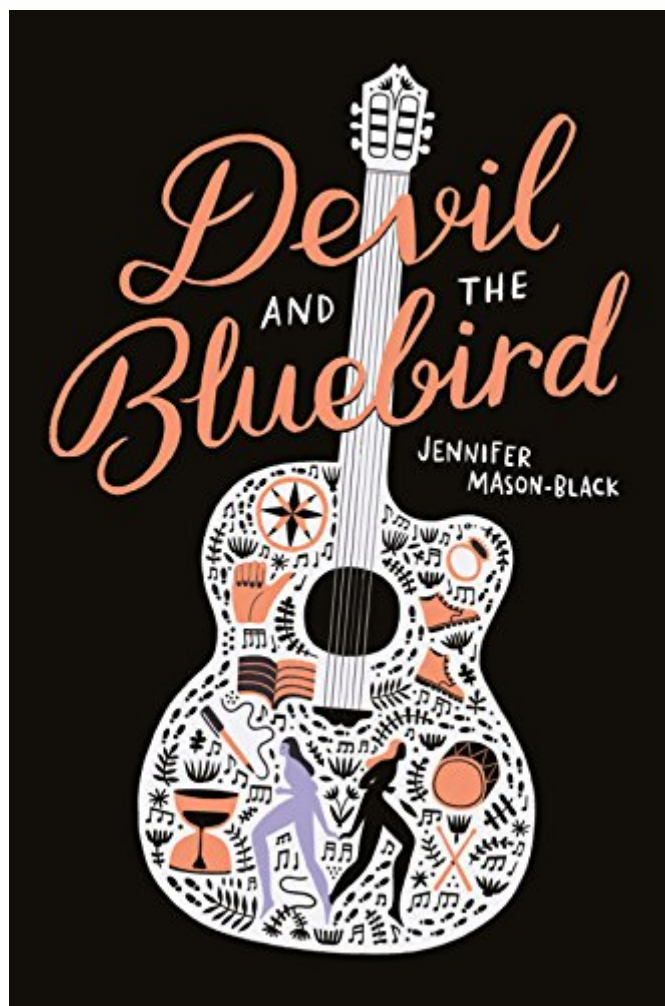


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Devil And The Bluebird



Synopsis

Blue Riley has wrestled with her own demons ever since the loss of her mother to cancer. But when she encounters a beautiful devil at her town crossroads, it's her runaway sister's soul she fights to save. The devil steals Blue's voice "inherited from her musically gifted mother" in exchange for a single shot at finding Cass. Armed with her mother's guitar, a knapsack of cherished mementos, and a pair of magical boots, Blue journeys west in search of her sister. When the devil changes the terms of their deal, Blue must reevaluate her understanding of good and evil and open herself up to finding family in unexpected places. In *Devil and the Bluebird*, Jennifer Mason-Black delivers a captivating depiction of loss and hope. "The odd and intriguing concept, the southern gothic backdrop, and the inclusion of nontraditional families and LGBT characters will endear this to many. Mason-Black's writing, lyrical and woven through with song and warmth, marks her as one worth watching."

--Booklist

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gorgeous book of beautiful prose with a touching story about sisterhood, family, and finding one's

self. Jennifer Mason-Black excels in creating scenes and characters that feel fully fleshed out. One thing that sets it apart from other road trip novels is the motivation behind Blue's road trip--she's not just trying to escape or have a final hurrah. She's on a search populated with wonderful characters who help and hinder her journey. Highly recommended for school libraries, public libraries, readers seeking fiction that explores family dynamics, readers seeking books about road trips.

