



Up and Down

Terry Fallis

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David Stewart, fresh from the Canadian Space Ministry, proposes NASA revitalize their PR with a Citizen Astronaut. A lottery for one Canadian and one American to visit the International Space Station chooses a too-perfect Texan, and a aged lesbian bush doctor pilot. How can he keep his job and still do the right thing?

Up and Down Details

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Author : Terry Fallis

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From Reader Review Up and Down for online ebook

Beth Peninger says

I seem to just really like Terry Fallis. I read his first two breakout novels back in 2011, *The Best Laid Plans* and *The High Road*, and knew that I would want to read anything else he publishes. Lucky for me he published last year with *Up and Down*. Fallis' titles aren't carried in my library system so I have to get his books through inter-library loan. Thank goodness for that option.

In this novel Fallis departs from official politics and focuses on a different kind of politics, the PR world. David Stewart has just left his job with one of Canada's Ministers to move closer to his dying Mother in Toronto. A PR firm trying to land a NASA account hires David on given his obsession with space and his previous experience in the field of science and space exploration. David's never done PR before but how hard can it be, right? Or maybe wrong. Fallis gives us an insiders look at a PR firm that employs a land animal they are asking to swim. As per his other titles, Fallis' David and the other characters he brings along for the ride are likable and engaging. David's journey through his first run at PR is interesting and fast-paced. Fallis once again develops characters that the reader can warm right up to or despise and in the manner in which Fallis wants the reader to. While David isn't near as humorous as Angus from Fallis' other two titles there are still funny moments. The story was a bit slow going in a few parts but within a page or two picked right back up for me. Not only does the reader find themselves walking in step with David but this reader (me in this case) fell in love with Landon. Brilliant character. Fallis, it seems to me, also continues in this book, and maybe more so than his other two since this one featured joint American and Canadian characters, to dispel false ideas and thoughts about America's neighbor to the North. We Americans can be pretty insensitive and stupid and I wasn't all offended by his exposure of it. Once again Fallis crafts a novel I was happy to read. And once again I state I will be reading whatever else he puts out in the future.

Ronni says

Terry Fallis, you've wooed me again. I just love his style of writing, his ability to make me laugh our loud (no small feat my family will tell you), and his talent for creating such loveable characters. I didn't think it was possible for him to make a character as unique as Angus from *Best Laid Plans*, but he equaled Angus with Landon. I only wish she was a real person, because I'd love to share a good cup of her minestrone and chat about the stars.

Philip says

After reading Terry's first two books I was actually waiting quite anxiously to read "*Up and Down*". I was not disappointed in this book but I don't think I enjoyed it quite as much as "*The Best Laid Plans*". This may just be because I, personally, am not quite as knowledgeable about the reality of life in a PR agency or in NASA as I am about the Canadian Parliamentary system thus taking a bit of the bite out of the satire. I did think *Up and Down* returned to more of the humour of *The Best Laid Plans*, which wasn't there in "*The High Road*", but most of the loudest laughs were achieved through slapstick stunts that would, in reality, be completely impossible to perform. That all being said I quite enjoyed *Up and Down* as highly satisfactory comic relief after having just been terrified and shaken by Don Easton's "*Birds of a Feather*" and enjoying the suspense and gore of Rick Mofina's "*Blood of Others*".

Terry Fallis has a great ability to invent some highly interesting characters and I think it'd be a real hoot if he could figure out some way to have Landon Percival join forces with Angus McLintock in Ottawa. Parliament would never know what hit it!

Mark says

This new novel by award-winning Terry Fallis is hazardous! I say that only because I was listening to part of the novel while driving and was laughing so hard that I almost got in an accident.

In all seriousness, having been a fan of the author's first two books, which were a satirical look at politics, I was eager to read this latest stand-alone novel. Fallis completely impressed me with this novel about a PR agent who takes on the task of trying to re-vitalize the public's interest in the space program.

Like in his first two novels, Fallis employs the use of a character seemingly out of their element to great humour and to also tug on the heartstrings. He delivers a rollicking fun ride with wonderfully dealt humour and a compelling storyline.

