



How Not To Fall

Emily Foster

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In her witty and breathtakingly sexy novel, Emily Foster introduces a story of lust, friendship, and other unpredictable experiments. . .

Data, research, scientific formulae--Annabelle Coffey is completely at ease with all of them. Men, not so much. But that's all going to change after she asks Dr. Charles Douglas, the postdoctoral fellow in her lab, to have sex with her. Charles is not only beautiful, he is also adorably awkward, British, brilliant, and nice. What are the odds he'd turn her down?

Very high, as it happens. Something to do with that whole student/teacher/ethics thing. But in a few weeks, Annie will graduate. As soon as she does, the unlikely friendship that's developing between them can turn physical--just until Annie leaves for graduate school. Yet nothing could have prepared either Annie or Charles for chemistry like this, or for what happens when a simple exercise in mutual pleasure turns into something as exhilarating and infernally complicated as love.

How Not To Fall Details

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From Reader Review How Not To Fall for online ebook

Marla Mei says

Still sorting out my feelings because damn son, this book just gave me All The Feels.

I didn't think I would like this book at first. In fact, a few pages into it, I decided that this book is not for me. Well the joke's on me because this book is totally for me and I'm so glad I was so bored off studying that I decided what the hell might as well just finish this book and now I'm crying because imagine if I hadn't been bored af I would've just tossed this into the DNF pile. Wow.

So here's a list including the things I LOVED about this book and also of the (very few) things that I didn't like:

- Annie. What a fantastic heroine she is. At first I thought she was pretty childish but eventually realized wow she is so me so of course I love her.
- The writing!!! So good. So, so good!!! Like how to write like this pls?
- The sex scenes are very well written and all served a purpose to the story. It did feel like there were too many of them but I'm not really complaining. Hehe.
- Charles is a dominant hero done right. What I disliked about him was sometimes he didn't feel like a real person? He talks too much and uses all these big words like do people really talk like that?? Idk.
- There were plenty of times--especially near the end--when I felt like crying because of all the feelings. Read this book guys and have your heart shattered by that ending. Thank God for the sequel--which feels like light years away but at least we're getting one--because that ending!!!

Daniel Villines says

So here I am at the end of a book filled with explicit sexual content and I'm tasked with writing a review while not sounding like a prude. In my defence, I am a fan of the genre. I have on occasion acquired a recorded performance or two from various sources. But I tend to like the short story format of the genre as opposed to the full-length novel. As such, I found *How Not to Fall* to be too much of a good thing.

From a critical point-of-view, *How Not to Fall* is an imbalanced book. It's impossible to believe that Emily Foster's intent was to write anything other than a story focused on the intricate details of sex. While there are occasional dry witty lines of humor, situational comedic scenes, and brief attempts at seriousness, these elements of the plot tend to serve as the fade-in-fade-out scenes between the sexual encounters. They never amount to anything that could compete with the extended chapters of sexual activity.

Also in support of the predominantly sexual theme, the characters are virtually perfect people. They are both medical students, geniuses, and beautiful examples of the human form. She is confident in her sexuality, rational about rejection, and relatively free of self-doubt and insecurities. He is the perfect gentleman who deems friendship more important than sexual conquests. They have no immediate flaws that would inhibit the reader from enjoying their enthusiastic and repeated encounters. I mean, who's not perfect?

The end of the novel does introduce some content of a broader scope and strikes at the perfection of its two consenting characters. By then, however, the book's purpose has been established and it's hard to be persuaded that this deeper insight is anything other than a manufactured way of ending the novel.

Anna says

If I could I might really give this book 2.5 stars because *How Not To Fall* suffers from a lack of identity. I adored the beginning. Annie and Charles are brilliant and fascinating, and I enjoyed them immensely. I was laughing out loud and I loved their wit, their obscure quotes, and the author's obvious research into a field of science I know little about.

Annie's sexual exploration was fascinating and the playing around with bondage was far less psycho than *Fifty Shades of Gray*. But of course once they went there things turned dark. Suddenly the kind, charming leading man is some dark brooding, emotionally unavailable control freak. What the hell?! Charles did a 180 from who he was at the beginning. And Annie went from confident, intelligent, scientific rock-star to a crying, whimpering mess who agreed to be controlled emotionally and physically. No. No. NO!

