



Falling Stars

Anita Mills

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Betrayed in a foreign land, one woman desperately attempts to return home in the sequel to AUTUMN RAIN.

Never thought to be particularly pretty, Englishwoman Katherine Winstead is flattered and overwhelmed by the attentions of the Russian Count Alexei Volsky and his sister Galena. When the Count proposes marriage, Kate thinks her dreams have come true, and readily accepts.

Isolated in the Count's frozen Russian estate, Kate quickly learns she is pregnant with the Count's child. The celebration is short lived as Kate discovers with horror her part in an elaborate plot for an heir, and the true relationship between the Count and his sister. Driven to flee in the Russian winter, Kate turns to the rakish Viscount Townsend, a family friend who has been hiding in Russia while contemplating his return to England. After bearing such a dark betrayal, will Kate's heart ever feel warmth again?

Falling Stars Details

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From Reader Review Falling Stars for online ebook

Regan Walker says

Beware Handsome, Mysterious Russians Offering Jewels

Mills serves up an unusual story that sweeps the heroine from the ballrooms of London to the grand palaces of Russia. The story begins in London in 1814 where Katherine (“Kate”) Winstead, and her younger sister Carissa, are enjoying the London Season with their brother, Harry, Baron Winstead. [Usually the title and surname are not the same but here they are.] Harry’s best friend is Bellamy (“Bell”), Viscount Townsend, a rake of the first order with the face of an angel. He and Kate constantly exchange barbs and unpleasant truths about each other.

By all accounts, Kate is both short (5 feet tall) and plain, and at 22 “on the shelf”, yet when the Russians come to town with young Czar Alexander, all that changes. For some reason known only to his sister Galena and him, handsome Count Alexei Volsky takes a fancy to Katherine and quickly offers for her. Now why would a handsome Russian count do that? Why, indeed. To have such an offer as a plain girl is unheard of and Katherine does not fail to accept, particularly when the count’s sister, Galena, tells Kate the huge betrothal ruby on her finger proves Alexei loves her.

I thought Mills did this part especially well, preserving the mystery as the wool is pulled over Kate’s eyes. Ah, but no reader will fail to wonder just what’s going on.

Meanwhile, Viscount Townsend must escape a woman in London who has set a trap for him, so he decides to go to Russia when Kate and the Russian entourage leave town... and the plot thickens.

Russia is a very foreign place to Kate: the language, the people and the customs. She feels trapped inside Alexei’s huge estate as the snows pile up outside. There, she learns she is pregnant and is thrilled until she discovers, to her horror, her marriage is a sham and underneath it all is a horrible truth. Kate decides (reasonably so) to flee Russia in winter. And who should come to her rescue but Bell, Viscount Townsend.

This is an unusual, well-told tale that kept me turning pages. Mills did very well with the Russian culture and scenes in and around Moscow in the winter. I felt the cold and lamented the loss of green England along with Kate. You must be patient to see the hero as an actual hero (though there are earlier hints) but he does come around in the end.

Tonileg says

Historical English romance with a brutally honest voyage in winter to Russia where a plain jane learns about love and finally finds it with a smoking hot titled gentleman.

Second chances romance with some damaged people which goes to show that you can be really good looking and still get the brutal shaft because that is not enough to make a relationship last.

Miss Katherine Winstead is a shy plain-jane with no good prospects to marry with an awful selfish mother and younger sister but is still a strong spunky girl because of a wonderful loving relationship with her older brother and father. Her brother's best friend Viscount Townsend is also selfish but his good looks and wealth

let him get away with almost anything which Kate doesn't accept or condone, she is his greatest critic and in a way a good honest friend which he doesn't figure out until they get thrown into a crazy situation in Russia. So Russian Count Alexei Volsky and his sister Galena come to London with the Russian Czar's entourage and quickly sweep Kate off her feet which should have been warning signs because she is shy and not beautiful, but they quickly get married and return to Russia where she finds lies, incest and almost dies. There is more than a little adultery in this book which although historically accurate was too big a part of this romance story.

The obvious happens when Kate goes to court to get a divorce, which means total rejection from London society, but she gets really lucky but it just goes to show that money can pave your way almost anywhere.

There is a HEA, but this was one roller coaster of angst and more than a little depressing.

Not a humorous read if that is what you're looking for, but historically accurate depiction of marriage and divorce in England, the difficulty of travel, the domestic situation of Russian serfs and how quickly a person can lose their good reputation and be ostracized at this time period.

384 pages and kindle freebie

Katie says

I seem to be a very small minority who liked it but didn't love it (nor hated it). It was a good read but not one that would make me choose another right away.