In a nutshell, Fallis has hit another home run with this wonderful blend of satire and poignancy. I suppose, though, since it is about the space program, I should say something like: "Fallis blasts another another novel into award-winning orbit territory, offering one small step for an author, one giant leap forward for Canadian literature." (In honour, of course, of the great Neil Armstrong)

Jennifer Rayment says

The Good Stuff

- Descriptions of the PR world - dead on accurate. Ok, I only worked in a PR agency for a year, but I think I worked with some of the characters in this novel
- Oh so very Canadian - and I mean that in a good way
- Could not put the book down, eventhough it wasn't my usual fast paced type novel - it was just so damn interesting and funny I was affected that very same way. I stayed up way too late reading it and would even read it while brushing my teeth and drying my hair
- Absolutely hilarious yet heartwarming and honest
- Plot is so unusual, yet at the same time, you cannot believe someone hasn't thought of this already
- If you do not fall in love with L. Percival there is something horribly wrong with you
- Filled with tons of commentary on US/Canada relations - but not done in a mean way
- Now if every Canadian writer could write like us I would stop making those snarky comments about Canadian literary writers (you know the ones that are depressing and write about the Bush -- ok, come on my schooling did it to me -- one can only take so much Laurence, etc)
- You know what, check out the passages section and if it appeals to you -- go pre-order the book, you will not be disappointed - think I better make sure my chapters store has lots of copies as I will be selling the shit out of this one, it is so good and will appeal to so many

The Not So Good Stuff

- It ended and I was just having so much fun I wanted more -- get back and write me some more Fallis!
- Quite frankly I am really disappointed that the story isn't real -- man I loved Landon Percival so much

Favorite Quotes/Passages

"Docking procedure" may be the better way to describe the manoeuvre that rolled her up to the strealined chrome and glass desk that would not have looked out of place on the bridge of a Federation starship. I half-expected an order to lay in a course for the Vega system. She caught my stare.

"I know. It's ridiculous, isn't it?" she said, running her hand across the gleaming elliptical surface. "The jackass before me was into sci-fi and spent an obscene sum redecorating before New York toasted him last year. Now I'm stuck with it."

"He's started out as an arrogant, right-wing, conceited jerk who viewed Landon, and everything about her with undisguised disdain, bordering on contempt. Now as the launch approached, he seemed to have evolved int an arrogant, right-wing, conceited jerk who had come to accept, respect, and even enjoy Landon, largely through her own generosity towards him. I still thought he was an ass, but Landon would hear none of it."

"But I was about at my limit. I hate when people use the word "tolerant" to describe how enlightened they are about gays and lesbians. It would never be acceptable to say that someone is "tolerant" of women, or blacks, or Roman Catholics. But somehow it's still okay to be "tolerant" of a lesbian."

Who Should/Shouldn't Read

- Um - well - if you are Canadian you will not stop laughing and shaking your head at times
- Americans - you might be a little ticked off - but just remember its all in good fun & lets face it most of you think we all live in the Great White North, say Eh and wear lumberjacks. Don't worry we sometimes do the same thing and think you are gun toting maniacs -- we are both wrong and I love ya all (Well except for that Bush guy -- we kinda know he is a moron)
- If you have worked in the PR field - you will get it and enjoy
- Most importantly if you have an interest in space travel this will appeal to you - Fallis obviously has a passion for it

5 Dewey's

I received this from Random House in exchange for an honest review - thanks guys stayed up much too late reading this and now must go buy his other books - damn you book pimps you

Andree says

Well, this is just fun. Sometimes I love CanLit.

A guy working at a PR firm helps organize a competition to send two citizen astronauts up to the space station, one Canadian, one American. The Canadian is a seventy-one year old woman who lives in rural BC (and I mean seriously rural BC), is a former doctor, and flies a bush plane. All while harbouring a lifelong dream of being an astronaut. She is also a diehard Sherlock Holmes fan, has spent years searching for her father who died in a plane crash, and is unbelievably kind. The American is basically your stereotypical American guy

Look, it's a Canadian twist on triumph of the underdog. Toss in a PR office full of off-beat personalities, a NASA comms coordinator being awesome, and the main character being a space fanboy and you've got yourself a novel.

There's a lot about this novel to love. There's a really good core story here that's very satisfying. Plus, the book feels really Canadian, which I often enjoy. Also, and it's no small thing, this book features a few really positive depictions of women with careers. They're workaholics, but that's not all they are. They're balanced. And they're not heartless, just driven. I really enjoyed it. Diane with her absurd glasses and Amanda in general were my favourites. Awesome at running the PR firm and getting it done. And also, Landon, the Canadian astronaut is just awesome, while David, the PR guy walks the line between being competent at his job and a bit wily, while also being self-deprecating and clumsy and awkward generally. It works.

That said, not a perfect novel. The prose is occasionally a bit clunky, particularly at the emotional scenes (noticeably so). And occasionally it felt like a bit... much. (view spoiler)

Also, for reasons of my own, I giggled when they started using LandSat data to search for her father.