And of course as is typical in today's publishing world, we couldn't see the story resolved in this book. No, we're supposed to still be interested in these characters, who can't make up their minds as to who they really are, for another whole book? Yeah, I don't think so.

I would love to see a sexual exploration romance novel that doesn't feel the need to make the characters twisted. Enjoying dirty sex, rough sex, or role-playing does not necessarily mean you were screwed up as a child. I would happily read a story about Annie and Charles that didn't feel the need to devolve into the dark.

Disclaimer: I received a free of ARC of *How Not To Fall* from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Mónica BQ says

This is a tough one.

I both liked and didn't like this book.

First of all, I think is important to note that I did totally read this as a supposedly smart, feminist, progressive and consensual take on *Fifty Shades of Grey*. I say "supposedly" and I'll get to that later. The book draws some very obvious comparisons *not* to the "BDSM/rich boy/virgin girl" romance trope but to the actual FSoG book. And as such, **I mostly judged it based on those correlations instead of its own merits as a separate story.** And that was the first problem for me.

The book is about a girl, Annie, who has the hots for her lab supervisor and plans to make her intentions clear at a date she sets up in a coffee shop. In a matter of weeks their student/teacher relationship will be over and she feels she's got nothing to lose by just asking and then if he says no, he says no and that's it. The object of her lusty thoughts is Charles, English, brilliant, hot and tall. Up until that point (and the scene in which she actually asks, which is fucking hilarious) everything was running smoothly. But then the parallelisms began.

After some longing they both do decide to start a sexual relationship. The parameters for said relationship are

set from the beginning and are amply clear. I felt they were realistically drawn and I was liking the general idea of the book. It seemed original. And then everything went downhill from there. My issues can be summed up into three categories in no particular order:

- **The supposedly smart, feminist, progressive and consensual story.** I now go back to my previous statement. One of the first things that happen when Charles and Annie get together is that Annie reveals she's a virgin. Then they proceed to have a conversation about the social construct around the concept of virginity and what it means to both of them specifically, both the healthy and unhealthy connotations they each assign to it. That sounds good right? Problem was, **it sounded snooty as hell.** This was the very first glimpse into how disdainful this book would read to me.

And it didn't get better from then on. As their relationship progresses Charles makes up a series of "rules" as to how *far* into their sexual explorations they should go in a progression of day-to-day basis. First of all, it was fucking ridiculous. Secondly, it basically obliterated Annie's own take and definition of *her* virginity. There is even a point where they've done almost everything except penetrative intercourse and she even asks herself if it shouldn't be her who gets to define whether she's a virgin anymore. And the answer should be "hell yes!". But the power to set her *own* sexual and physical milestones is taken away from her and instead Charles is the one defining *what* is and isn't an important sexual activity or discovery. And that's where the book completely fails at making itself anything *progressive* or *feminist*. It's utter bullshit. And the fact that *Charles* gets to make a big deal out of inserting his penis in her vagina, instead of letting *Annie* be the one to determine that takes away not only her choice but her control over her own body. Since we get this book from Annie's POV we know she isn't entirely on-board with that, and we see her go from a self-assured, strong-willed woman to a complacent idiot.

Basically, **it was at that point that I started nit-picking everything. And even though the book didn't lose my interest, it did lose my respect.**

- **The very obvious parallelisms with FSoG.** It seems to be a fad now to take the tropes we saw in the wildly famous FSoG and deconstruct them. And that's fine. The tropes themselves aren't anything new under the sun, and after the clusterfuck that FSoG was at taking BDSM seriously and respectfully (not to mention its other various problematic content) I get why authors are jumping in at the opportunity to show a smarter way of doing it. The problem here was that this book sometimes read as the author's take on those tropes (which I reiterate: I like and applaud) and it sometimes read as the author's take specifically on FSoG. And there is where it massively fails. For two reasons mainly:

a) The condescending, patronising and arrogant tone of it. The whole time a scene is very obviously depicting or resembling a FSoG scene there's this *tone* to it that reads like "hey, lookie here!, this is how it's done". And I'm sorry, but I'm not fucking reading a romance to be fucking lectured. I read contemporary romance for entertainment and if I learn something along the way, *cool*. But I'm not looking forward to a fucking lesson.

