



# Falling Uphill

*Wendy Nelson Tokunaga*

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**Falling Uphill** Wendy Nelson Tokunaga

“Ruth Fenton is dead, but what does that have to do with me?”

That’s what Candace Grey, 29, wants to know after receiving a puzzling phone message from San Francisco.

A bright, but slightly absent-minded anthropology teacher at a small Michigan college, Candace is all set to leave for Los Angeles to conduct research on 1960s TV star Pamela Parrish—America’s Sitcom Sweetheart—for her Master’s thesis on television and female gender roles. But after discovering that Ruth Fenton is a long lost relative, she’s first off to San Francisco for her memorial service where she meets a crazy(?) old lady who claims Pamela Parrish didn’t commit suicide like everybody says—she was murdered.

Now Candace has to get to the bottom of it, all while fighting the nagging feeling that her long-time professor boyfriend back home is getting a little too close to one of his students, and at the same time wondering if new-found friend Brandon, a newspaper reporter and budding painter who lives on a hidden stairway street in the hills of San Francisco, is really the guy for her.

It’s a funny, but moving, uphill climb for Candace who finds that things are rarely what they seem in the ups and downs of love or in discovering a surprising secret about her not-so-perfect mother, or unearthing the truth behind the death of America’s Sitcom Sweetheart.

## Falling Uphill Details

Date : Published 2011 by Culture Wave Press

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Author : Wendy Nelson Tokunaga

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## From Reader Review *Falling Uphill* for online ebook

### Diane Wheatley says

A very sweet story. I read it on the plane. Good light book. Free on Kindle. Recommend it for a summer read in between heavier literature.

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### Kathy says

4.5 Stars. *Falling Uphill* by **Wendy Nelson Tokunaga** is a vastly entertaining and light-hearted novel that is a delightful mix of romance and mystery. To read my review in its entirety, please visit [http://www.bookreviewsandmorebykathy....](http://www.bookreviewsandmorebykathy...)

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### Kathleen Crowell says

I really wanted to like this but the characters and storyline fell flat. I did love the imagery of San Francisco though. you can really tell WT loves her home!

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### Kbee says

A bright, but slightly absent-minded anthropology teacher at a small Michigan college, Candace is all set to leave for Los Angeles to conduct research on 1960s TV star Pamela Parrish—America's Sitcom Sweetheart—for her Master's thesis on television and female gender roles. But after discovering that Ruth Fenton is a long lost relative, she's first off to San Francisco for her memorial service where she meets a crazy(?) old lady who claims Pamela Parrish didn't commit suicide like everybody says—she was murdered.

Now Candace has to get to the bottom of it, all while fighting the nagging feeling that her long-time professor boyfriend back home is getting a little too close to one of his students, and at the same time wondering if new-found friend Brandon, a newspaper reporter and budding painter who lives on a hidden stairway street in the hills of San Francisco, is really the guy for her.

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### Rhiannon says

The beginning is really really boring, so I gave up.

It's interesting. I'm fine with giving up on kindle books, but not physical books. Maybe I should read some more kindle books.

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## **The One Tree says**

This was a lovely light read. Very enjoyable.

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## **Bette says**

College professor Candace Grey is going to LA to begin researching her masters thesis on Pamela Parrish and Hollywood sitcom women and their influence on the role of women in America.

Candace stops in San Francisco for her Aunt Ruth's memorial before continuing on to L.A. which is fortuitous because she meets a woman at the senior home that claims that Pamela Parrish (think Donna Reed) was murdered. She also meets reporter Brandon Treadwell who provides research assistance and romance.

Romance and mystery in a light-hearted look at the 1950s and 1960s mothers on TV. Pamela Parrish and her TV family sound like the Donna Reed Show and brought back memories of watching TV with my family. I thoroughly enjoyed the stairways of San Francisco references.

11/77

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## **Caroline Gabel says**

its more a romance than a mystery, i prefer the other way around

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## **Joan Reeves says**

### **Gem of a Book**

I truly loved this story from the first page which sucks you in with a great hook and doesn't release you until the end, at which time you want to go back to the beginning and read the book again.