Mostly, despite its flaws, I liked it a lot. So maybe this is really 3.5 stars, but I'm definitely rounding up. And honestly, in my current mood I could be talked into a straight 4.

2015 Reading Challenge - A book with antonyms in the title

Marisa says

A light and fun read, especially if you work in the field of Communications. The characters are a bit too one-dimensional (although quite likeable) and the humor is obvious at times. Still, it's enjoyable enough. I liked Terry Fallis' first book "The Best Laid Plans" far more.

Marieke says

4.5 stars. I enjoyed this so much and it was exactly the book I needed to be reading at just this time. I want it to be a movie and I have casting suggestions. :)

An Odd1 says

After "three years for the Science and Tech Minister" p2 in Ottawa, narrator David Stewart is hired by international PR company TK (Turner King), to win their bid, joint with Washington DC branch. NASA

wants to "re-engage the public" p19 after "the majority of survey respondents would rather go out for lunch than watch a shuttle launch" p15.

A space geek from forever, I looked forward to this subject, but overall ended disappointed. The first 1960s telecast was unforgettable, the terrorist Twin Tower takedown worse, I'd usually rather try a new book or movie than old myself.

"Welcome to the dark side", the first line, links PR profession "with Lucifer, lord of the underworld" p1, mine and stereotype viewpoint, applies more to dress code. "Almost everyone wore black" p5. Only his boss Diane, supplemented her "barely five feet" p1 by "outrageous .. specs looked like a bizarre little abstract-post-modern sculpture" What she sees "adds a few inches to my presence and makes a very personal fashion statement" comes across more as "a declaration of war" p5.

His gut reflex reaction to agency committee style standard proposal, "boring", provokes the inspiration "Citizen Astronaut", a lottery for everyday janes and joes to join the elite astronaut ranks. His typical Canajun "nice guy personality" p3 is down to the core soul true. He goes to the bat for their selection, bush pilot doctor Landon Percival 71, turned down before, too old at age 44 p153.

Her search for the total disappearance of her father and his plane forty years before is in intriguing side mystery, deepened when satellite photos show no crash site p318, weak thread, but slow reveal helps hold interest. (view spoiler)

Lanny the lesbian is annoying, *not* an aspect of heroism, Intolerance is "to say someone is tolerant" of particular groups p 274. But when they demand differential treatment, complaints are unreasonable.

Too much is predictable. Lanny's smarts and strength, and kindness to jerk American winner, Eugene Crank, Texas deputy sheriff p177. Dave's discovery of her 30 years lost father, previous bush pilot. Villain, Washington GM (General Manager) Crawford Blake, foul-mouthed red-neck bigot (view spoiler). NASA Office of Communications Kelly Bradstreet is placeholder, supportive hotshot intermediary who convinces reluctant old guard astronauts.

My favorite personality quirks are Dave and Lanny's shared love of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, peppered quotes, catchphrases as passwords. Does author's life push in, to turn negatives positive, helping librarian sister Lauren care for their mother in the last few months of fatal cancer, nearly painless with newest medical policies? Did publisher pressure to add sex, when hard workaholic Toronto team leader Amanda "like an Exocet missile, only explosive" p21 gradually warms into a love interest?

I liked author Fallis's Best Laid Plans and sequel, that made boring Canadian politics fun, maybe I expected too much. Traditional national past-times are to criticize government and weather, so the slog was uphill. References to neighborhoods sweeten description for locals.

Before, the narrator was the reader, mild everyman caught in the orbit of an eccentric who fights for honesty, trips in slapstick silliness. Landon is lionized by fictional media but not a hero to me, predictably saves the mission leader (view spoiler), more of a diplomat than warrior. One funny incident is spoof ad for "Urnstar 2000 operators standing by" p195 in the funeral home, barfing lots gets boring. Crank's name and "impressive inflamed hemorrhoid" p295 are too blatant. I skipped too many pages, lottery requirements, conference calls, media plans, progress, medical minutiae.

I did not think Dave could hide his internet email and Twitter activity on his Blackberry (view spoiler).

Though why an IT joe would find and bring printouts to the attention of his supervisor does not make sense. Closing with moving "the lunch or launch needle" from 45% "to 61%" seems too small a triumph.