b) The book would have probably worked better, or at least for me, if it hadn't made it's mission to draw evident comparisons against FSoG. Honestly, the book was doing fine and the story was completely interesting without inserting those minuscule details that makes indisputable to which other book it is referring. We have Annie (Annabelle) and Charles. Annie is an inexperienced virgin. She lives with her best friend and confidant. She has two loving parents. She's sweet and hard-working and smart and naive. Charles is a rich lord from England, sexually experienced. He has two siblings. A brother and a sister that he loves but feels don't love him back because he is a repressed asshole. But is also secretly a sweetheart with a marshmallow soul. He gives Annie a first edition copy of a book that bears importance both to her personally

and in the world because he knows no other way to show his feelings. He "can't love" due to an abuse-filled past that's left him a tortured man. There are tons more of those details. And there are of course also differences. Plus the spin that's put on some of those things is actually very well written. But **what bothers me, is that none of those details were necessary at all for the core of the story, except to make an undeniable comparison and then smugly say "hey, this is how it's done".**

The final reason that made How Not to Fall a flop for me was:

- **I didn't much like the heroine.** This one is a totally personal pet-peve and it probably won't be a problem for the majority of other people who read the book. The woman fucking cries at least once a chapter for the first 40% of the book. UGH. And then, she is a bit too bubbly- at times she sounded almost childlike. I could have bought the act had she been playing it as a means to flirt (maybe) but in some scenes she was basically being either purposefully obtuse or just plain stupid and naive. And I can't with that either. For someone who's supposed to be super smart she acted and sounded like a 13 year old for half of the story.

I felt on the fence about the book while I was reading it, but I was also sufficiently intrigued for me to buy the second one, especially after the cliffhanger. (If you've read FSoG, you know what cliffhanger I'm talking about). It's basically the same (with a slight twist if you will, but the same nonetheless). I also have to say that there were some parts of the book that I loved:

- Some of the dialogue is highly comical.
- There's no abandoning of outside responsibilities.
- No sexual encounter in their place of work (thank you all of the gods!!!!!). They were both actually very professional when they had to be and neither of them neglected their research or work goals.
- The secondary characters were well portrayed without ever taking away protagonism from the story.
- **The book is very relationship- centred.** Which is something I now pretty much demand from contemporary romances. I fucking loathe reading a romance where the main story turns out to be "coming-of-age", or a mystery or anything other than the actual romance. There's on page interaction between the MCs *constantly*. The MC that doesn't get a POV is *not* shrouded in mystery and we do get to know him. Major kudos for that.

Paige says

Oh man on man. I wasn't expecting that ending but this book was pretty perfect. What a spelndid way to start the new year. Finding a new to me author and loving every minute (mostly: that ending though) of this delightful debut. (FYI: How this is a debut, I don't know because it is so well written.)

I heard about this one in Penny Reid's reader group on FB as it was recommended to her and I can see why! If you're a fan of Penny, this book is definately right up your alley. It's ridiculously smart. (I had to look up more than one term and eventually just nodded my head in confusion when certian science and medical terms were thrown about (but not at all in a bad way but in a way that was yeah, they are so much smarter than me and I'm okay with that kind of way). And the sexy times. Oh the sexy times. *fans self* It was steam-a-licious up in here but in a way that was not at all gratuitous. It worked really well. Erm. Really well. *wink wink*

Now that ending. Oy. My heart! This is not a standalone if you're looking for the standalone with an all inclusive HEA. But have no fear. The second (and final I'm pretty sure) book is out already and I can't wait

to dive in!

Ariadna says

Actual rating is 2.5

What prompted me to read this novel was listening to a podcast (featuring the author) in which she explained why she felt the need to write her version of 50SoG, the different thought processes she went through as she created what ended up being a duology, etc. FWIW, I think of 50SoG as poorly written porn that jumped to the top of the heap due to a mix of timing and v. astute use of the canon it's ~inspired by~. And, with another exception that I'm looking forward to reading, the 50SoG remixes (as I like to call them) is a genre that I tend to ignore due to lack of interest.

After seeing how *this* book came to be, however, I was curious enough to snag a copy.

Readers familiar with the original can tell where the author departed from the 50SoG narrative. Like, instead of Christian's dismissive/reductive attitude regarding Anastasia's physical virginity, Charles proposes slowing things down so that, by the time the penis-in-vagina moment happens, Annie is not only super aroused, but also truly enjoys the experience. Which, yeah, that's cool.