Victoria says

Is a great book to read

LJ says

FALLING STARS - Poor

Mills, Anita - Sequel to "Autumn Rain"

Kate Winstead's noble father had been destroyed by his weakness for gambling. Now Kate was taking a gamble that would have made her father blanch. She was giving her hand in marriage to a man she barely knew and going to live in a foreign land. Her husband, Count Alexei Volsky, was as mysterious as he was masterful, yet strangely cold even at the burning peak of passion. What secret did he and his ravishing sister conceal on his vast estate deep in Russia? And would Kate dare turn for help to Bell Townsend, London's most notorious rake who had fled from scandal at home to pursue his desires abroad? Kate was torn between a husband she did not trust and a libertine lord who made her doubt herself. It was a game of danger and desire—the stakes were shockingly high, the key cards were hidden, and love held the final startling trump.

Set in Russia, I didn't care for this.

Susannah Carleton says

Sequel to Autumn Rain. It's not a typical romance, but it's an intriguing one.

The Glassed And The Furious says

I had this book on my kindle for ages before I finally read it, so I had pretty much forgotten what it was about and just started reading. And well....

First of all the beginning is annoying simply because of Claire. What a horrible brat. I was tempted to put it down because I already knew this would continue throughout the entire book. But I kept going.

The moment Townsend was introduced I knew that at the end he and Kate would be together, it was all just a question of how. When Lexy entered I could suspect that it would get ugly. So basically this book has a huge problem with predictability. I could guess what would happen between Lexy, Lena and Kate, I could guess that since Bell went to Russia with them he would help her and and and. So it really wasn't such an exciting story.

Also, most of the book is dedicated to the wrong events. The parties in London, Claire's unbearable chatter, Lena playing dress up with Kate, the travel to Russia, the introduction to Lexy's family and and and. It's all way too boring and considering that the main event should be Kate's flight from Russia there is too much focus on idle chitchat and unimportant things.

The entire escape was dark, really really dark and while I appreciate the shocking realism to it all, it was the way the characters reacted that made it unlikeable. I get it; Bell is selfish and solemnly helps people, but he decided to any ways. Why does he always have to remind the reader about how much he dislikes it? WHY does he constantly tell Kate so? And if he's not contemplating that helping her was a mistake he goes on and on that he's just useless - which he really is. The only thing he's got going for him is money.

Kate's struggle was real and it really did affect me.

But here's the major problem for this story: the love story between Bell and Kate is unbelievable. Not necessarily for the characters but because of the way it happened. During their escape there is no real bonding. He tells her to eat, he orders her to rest and tries to console her after the miscarriage. They play cards. Then, suddenly they're kissing, once in Poland they sleep with each other and then he wants to marry her. It was just unconvincing.

I did like the trial, Hamilton was a good addition but then again Bell just suddenly returns from Italy, practically falls onto his knees in front of her and tells her how much he loves her and then: the end.

It's as if the entire character of Bell that was constructed throughout the book was a contradiction to the Bell of the end.

Angelyn Schmid says

Readers either love or hate this book, a sure sign that it is unforgettable.

I've read this book many times, not only because the story is gripping but to learn how to create believable characters and emotional conflict.

Bell Townsend is the anti-hero and I love this character. The author takes his selfishness and manages to turn it into a strong motivation to help the heroine--how does she do that? I'm still working on it.

Kathleen says

If I could give a book NEGATIVE STARS, I would.

I read Autumn Rain years ago by the same author, and loved it. Just the right mix of melodrama and angst. So when I spotted Falling Stars in a used bookstore over the winter, I grabbed it. And fell straight into one of the most depressing books I have ever read.

The gently-bred English heroine marries a Russian man with a secret. After she is pregnant with his child, she discovers that he's in love with- and sleeping with- his sister. So she flees with this other man, who was kind of an anti-hero in Autumn Rain and is a great character here, except that by now over half the book is over. Seriously. They flee in the middle of winter, trying to get to England, and she gets terribly ill and loses the baby in a horrifying episode in a monastery or something.

I actually stopped reading shortly after. It was too depressing. The heroine was too deeply flawed and kind of batshit crazy by this point because of all the hellish things she'd endured so far, and I just couldn't see a happy ending on the horizon, which is a major reason why I love romance novels.

In the end, it was just too realistically depressing a portrayal.

Lindsay Nelson says

Good

I wasn't sure if I would like it or not for most of it, but I did in the end. Pretty disturbing and depressing through a lot of it, but ended well.

Laura Lee says

England and Russia in the early 1860s. Liked it.

Nancy Laney says

Autumn #2

Julianne G Cockey says

Excellent

Excellent

This vivid story pulls emotions out of you and has you turning pages to read faster than your eyes can focus. It will reveal the heartbreaking degradation and lack of freedom many people suffered in the early 1800s of Europe and Russia. It's the survival story of a brave sheltered young woman.

Lady Day says

Because of the bad reviews, I started at the middle of this story. What I read so far has been interesting. Will review upon completion.

Update: I enjoyed the book, it is a fifteen hour read and it introduces a character in the third book of the series which happens to be one of my all time favorite. Now the book is in audio format.

I would say to understand the H and the heroine you must understand there past. It is a slow book but it does get better.

CLM says

I know I read this but don't remember anything but the cover.