### **Blurbing The Book**

In this multi-layered novel, Candace Grey, an anthropology professor at a small Michigan college, is almost 30 and mired in a fizzling relationship with a man who won't commit any more than he'll become the kind of man she needs.

With plans made for a summer of research in Los Angeles to be followed by a fall dedicated to completing her thesis on gender roles as influenced by sitcoms, Candace is unsettled and lonely and uneasy and worried about her relationship. When she's notified that her only remaining relative has died in San Francisco, she decides to attend the memorial service there. That decision changes everything in her life, and leads her on a voyage of discovery about the star of one of her favorite television shows and about her own self -- what she

wants out of life and what she's willing to fight for.

### **My 2 Cents**

From the first page of this novel, you'll find yourself believing in Candace and her issues and understanding what makes her tick. It's as if she's someone you know, and maybe that's because we recognize her longing to be with someone because that would mean she wasn't alone in the world. Even though the man in her life doesn't nurture her, she tolerates his critical assessments and makes excuses for him and hopes he'll eventually commit because she wants marriage and children yet she doesn't push for that.

The subtle restrained emotions, the engaging characters, and the inexorable recognition of certain truths -- life is to be enjoyed, life is short, life is what you make it, and, in the end, life is what you decide to either settle for or to reach for -- fuels this novel. When you think it's predictable, it surprises you. When you think you see Candace's happy-ever-after coming down the pike, you breathe a sigh of relief because it's rewarding in a way that pleases anyone who ever struggled for a way out.

### **Setting As Character**

Don't be surprised if you're overcome with a burning desire to go to San Francisco and discover the enchanting stairway houses for yourself. In many respects, the city by the bay is as much a character as Candace and her pessimistic pals. She and her friends undergo an "optimism renaissance" as they recognize that not all men are bastards. Candace's embrace of the city she learns to love is a reflection of her willingness to step out of her comfort zone, ignore conventional wisdom, and reach for what she wants.

Falling Uphill by Wendy Nelson Tokunaga is a gem of a book. It's a keeper.

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### **Glenn Harris says**

Quite a nice little mystery/romance as an anthropology professor tries to find the truth about the thirty-year-old death of a Hollywood actress.

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### **Betty says**

Descriptions of the city were wonderful.

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### **Christine says**

A darling novel about a gender studies/tv researcher who falls in love with San Francisco and a new man. Anyone who misses walking the city should read this book!

The one negative I have is that the author was unrealistic in her choice of career prospects for her heroine. Tokunaga places her as a teacher at a liberal arts college in the anthropology department, without a post-bachelor's degree. It is possible for a college to hire someone based on significant life experience, usually in teaching business courses, but in general a person of the heroine's age and stage would not have a college

teaching job unless it was as a student teacher(ta), etc. It would be possible if she were writing her PhD thesis, but not a master's one.

Recommended.

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### **Charlene says**

Nice piece of fluff but not much of a story. Kept expecting some real intrigue or danger but the plot disappointed me.

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### **Gayla Nelson says**

Candace is a well rounded character surrounded by a variety of interesting less developed characters. The plot carries through the story well and the ending is fine. Not the best novel I have ever read, but I liked it enough to finish it. I related to it as she was a college professor working on a book, but it was set in San Francisco and Michigan and sometimes it seemed like the writer took the easy way out. I did like the subtle dry humor of the author. There were some memorable lines in it for me.

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### **Bobbi Steadman says**

Wasn't an awful read, but was far from impressive. I felt that Candace Grey's personality might be of a girl fresh out of high school and unsure of herself. Being a pretty well accomplished woman, she should have had a great deal more confidence than she did and her constant doubts about herself and her relationship began to seriously grate my nerves. I feel that she was much too dependent on her relationship, but when it ended (although she was expecting it wouldn't last much longer) she was upset for a total of one day. I think this was a great contradiction to her supposed 'love' for this man, and the fact that she had moved on and was ready to marry again almost immediately following (and with someone she was also having doubts about to begin with) gave the impression of a very weak woman who just couldn't stand being alone. Like I said, not awful, but I doubt I'll pick up another book by this author.

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