I liked and sympathized with Annie 80% of the time. She's ambitious when it comes to her professional career, had a good and close relationship with her parents and friends, and had a solid idea of what she wanted to do with Charles. At times, she was a little pushy, but that fit with her character's motivations so I couldn't fault her for that.

Because of what "inspired" the author to tackle this story and the overall theme, the novel has a lot of sex scenes. I give props to the author for keeping the focus on Annie's pleasure. The author took some time creating a complex female character and so Annie's exploration of her intimate and sexual desires were really neat to read.

HOWEVUH, with that in mind, I'll admit that there were scenes during Annie and Charles' convos that left me sorta cold. As characters who moved in Academia, their dialogue skewed heavily to the \$10 words.

The book--which is told from Annie's POV--has a tone that wavers between clinical and didactic. This translated into a certain level of detachment in her narration that made for awkward reading at times.

Out of the two, I was less enthused with Charles. The author really went deep when it came to Charles: he's a handsome British guy who has genius-level intellect, rich, and has a royal title. Like, the only thing missing was a hidden ability to fart kittens, IDK! Also, his dialogue is kinda OTT half of the time. The nicknames he gives Annie alone... #EYEROLLCITY

The author did give Charles a level of self-awareness that made him less insufferable. He's self-deprecating enough to cushion my side-eye at his perfection. I'm not sure I'd want to be friends with him IRL, tho. :-/

As the story progressed, there were some latter reveals about his background that explained his

achievements, his drive, etc. The downside was that Charles' darker side was also unveiled in what I found was an overtly dramatic way. The way that he talked about it and Annie's reaction to seeing Charles behaving in a more brusque manner were straight out of a soap opera. #Forrealsies

And, maybe this is where the plot's strangely formal vibe backfired for me. I was never sold on that particular conflict cuz it was mostly telling instead of showing. Like, Charles would go on about the trauma he'd endured (etc) and it was v. messed up. But, it didn't convey the pain or despair that the author was aiming for. In addition, I thought that, by focusing so much on Charles' pain, the novel grew weaker.

I mean, there's a neat conflict in how Annie and Charles only had about a month or so before she *had* to leave. So, to shift from that to Charles' manpain was DISAPPOINTING AF.

The tone went from Annie's happy and fun sexual escapades to Annie doing a poor job of avoiding manpain. This kicked off the Annie cry-a-thon. She literally cried at least once in each chapter for the last third of the book.

One last thing that, while for me was a #sadtrombone, I'm super sure some readers might appreciate: interwoven amid the sexy times are several instances of foot worship. Mainly in the form of kissing and licking them. There's no doubt that Annie and Charles enjoy the experience. It just isn't a thing for me.

TL;DR: Yet another version of 50SoG in which the female character has more backbone and the male character is less of an outright jackass. As far as het stories go, it's OK. I wasn't super convinced on the romance. The kink was mostly D/s and v. light bondage. I don't regret reading it, but I can't help my #sadtrombone at the last 70% manpain conflict bullcrap.

There was queer POC rep via Sally (Annie's roommate) and her girlfriend. Sadly, neither of them were involved in the story as much as I wish they had been.

Is it a good book? If you're a fan of 50SofG this is a good alternative. If you're not a fan of that book/series, it's an interesting take because Annie has more agency when it comes to learning about herself. It does end in a definite cliffhanger (just like the first book in 50SoG). I'm reading the second book if only to see how everything gets patched up.

Nicola says

4.5 Stars.

Well, I have to say wasn't expecting this to be as sex-fuelled as it was. Not that I'm grumbling, far from it because despite the fact that after some perfect build-up this couple went at it like a pair of rampant little bunnies, indulging at every opportunity, there's also a deeper story and whilst it unfolded later on, the pacing was right and it's set the next book up nicely. Yes, there are two parts to Charles and Annie's story although there's not a particularly painful cliffhanger.

"I have been imagining you naked since the day last summer when you came into the lab soaked through with rain."

I love a bit of forbidden love. I love smart, intellectual, slightly awkward characters and I love a bit of

debauchery, and *How Not to Fall* absolutely ticks these boxes. Annie and Charles have spent the past two years working together in a research lab, her student to his post-doctoral fellow. But they have *A Thing* and, with Annie's time up in the lab fast approaching she decides to act on her feelings for the slightly untidy, English sex-god.

