Tin Man – Book Review

Tin Man, by Sarah Winman, is a novel that follows the friendship of two young boys, Ellis and Michael, which develops as they grow up. The story moves between time frames and points of view, covering the boys' childhoods and Ellis' marriage to Annie, the time between, and the time after. It explores the complex nature of love, loneliness, longing, compassion and forgiveness.

Tin Man is a book that focuses heavily on the characters and setting and less so on plot. Sarah Winman does this well, and each character is interesting and multilayered. They demonstrate the brutality and magnificence of love and loss in an honest and realistic manner.

There are some absolutely stunning lines in this book. I was blown away at the beginning when Ellis is introduced; the descriptions are gorgeous, and there are many others throughout the book that caused me to stop so as to truly absorb them.

However, overall I did not gel with this book and the main reason for this is that I found the general writing style complicated, and at times it lost and confused me. This is definitely a personal opinion; I know that a lot of people are bowled-over by how well-written this book is. But I love stories that twist between different points of view and time frames, and I found this one just too jumpy and stark. The first half of the book was particularly difficult to get through; at the midpoint, the writing style changes dramatically and flowed better, increasing my interest in the story, but I still wasn't completely captured by it.

I loved Sarah's first book, When God Was a Rabbit, so I was looking forward to this one after hearing so many good reviews. Unfortunately, it just didn't live up to expectations

for me. I am, however, keen to get to her other book, A Year of Marvellous Ways, which has been on my bookshelf for far too long! Although I did not completely enjoy this book, I definitely still recommend it. There is some beautiful writing and the images created are wonderful. Perhaps I just wasn’t in the right mindset for this one at the time.

I gave it 3 out of 5 stars.