The Winner's Curse
Marie Rutkoski
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Kestrel didn't know what she was thinking to bid a high price on a slave from the auction. She spent 50 keystones on a slave named Arin, drawn by his defiance. Kestrel, being the daughter of a Valorian general, knew the word would spread about her purchase. But the exorbitant amount of money she spent on this man would be nothing compared to what was to come. Buying Arin came with a cost, a cost that Kestrel could have never imagined. She never expected to fall in love or to see her entire world turn upside down.

The Winner's Curse was certainly a story of star-crossed lovers. Kestrel and Arin could not love each other, when she was a valued Valorian and he a Herrani slave. And that is the very thing that made their slow burn romance all the better. Who doesn't love a little drama? Aside from the intriguing dilemma of Kestrel and Arin's relationship, I found myself drawn into the recurring concept of war and strategy in this story. Kestrel is a strategist and knows how to crush her opponents in a gamble. And Arin is the only one who can beat her at her own game. In fact, their romance is heavily influenced by strategy. Different stakes arise during their time together and it certainly switches things up.

The book is a slow-burn, so readers may not expect much action. But there are definitely some negative elements. Violence, alcohol, slavery, and sexual harassment do make a showing in this story. With all the romance, readers can expect The Winner's Curse to have some intimacy, but not so much to be a burden. Therefore, I would recommend this book to anyone 13 years or older. This would make an amazing gift for fans of romance and strategy!

Recommended Titles:
The Winner's Crime by Marie Rutkoski (Sequel to The Winner's Curse)
Bridge of Snow by Marie Rutkoski (Prequel to The Winner's Curse)
The Shadow Society by Marie Rutkoski
The Cabinet of Wonders by Marie Rutkoski