What a fabulous surprise Charles was. Beneath the creased shirts and well-spoken, professional exterior is a very dirty English gent, who takes Annie on a journey of discovery, sexually and emotionally. She's young and inexperienced but she's no wallflower and her awkward honest musings and thoughts, internally and vocally, made for a great POV. And what's meant to be a few weeks of fun, no-strings sex with their friendship in tact at the end of it, soon starts to gather a bit of meaning, which Annie is fine with and Charles isn't so much.

"I'm fucked up, but I'm not a complete arsehole."

It could have been heavy but it wasn't and Charles' personal torment added depth, emotion and a whole raft of potential for the next leg of their journey. And Annie matured hugely from the character we met in the opening pages.

I'm glad this couple's story isn't over. And, if Emily Foster drifts away a little from the sex aspect and focusses on the real issues between them then I'll be one very happy reader. Of course I'm not going to grumble if they're still a pair of dirty bunnies, but there's so much more to both Charles and Annie than that and I'm looking forward to seeing if they can find their HEA in *How Not to Let Go*. December's not that far away.

Copy received courtesy of Kensington via NetGalley for an honest and unbiased opinion.

???s Xamante de los spoilersX says

Nuevo titulo: HOW TENER ALL THE FEELS Y MORIRTE DE AMOR LEYENDO ESTE LIBRO.

HOW CAGARTE DE LA RISA Y QUERER CASARTE CON LA PROTA PORQUE ES UNA GENIA.

HOW QUE MIERDA VOY A HACER CON MI VIDA HASTA QUE SALGA LA SECUELA?

HOW HOLY SHIT LOS PROTAGONISTAS SON FEMINISTAS!

Tarde como 2 semanas en leerlo pero de pajera nomas porque desde el principio se notaba el potencial de la historia.

MUY BUENO.

La protagonista es inteligente y muy divertida, una mina de 21 años virgen que quiere que la quieran en la "sexy way" pero no solo por eso, que casi no tiene experiencia con los hombres, que se viste "como un

varon", que se quiere asi misma pero acepta que no es la mujer mas hermosa del mundo, que a veces se siente fea, que tiene miedo a equivocarse, una mina fuerte que es positiva, alegre buena persona, que es feminista, y tantas cosas mas, casi pareciera que salio del libro y cobro vida, alguien que me encantaria conocer, que podria llegar a ser una amiga.

De lejos la joya, la estrella del libro, se llevo todo el protagonismo (re que ella es la protagonista LOL). Hace tanto que no me sentia tan identificada, tan involucrada con un personaje, es de esos casos en que sus luchas personales, por Dios casi parece que hablo de alguien real, se parecen a los propios y uno no puede evitar involucrarse en la historia de lleno.

Me encanto porque es de esos casos en que me enamoro de la protagonista y el libro es sobre su vida y da la casualidad que se enamora de un tipo pero la mas importe siempre es ella.

En cuanto al romance me encanto, porque es fantasia porque si tendria que aplicarlo a la vida real Annie es demasiado buena para Charles y él es una persona toxica y esto es lo que me jode con los libros de romance, que te ponen un personaje con muchos problemas psicologicos, esos que no pueden ni estar con si mismos pero quieren estar con alguien mas y se van a salvar, se van a mejorar porque se aman y bla,bla,bla
Primero arregla tu mierda y despues fijate si vas a estar con otra persona o no, no podes ni con vos mismo y queres involucrarte con alguien mas, o sea QUE PEDO?

Me jode porque no puedo evitar analizarlo y criticarlo, no puedo dejar la razon de lado pero bueno, por algo es un libro y por algo es romance, es fantasia y es algo que leemos para relajarnos y disfrutar sin pensar, que se le va a hacer, soy una criticona de mierda.

En resumen, leanlo por que es mierda de hada, o sea esta MUY BUENO.

Pd:

Disculpen las faltas de ortografia pero es que estoy desde la tablet y es incomodo escribir desde esta cosa.

Aly Martinez says

So I did A Thing...I read this book. And since I reached the end, I have been trying to find the words to tell you how much I adored it.

Long story shortish: It's brilliant. And not because it's going to rip your heart out, or make you bust a gut laughing, or keep you on the edge of your seat. (Though all of those things will happen at one point or another while you are reading it.) This book is smart, well crafted, and well executed. It's not overwrought or over dramatized. But you still feel every possible emotion while turning the pages.

