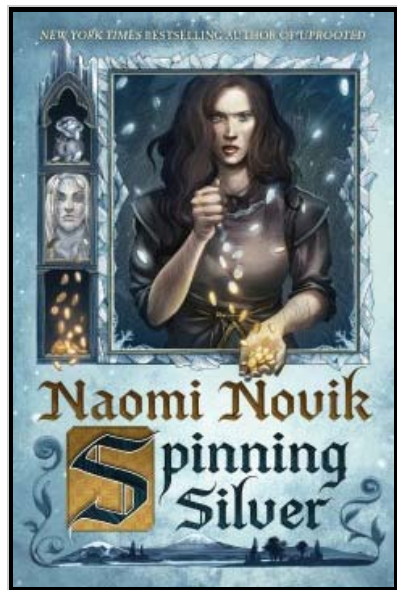




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Spinning Silver

A Novel

by Naomi Novik

Price: \$28.00(Hardcover)

Published: July 10, 2018

★★★★★

Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

From the Publisher: A fresh and imaginative retelling of the Rumpelstiltskin fairy tale from the bestselling author of *Uprooted*, which was hailed as “a very enjoyable fantasy with the air of a modern classic” by *The New York Times Book Review*. With the Nebula Award-winning *Uprooted*, Naomi Novik opened a brilliant new chapter in an already acclaimed career, delving into the magic of fairy tales to craft a love story that was both timeless and utterly of the now. *Spinning Silver* draws readers deeper into this glittering realm of fantasy, where the boundary between wonder and terror is thinner than a breath, and safety can be stolen as quickly as a kiss. Miryem is the daughter and granddaughter of moneylenders, but her father’s inability to collect his debts has left his family on the edge of poverty—until Miryem takes matters into her own hands. Hardening her heart, the young woman sets out to claim what is owed and soon gains a reputation for being able to turn silver into gold. When an ill-advised boast draws the attention of the king of the Staryk—grim fey creatures who seem more ice than flesh—Miryem’s fate, and that of two kingdoms, will be forever altered. Set an impossible challenge by the nameless king, Miryem unwittingly spins a web that draws in a peasant girl, Wanda, and the unhappy daughter of a local lord who plots to wed his child to the dashing young tsar. But Tsar Mirnatius is not what he seems. And the secret he hides threatens to consume the lands of humans and Staryk alike. Torn between deadly choices, Miryem and her two unlikely allies embark on a desperate quest that will take them to the limits of sacrifice, power, and love. Channeling the vibrant heart of myth and fairy tale, *Spinning Silver* weaves a multilayered, magical tapestry that readers will want to return to again and again. *Advance praise for Spinning Silver* “A book as cool and mysterious as a winter’s night, with two marvelous heroines at its heart. *Spinning Silver* pits the cold of endless winter against the fires of duty, love, and sacrifice. I couldn’t put it down.”—Katherine Arden, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Bear and the Nightingale* “Naomi Novik knows how to weave words into magic, and *Spinning Silver* enchants the reader from the first page. This magnificent tale of three courageous young women who find the power to change their fates will catch you in its spell and linger long after the last chapter is read.”—Christina Henry, nationally bestselling author of *The Mermaid*

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About The Author

Naomi Novik

Naomi Novik received the 2007 John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer at the World Science Fiction Convention. In 2016 she won the Nebula Award for Best Novel for *Uprooted*. She is also the author of the nine volumes of the Temeraire series and the graphic novel *Will Supervillains Be on the Final?* An avid reader of fantasy literature, Novik is also a history buff with a particular interest in the Napoleonic era and a fondness for the work of Patrick O'Brian and Jane Austen. She lives in New York City with her family and six computers.

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What We Say

She's done it again. Naomi Novik launched her career with the delightful conceit of combining the Napoleonic era with dragons...talking, thinking, querulous dragons who sometimes wonder why they don't have the same rights as humans, or at least the same respect that dragons enjoy in China. It's the sort of musing that might make any human riding on their backs a little...nervous. The Temeraire series began as a paperback-only release but garnered excellent reviews and a growing legion of fans. Ten books were planned but, just after the eighth, Novik delivered a stand-alone fantasy novel called "Uprooted." Digging deep into Polish folklore, it was remarkable and took Novik to an entirely new level. The Temeraire series ended (rather abruptly, to me) with the ninth and final volume. It was a very good and sometimes great series, but Novik was stretching her own wings. Now here comes "Spinning Silver." Nominally inspired by the tale of Rumpelstiltskin, it too is a stand-alone novel every bit as good as "Uprooted" and sure to be just as successful. Our heroine is Miryem, the Jewish daughter of a moneylender. Her father isn't a very good moneylender; he's rather embarrassed to ask people to pay up and takes any excuse with good cheer. So naturally people put him off as long as possible or simply never pay. The young girl loves him and doesn't mind so much. But when her mother becomes ill and their genteel poverty threatens to kill the mom and leave them homeless, she becomes rather determined. Miryem finds the fortitude to confront the people who owe them money. Her persistence and perhaps their mild feelings of shame result in her becoming a very good moneylender indeed. Suddenly, the family isn't just surviving; they are flourishing. Miryem unthinkingly boasts that she can spin silver into gold. And that's when the real problems begin. Like "Uprooted," this book is bursting with characters that are bitingly alive -- real, complicated, confounding and delightful. Even when they surprise, you think well of course that's what they would do. For a while, the book alternates between Miryem and a servant named Wanda. You assume this is the pattern of the book, when suddenly another character takes over the narrative for a chapter: the daughter of a nobleman who looks set to be married off in desultory fashion. And then another and another voice is added: the little brother of Wanda, the unexpected husband of that soon-to-be-wed daughter and more, each of them captivating and distinct. Novik does not create some imaginary fantasy world with an elaborate set of rules, Tolkien style. (Though she does give a fire demon a very Tolkien-esque name.) No, Novik sets her story in the folk tale world of our youth, but one that is far more realistic and rich than any you'll find in Grimm. As with "Uprooted," you won't discover a battle between good and evil but a battle between people and mythic characters, all of whom have their motivations and fears and desires, making the idea of "heroes" and "villains" seem positively childish by the end. Winter battles with spring, two worlds existing side by side try to swallow each other up and it's all gripping and funny and so, so good. At one stage almost smack in the middle of the narrative, Novik brings together two storylines in a way I hadn't expected and it made me smile with delight. That wasn't the first or the last time. Any book with a terrific opening, a mic drop closing and not a faltering moment in between is to be cherished. But beyond that, Novik is enriching the world of fantasy and folk tales with a depth of emotional complexity, empathy and humanity not seen since the heyday of Ursula K. Le Guin, if ever. She's spinning silver into gold, indeed. -- Michael Giltz

What Others Say

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