story about love, family, being there for each other when one is most vulnerable and the ability to forgive, forget and move on. It was so beautifully written and the storyline is really unique. It's a novella in Himes' standard but it's over 25000 words and contains 14 chapters. I don't wanna spoil too much since it's not officially out yet but let me just say, this is one of the best .. BEST holiday novellas for this year. ? And you are in for a real treat my friends. ? You will be surprised by how much effort the author has put into this book when you have the chance to read it. I loved how Jaime and Maxim found each other, finally able to heal their hearts and souls, how they are with each other through thick and thin and the power of their love - simple, charming and absolutely heartwarming. ?♥?? And my god, sooooo many swoon worthy moments!!! ? You are going to be like "Awwnnn" all the time. ? The novella will be out on 24th and my friends, let's count until then. ?

Favorite excerpts from the novella: ???♥?

"Falling in love felt like learning how to live again."

"fear is senseless, cruel, and, sometimes, necessary."

"This prince is yours, forever, if you'll have him." "Maxim." Jaime breathed out, lifting his chin, asking without words for something he wanted desperately. "Jaime, my love," Maxim said, his words as soft as his kiss."

"I would claim nowhere but here, but you. This is home now. You make this home."

I love you so very much. I love you more than I did yesterday, and tomorrow, I will love you more than I do today. My love for you will never end, always growing, always true and certain."

Mmmmm ~ *happy sigh* ~ ???

5 dreamy fairytale prince charming stars

??????????

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

Price drop to \$0.99 at Amazon US, 3/15/18

Barbara? says

What a sweet winter solstice read! I loved both characters. Jaime grew as a person to become who he was meant to be. And Maxim was patient, kind and helped him to grow. I loved the world building and I can't wait for more in the series for sure. And I LOVED the drawings within.

I have to agree with other reviewers that not much really happens. There is potential in several places for some drama or angst. I appreciate that it was a sweet, easy read and was just what I needed. But I think a *little* something extra would have pushed this to 5 stars for me. I don't need a lot of angst and really prefer no relationship drama. But it needed just a little "oomph".

Jenni Lea says

This was such a sweet, sweet story. A deviation from her usual paranormal action/adventure, SJ Himes delivers a gentle, quiet tale of a remarkable boy and the prince who loved him.

To be honest, I wasn't sure I was going to like this. It was so far removed from what I've come to expect from this author that I felt a bit off-kilter when I started reading. But, as I got further into the story, I found myself smiling more and more. I should have known that I needn't have worried; I have yet to read a story by Himes that I haven't loved. The same great writing was there and the world-building was exemplary (as usual); it was just toned down a bit. OK, a lot. There was virtually no angst in this book.

Jaime was adorable AF and Maxim, a complete charmer. All of the secondary characters were fully-fleshed and played their respective roles well. I could have gone for a tad bit of angst, but for what it was, I enjoyed it immensely.

Recommended for readers who are looking for a light, sweet, no-angst story reminiscent of a fairy tale to pass a rainy Saturday afternoon or to cleanse the palate after a heavy read.

Al *the semi serial series skipper* says

DNF @ 78%

So, I have been reading this for weeks now and I just can't get into it. The characters are too perfect and yes, I know what his name was a slave and was free, still. Their relationship just fell into place, everyone is happy for them, I can't believe I'm saying this, but where is the angst? I am so bored, I'm waiting for some battle, someone almost dying, some big misunderstanding, something to spice the book up a little bit.

I want to say I'll try some other time but I very much doubt it. This is my first book by the author and I'm willing to try another because several of my friends love him/her.

Susan says

This started out really great. We had lots of hurt/comfort and I couldn't wait for the rest of the story. But unfortunately I kept waiting for something to happen and it never did.

This fantasy story starts with Jaime at work in the big kitchen of the palace. He has been brought there several weeks ago when he was rescued from a slave ship. Jaime has no idea in what kingdom he is, but he knows he has to keep his healer magic a secret or he will be punished.

When his gift is accidentally discovered he is not sent away though, but praised for his abilities. The kingdom he is at cherishes healers, especially ones with the gift.

Jaime doesn't quite know what to do with all these people who are so kind to him. Especially the youngest prince, Maxim, who seems to be very enamored by him...

I absolutely loved the first 25%, where Jaime and the prince meet and we get to know shy Jaime and all he has been through. Unfortunately the rest of the book consists of Maxim and Jaime holding hands, sharing some kisses, Jaime blushing a lot, and the every day life of the castle. That was about it. Oh, we do get a nice sex scene at the end, so that was good. But I kept waiting for something to happen. For some villain to come out of the woodwork and kidnap Jaime or something like that. But nooooo, everyone was just so freaking nice all the time.

I love a good sweet and tender love story, but this almost put me to sleep. Too bad, because I really did like Jaime. I just wanted something to actually happen.

Jennifer?Pher? says

I think this book cast a spell on me.

S.J. Himes has seriously climbed up my favorite author list, no doubt about it.

I feel like I want to complain about a lot of things but I just can't. When I start to think about something that I didn't like or something that totally shouldn't work for me I can't voice it.

Spell work for sure.

This book *did* work for me even when it *shouldn't*. There was just something so easy about it even when it was difficult. It read to me so lovely and hopeful and just made me feel full of joy.

I really can't explain it. It should not have worked the way it did.

I really can't wait for more and hope to God that 2018 and 2019 are incorrect and the next installments will be quicker than that.

Joyfully Jay says

A Joyfully Jay review.

3.75 stars

The Solstice Prince is the first book in the new Realms of Love series by S.J. Himes and it introduces a lovely couple in Jaime and Maxim. They are just both such nice, good people, you can't help but root for them. Himes has clearly taken care setting up this series and building not just the palace and the capital city, but giving us a bigger picture of some of the surrounding countries and their politics, including Jaime's native land. And this is just a sweet, easy story of two men falling in love.

The issue I had here is that things just felt a little too simple for a novel-length book. There just really isn't any conflict here. Maxim sees Jaime briefly when Jaime delivers his food, and then apparently decides to court him because suddenly he is visiting Jaime, taking him on tours of the castle, etc. And then they are just together. We get no real relationship development here, no sense of what is drawing these men together other than the fact that both of them are incredibly lovely and kind people. They are together almost from the start of the book and there is never any relationship conflict they face, or even any chance to see them really getting to know one another. We are also all in Jaime's head, and so I really never felt like I knew Maxim beyond his basic biography, as we don't really see them getting to know one another themselves.

Read Jay's review in its entirety [here](#).