This book, y'all. It's all the things. The wit is sharp. The banter. Oh, the banter is top notch. And the swoon? This book contains the most swoony line I have EVER read. (Best part: I'm not even sure it was meant to be swoony. It just was!)

Yes this book is \$7.99 but it needs to be read. Don't look at the cover. Don't read the blurb. Don't even read the reviews (besides this one! HA!) Just download the sample and give it a shot. I was hooked by the third paragraph, and I didn't put it down until I reached the end.

I don't know this author. She doesn't know me. Actually, I had never even heard of her before my Secret Santa sent me this duet. But after reading and falling in love with Charles and Annie...I need all of you to

pick this book up and get to know Author Emily Foster as well.

Tink Magoo is bad at reviews says

2.5 Stars

Well, it started really well. This was funny in a sciencey pretentious geek kinda way. It was awkward and kinda sexy if you're especially into the proper genitalia words being used throughout some of the sex scenes, it's also sexy if you like to read about a lot of foreplay - I don't. (Get to the penetration already Charles).

BUT, big Kardashian BUTT, somewhere around the 60% mark the author decided to turn Charles into this tormented man that can't love anyone and then this turned into a dreary slow struggle. The lighthearted awkwardness disappeared into a cloud of 50 shades duplicate boredom-ville.

And dare I say that there was too much sex - too many orgasms, too much juice sharing, too much toe sucking - it lost the easy amusing dialogue and dragged. Introducing that level of angst so late into the story ruined everything I had loved about this.

It's doubtful I'll read the next book at the moment.

Sincerely
Annoyed and disappointed.

Megan • Reading Books Like a Boss (book blog) says

Click on the banner to read this review on my blog

How Not to Fall is written by a New York Times Best Selling author of a non-fiction sexual education title. This book is her fiction debut. This book is very clearly written by someone with a Ph.D. in Health Behavior with a concentration human sexuality with its detailed and almost-clinical sexual descriptions. What the synopsis promised was a steamy forbidden romance between a college senior and her advisor, but what was delivered was an extremely derivative erotic romance that was lacking in story and characters.

Annabelle is on the verge of graduating college and going off to an intense graduate school dual degree program (PhD/MD). For the last two years she has been lusting over her advisor, Dr. Charles Douglas. With nothing to lose she asks him to sleep with her. At first, he declines, but agrees to talk to her about their "Thing" after she finishes finals. Following finals, they can ethically be together and Charles confesses he's been equally attracted to her. After finding out Annie is a virgin, Charles requests to go slow with start their no-strings sexual relationship. In the month leading up to Annie's departure, she starts to fall for him. But ghosts of Charles past make it impossible to reciprocate her feelings.

I've mentioned before that I'm such a huge fan of forbidden romances, so when I came across this New Adult

title I wanted to give it a try. In the beginning, I enjoyed Annie's witty inner dialogue and awkwardness; I was hopeful that I was going to enjoy this. But it didn't take long for me to get annoyed with her and the turn of events.

Charles is British and portrayed as being very restrained and awkward but with crazy sex appeal. Almost instantly, Charles turns into a sexual alpha male after finding out Annie was a virgin, chomping at the bit to teach Annie the sexual ropes. He confesses that he's wanted to sleep with her for over a year. The rest of the book is all sex scenes and a few fights on the topic of "I'm broken" and "You can't change me".

This book was very derivative of Fifty Shades of Grey to the point where I wondered if this was fanfiction, rather than a wholly original work as its being touted. This really bothered me. There were *some* differences to the characters, story, and setting. For example, Annie is much more confident than Ana and Charles isn't a dominant like Christian. But there are **shockingly similar** plot points, character traits, and situations taken from Fifty Shades of Grey. Here are just some of them:

- Annie = Ana, Charles = Christian
- Prior to starting their sexual relationship, Charles picks up a drunk Annie and allows her to sleep peacefully with him.
- Annie, like Ana, was a virgin yet becomes a sex goddess on her knees in front of Charles. After Annie's last final, Charles goes to town on Annie and spend most of their time between the sheets.
- He ties her up and brings out the Ben Wa balls in their sexual escapades.
- For her graduation gift, Charles gives Annie a very valuable first edition book of *Origin of Pieces*. Annie struggles with whether to accept this gift.
- Like Christian, Charles is emotionally broken from childhood trauma and won't allow himself to fall in love with anyone, leaving an in-love Annie frustrated and desperate to fix him.
- (view spoiler)

But even putting the blatant similarities aside, there was really very little plot to the story. The author tried to inject plot with scenes outside the bedroom, including rock climbing and dancing lesson scenes but it wasn't enough to be compelling. The sex scenes were numerous, long, and highly descriptive to the point that I began to question whether this was new adult or erotica. Further, Charles's British dialogue was almost painful to read. His pet names for Annie were strange and archaic—"my termagant", "my shrew", and "my harpy". Charles social status as a viscount was also ridiculous and unnecessary.