If you met the Devil at the crossroads, what would you say to her? Sapphire Blue--Bluebird, secretly--has a missing sister, a pair of hiking boots, and her mother's guitar, and she makes a deal sealed with a kiss with the woman in the red dress: she will help Blue find her sister Cass, in trade for her soul. Her boots will guide her, in return for her voice--so Blue learns to speak through her guitar. When she thinks she's got the hang of the rules and the road, the woman in the red dress changes the stakes. She's got a notebook, a skeptical heart, and the power of myth on her side--what waits for Blue at the end of her journey? I love music, I love a road trip, and I love some subtle mythology, so *The Devil and the Bluebird* was a great read. It's a hard read too, with heartbreak with no easy answers, the politics of transience and the ache and selfishness of human nature, and Blue's mother's death creating ripples of pain across time and space. But, Blue's army of lovers--including Tish, her mother's former lover, partner in their folk rock act Dry Gully, and second mother to her and Cass, becomes something fantastic in the third act. I loved this, and can't wait to see more from Jennifer Mason-Black. "This world, we see it through all kinds of peepholes. Microscopes, telescopes, binoculars turned backward." Laughter echoed in Blue's head, a memory of all four of them playing with a pair of binoculars. "Sometimes we see things one way, sometimes another; some of them are never recognizable again. That's the magic of being alive."

I think the reviewers who compared this book to a Charles de Lint story have it about right; it's a little plainer and rougher-edged than de Lint, but it has much the same feeling and should appeal to the same audience, which includes not only young adults but anybody who can remember being a young adult, with all the uncertainty that that implies. It also shares with many de Lint stories a background of folk music and traveling musicians, which always appeals to me. Sapphire Blue, or Bluebird, or just plain Blue, a girl in her late teens, sets out to look for her older sister, Cass, who left home abruptly a couple of years before and didn't telephone Blue on their mother's birthday, as she'd promised she would always do. Cass is the only person Blue has felt close to after their musician mother died of cancer; their aunt, who took them in, is pleasant enough but very conventional. To speed her hunt

for her sister, Blue goes to a deserted crossroads at midnight and makes a deal with a woman in a red dress, whom she believes is the devil. The woman gives Blue boots that will point her in Cass's direction, but Blue has only six months to find her sister: if she fails, the woman can claim both of their souls. As a down payment, furthermore, the woman takes Blue's voice; Blue cannot speak for most of the story, but must communicate by writing notes. An additional bit of the fine print in the deal states that if Blue tells anyone her real name "or if they find it out on their own" she must leave them within three days, or harm will come to them. Blue travels across the country with little more than her (and before that, her mother's) guitar in its battered case, encountering good people and then bad people and then good people again and so on. It's a somewhat repetitive alternation, but all the people are interesting, especially Steve, a young transgender person, and Tish, Blue's mother's former partner in music and life. The woman in the red dress shows up again from time to time, too, as does a man who seems much more like a devil than she does. As she deals with the joys and dangers of her journey, Blue learns more and more about who she is. The book is well written throughout, and I found it very satisfying. I hope we hear more from this author.

I adored this book. A modern day folktale, filled with darkness and broken things and so many varieties of love. It is strange, and haunting, and ethereal, and intimate. Our heroine experiences some truly terrible, horrible, traumatizing evil. And a hundred small kindnesses. As her journey transpires, her knowledge of herself and other people deepens. It reminded me of "The Devil and Daniel Webster", Stephen Vincent Benét's Faustian folktale, only with the power of music substituting for the power of oratory. Blue makes for a great protagonist, and Mason-Black has a wonderful eye for humanity, in its many stripes.

I LOVED READING THIS VERY INTERESTING BOOK. IT WAS FILLED WITH MANY UNIQUE CHARACTERS THAT SHE MET ALONG HER JOURNEY SO THAT IT KEPT YOU INTRIGUED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE BOOK. JENNIFER'S WRITING STYLE IS SO REFRESHING FROM ANYTHING I HAVE READ IN THE PAST AND I WOULD HIGHLY RECOMMEND THIS BOOK. IN FACT, MY BOOK CLUB WILL BE READING IT SHORTLY.

My two criteria for absolutely loving a book: 1. Reading far into the night, unable to put the book down 2. Finding characters that stay with me well after I have read the last page This beautiful little book gifts the reader both my criteria, and so much more...

DEVIL AND THE BLUEBIRD. Perfect book about finding yourself, art, and success. Love how she describes music. Reminded of Charles deLint's urban fantasies.

I loved the book. It was fascinating and challenging and included a number of endearing characters. Go for the ride. Emerge ready to sing, write or ... well, that's up to you.

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