Aside: Real space spending

Apr 5, 2012 "The global space economy grew .. a surprisingly robust single-year expansion of 12.2 percent and five-year growth of 41 percent* in a global economy that has been suppressed in many other sectors ,, Space is good business", driven by "consumer demand for two space-derived products and services: GPS devices and chipsets and direct-to-home (DTH) television." <http://spaceref.com/event/28th-nation...>

Feb 6, 2013 "As government spending decreases worldwide .. space launch spending is forecast to spike to over \$9 billion in 2013". Pushed by "the proliferation of cellular devices, networks, and direct-to-home (DTH) services", more launches will be "executed by commercial companies" with "governments forced to subsidize". <http://spaceref.biz/2013/02/global-sp...>

In updating Wiki entry for James Doohan, original Star Trek Enterprise engineer "Scotty" Montgomery Scott, I found more evidence of his and their inspiration on generations. Ashes into space seem an unlikely growth industry, who knows?

Jaclyn says

I received this book from a Goodreads giveaway.

Up and Down is less slapsticky than The High Road, but unfortunately also much less charming. There were moments of mild humour, but they felt too forced to really elicit a laugh. Most of the story plodded from one plot point to another -- perhaps it was just that the conclusion seemed inevitable. The narrative earnestly wants us to cheer for certain characters, and in doing so ends up with stock character types that are occasionally charming but mostly flat. The story picks up a bit after a rocket is launched into space and becomes somewhat less predictable. Still, it's easy enough to predict the outcome for both the good guys and the bad guys, and so it's difficult to care.

Landon, the Angus McLintock of this novel, is likeable enough. We're supposed to fall in love with her, and yet in his attempt to make us do so, Fallis turns her into a near superhero. She can do no wrong, and just when you've seriously had enough of her utter perfection, she goes ahead and does something practically superhero-esque. I suspended my disbelief for most of her storyline -- and there were plenty of occasions that required a suspension of disbelief -- but Fallis pushed it far beyond the tipping point.

For what it's worth, I did enjoy The High Road - it was good, campy fun, and I actually liked Angus McLintock.

I couldn't stand this book. Bland characters, a checklist of a plot, and a character way too good to be true -- Up and Down felt like a trite PR pitch that just won't let up.

Connie Tang says

I was trying to decide between 4 or 5 stars (so 4.5), because it's not exceptionally profound or life-changing (as I feel like 5 stars should be), but it is... incredibly enjoyable to read. Highly so, easily one of the most delightful books I've read this summer. Without a whiff of mystery, it maintains its intrigue. And for a book about a PR firm trying to re-brand NASA, it was definitely an adventure.

While it doesn't start off as anything special, it rapidly grows on you, and it's an utterly charming book. It was hilarious. I laughed out loud multiple times, it's smart, it's sarcastic, it's satirical but still retains that heart. It's emotional, and I teared up at a story that has no tragic elements at all.

The only complaint I would have is that the book is entirely too white. But then again, so are most of the books targeted American and Canadian audiences. (I'm just bitter about this, because diversity only happens when the author is making a political statement, apparently) And Landon was too capable in all her respects, but she was so damn likeable that it didn't even matter.

I can only hope to be half as intelligent, capable, and generous as her.

An entertaining read through and through, and it comes highly recommended as a great summer read.

Most of all, with its obvious love in the setting of Toronto and Vancouver (which are places I have, obviously, a fond attachment), and the great Canadian "spirit" that tinges the entire novel - this book makes me proud to be Canadian.

Tania Gee says

The first thing I thought of as this novel began was "has Chris Hadfield read this book?" It's all about social media and re-invigorating the public's interest in the space program and it was published the same year Hadfield went up. If he didn't read it, someone on his team sure as heck did. The book certainly invigorated my interest in the space program.

This was a great light read, with quite a few genuine laughs and a few moments of real warmth. I had a great giggle at David's experiences with Power Point and other technologies, as they were much like my own. I enjoyed the comparison between PR and GOV'T work, and also the comparison between Canadian and U.S. PR companies, which did a little American stereotyping, but I was okay with it. As someone who constantly asks herself "what's the right thing to do here?", I found I related to and appreciated Fallis' characters who try to do the same. And, I loved his portrayal of an intelligent, adventure seeking, and totally still useful senior citizen. These themes of the idealistic protagonist and the inspiring senior appear to be ones Fallis repeats, and while that perhaps makes reading all his books back to back a little repetitive, they are also important themes that bear repeating in this age of political cynicism and undervalued seniors.

Tina Siegel says

If there was a half-star option, I'd give it three and a half. As always, I enjoyed Fallis' writing (which is clean and clear), his characters (who are endearing and memorable) and his story (which is fantastical in a charming way).