I didn't know this going into the book but rather discovered about 60% in that this was going to be duology. The next installment of Charles and Annie's story is called *How Not To Let Go* and will be out later this year.

1 star

* *I received an advance copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.*

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★★UPCOMING BOOK RELEASES★★

Megan Johnson says

How I feel about this book is perhaps a bit overly complex. On the one hand, it's well written, entertaining, and it got me thinking about things far more deeply than I thought I would. But on the other hand it wasn't what I was expecting. After picking it up and seeing that it was very science based, I wasn't expecting quite so much explicit sex.

Still though, I want to stress that it's still a great and emotionally deep story.

How Not To Fall is the story of Anna, a girl who is about to head off to New York to attend medical school, and Charles, a post-doc in the lab Anna works in. Although their relationship starts as a strictly professional one, as Anna is soon to leave the relationship takes a turn and they realize that they might mean more to one another than they had previously realized.

Or, as they so annoyingly call it, they have "a thing." Sometimes, as if that wasn't annoying enough, they refer to it as "a sexy thing." It's a bit distracting but not awful.

I'll be honest. I was disappointed when I realized this story wasn't what I had hoped. But as I continued to read (I'm weird and have a hard time just quitting on books), I realized that it's depth is actually surprising. Have you ever stopped to think about the fact that if you lived your life as if it were your last day on earth that you might be too freaked out to actually enjoy it? I hadn't but this story is just that. How do you enjoy something when you know that it must eventually end?

What did I think?: I really wasn't expecting to enjoy this book so much, but I actually really did like it. I'm not one for explicit sex usually in terms of my literary choices, but since this one went beyond that I was pleasantly surprised by how enjoyable I found it to be.

Who should read it?: If you want 50-shades but with more emotional depth, this is a step in the right direction. It's sexy without being terribly vulgar, and it's playful in a way that is oddly endearing. Not to mention it's easy to read and leaves you feeling like things came to a sufficient end.

I was provided with a copy of this book in order to conduct this honest review.

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Navessa says

A feminist, inclusive, sex-positive, fully consensual, intelligent, nuanced, hot as fuck erotic romance.

3.5 stars

This book feels like it was written in answer to FSoG. Seriously, there are SO many parallels. Down to minute details like the main character being Annie (short for Annabelle), the male lead Charles (hmmm...sort of similar to Ana (Anastasia) and Christian), and the fact that Charles calls Annie Miss Coffey, much like Christian calls Ana Miss Steele.

So, I hated FSoG with the all the power of a dying star mid-supernova. To say that I was a little concerned when I started to notice these parallels is an understatement.

What saved this novel was how it handled these similarities. I don't want to go into *exactly* how in this review, because a lot of what I want to touch upon would be pretty spoilery. Suffice it to say that if you hated FSoG and need something to erase that book from your mind and replace it with something more consensual and less abusive, but still pretty dark at times, try this one.

And for those of you who loved FSoG, (seriously, no judgement) you might really like this one, too. Because even though the themes and scenes that connect the two are similar and yet handled differently, this never feels like a copycat or like it's trying to insult FSoG.

Okay, moving on from the comparisons. Other things you should know about this book: First off, it's, at times, hilarious.

"ME: I'm going to do it for real. I'm going to ask Charles to have sex with me.

MARGARET: *laughs uproariously*.

ME: *completely straight face*.

MARGARET: *abruptly stops laughing*. You're serious?

ME: As a hemorrhage. (NB: I didn't really say this. It's the kind of thing I *imagine* myself saying. I think I actually said something pithy, like, "Yes." Also, don't be fooled into thinking I actually know how to spell *hemorrhage*. That baby is all spell check.)

Secondly, it's brainy as hell. The MC has been accepted into doctoral programs at both Harvard and MIT, and the male lead is a post-doctoral fellow who assists the professor in the MC's senior psychophysiology lab.