However, he still hits his jokes too hard. He's ham-handed. He gives us a funny incident, then tells us that it's funny, then explains WHY it's funny. And his foils, his antagonists, are one-note stick figures. They're boring, and therefore their contributions to the story are boring.

Still, it was an enjoyable read and I'd recommend it. I'd also caution you not to expect too much.

Beverley says

It takes great skill to write a comic novel that feels light but has serious undercurrent. Terry Fallis has mastered it. He gets better and better.

Suzanne says

Told from the point of view of David Stewart, a newbie in the PR world, this hilarious new novel from Terry Fallis follows David's experience working on his first campaign – with none other than NASA as his firm's client. David and his team need to create a plan to revitalize North America's interest in the space program, and the idea he comes up with is, well, out of this world: a lottery contest that would send one Canadian winner and one American winner on a mission to the International Space Station.

While this novel is completely filled with laugh-out-loud moments, Fallis also tries his hand at writing some more emotional scenes, and proves that he's just as adept at writing tragedy as he is comedy. Definitely one of the most entertaining books I've read so far this year. If you loved *The Best Laid Plans*, you'll love Fallis' latest hilarious read, too.

Carole says

I loved this book! Terry Fallis' tale of "citizen astronauts" going for a ride on a NASA space mission was laugh-out-loud hilarious, touchingly heartwarming, and quintessentially Canadian.

It is impossible not to love David Stewart, the PR man who plays the role of the naive narrator to perfection. The heroine, Canadian astronaut Landon Percival, is one of the most memorable fictional characters I have met in a long time.

Aside from the wonderful humour in the story, it is also a real page-turner and a great read.

Sarah says

This is what I've learned about Canadian literature since moving to Canada: no matter how far-fetched a plot line seems to an American, once you've lived in the north for a bit, it becomes strikingly plausible. I read this while following Commander Chris Hadfield's rise to social media fame (finished it prior to the recording of his song with the Barenaked Ladies) and it became hard for my mind to sort what was real and what was

fiction. I'm not sure if that means that the book is particularly realistic or that the events surrounding this gig on the ISS for the Canadian are particularly fantastic. Either way -- read this five years from now and it won't be near as interesting.

Daniel says

If you are Canadian and haven't read Terry Fallis, you owe it to yourself to grab a copy of any of his books and savour the pure and unadulterated feel-good rush that comes from reading them.

Up and Down is about NASA trying to reinvigorate their image, and how the Canadian branch of a PR firm stumbles into getting the job. Its a laugh riot from beginning to end, yet there are some serious and profound moments that ground the story.

Like his other novels, this a book I would recommend unreservedly to just about anyone.

Jennifer says

humour in literature is difficult. at least, i have a hard time with it on occasion. terry fallis is a funny guy. i have met him and enjoy him, so it was easy for me to imagine him telling me this story. but, on the page, i sometimes got a bit tired of david stewart (main character) being so prone to pratfalls and one-liners. for me, this served to detract from a great story. overall, i had a lot of fun with this quirky novel. some moments, i laughed out loud but overall, i was more taken with the heart of the story - 71yo Landon Percival. she's all sorts of awesome-sauce - than the humour being attempted. i loved the premise and while teetering on the outlandish, it was fascinating to imagine it all. a couple of complaints: a) product placement totally distracted me. do i care that it's a macbook air or a ford fusion? not at all. these moments totally jarred me out of the fictional world. b) the use of the word 'bitch' towards one of the female characters - a strong, driven female executive. sure it was used in a self-deprecating way, but really, is that necessary in this day and age? and then, the almost end...was a bit too...convenient. i wasn't sure one aspect of the story was really necessary? but i do't want to lob a spoiler here, so i will leave it at that and hope i remember it, should anyone ask. heh. seems, between this book and The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared, senior citizen heroes may be the new thing in literature. it's kinda cool!

Debra Komar says

I enjoyed this one more than any of Fallis' others, although I still find his books "intellectually frothy," as reviewer Andrew Pyper once wrote. Fallis asks nothing of his audience, which is fine for a summer beach read. There are still all the trademark overt manipulations and obvious plot devices. I hesitate to call them twists, because that would imply they are unexpected and they never are. The token love interest is telegraphed early and the romance never really builds to much. Like Grisham, Harlen Coben and countless others, Fallis found a winning formula and never deviates from it. It is the same single male protagonist, the same fish out of water work drama, the same slow burn relationship. It almost feels as though he has a computer program in which he feeds the name of his hero, the vaguely governmental agency he works for and the quirky hobby that will ultimately save the day. Its never believable, but it is easy on the eyes and lets you shut your brain off for a while.