Something you should know about me: I'm an aeronautical engineer. I spend my days conversing with other engineers and people with advanced mathematical degrees. We even have a rogue astrophysicist or two wandering our hallways that I avoid speaking to, because, honestly, I think I'm pretty smart and I can barely interpret some of the things that they say.

This book is sooooo well researched. The first 1/3 of it is devoted to the friendship and mentoring bond between Annie and Charles, and a lot of their time together is spent discussing her thesis. In detail. I was legitimately blown away by the depth to which this is covered without ever feeling like it was dry or too detailed. Not saying that other readers won't think that it is, just that, to me, this book and the relationship between its male and female lead is nerdlust goals.

Thirdly, this book doesn't shy away from touching upon some very serious subjects, like abuse, mental health, traditional gender roles, male gendered violence, rape, and mass killings. It handles them with the

detail and depth they deserve.

Lastly, we have the sex. Whoo-boy, Foster can write some seriously steamy scenes. As I said a few paragraphs ago, the first 1/3 of this is devoted to the friendship aspect of this couple's relationship. Once Charles is technically no longer in Annie's teaching chain, things...change between them, and the last 2/3 of the book contains A LOT of sex. And, damn, is it

Is this book perfect? Nope. One part particularly annoyed me. Minor spoiler: (view spoiler) But other than that I wholly enjoyed this read, and I fully recommend it for anyone looking for a feminist, brainy bit of erotica.

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Jen says

4 Stars

People don't fear heights. They don't even fear the fall. They fear the consequences of the fall. The greater the height, the greater the consequences, and so the greater the fear.

Annabelle and Charles have A Thing. Well, at least Annabelle's hoping Charles feels the mutual thing like she does. After two years of working together as student/postdoc, Annie's ready to lay it all on the line and find out where Mr. Hot Brit Charles stands. Why not take advantage of their mutual Thing and enjoy each other until Annabelle leaves for grad school? At first glance, a friends with benefits arrangement with a built in end date seems like the perfect solution for exploring the attraction between these two. Unfortunately things are rarely go as easy as predicted.

“Friends, colleagues, and parenthetical lovers,” I repeat.

“Agreed.”

There were so many things about this book I enjoyed but first and foremost was the writing. Told from Annie's POV, both the banter between her and Charles as well as her inner ramblings and thoughts are well done and passed my ultimate test of never sounding stilted or awkward. Annie's a bit socially stunted but she owns it and I loved that aspect of her personality. For a main character in a NA novel, there's surprisingly little angst in Annie's world and that's a refreshing change of pace for me. Charles, on the other hand, is a completely different story. There's just enough angst provided by Charles and his issues to keep things interesting but nothing over the top to overwhelm the reader.

Did I mention the sexystimes?

For a girl that just managed to lose her v-card, Annie catches on fairly quickly and these two end up burning

up the sheets.

“What’s it feel like?” he whispers. “Like you put your penis in my vagina,” I whisper back, and we both laugh

Okay, that was far from hawt but I still laughed my ass off!

Far be it from me to complain about the amount of sex in a book but you know what? This book bordered on too much sex. There, I said it and I’m not gonna apologize for it! I could’ve used a little less bed time and a little more convo time between Charles and Annie but in the grand scheme of crap to complain about, that’s pretty low on my list of aggravations.

If there’s such a thing as a kinder, gentler cliffy, *How Not to Fall* ends on one. While the ending didn’t surprise me, I’m thrilled to see the story of Annie and Charles isn’t over yet. I was pleasantly surprised by how much I enjoyed this book and am already looking forward to what promises to be an entertaining conclusion.

ARC provided by the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Nenia ? Queen of Literary Trash, Protector of Out-of-Print Gems, Khaleesi of Bodice Rippers, Mother of Smut, the Unrepentant, Breaker of Convention ? Campbell says

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Erotica is a tricky genre for me. I know what I like & I know what I don't, and first and foremost, a work of erotica has to have good writing and a decent story. Some people can enjoy smut for the sex scenes alone - not me. Plot, or GTFO.

HOW NOT TO FALL is one of the better new adult/erotica works I've read over the last five years. It would probably make my top ten list, and would *definitely* make my top twenty. The writing is great, the sex scenes are great, there's dialogue and character development, the characters are both intelligent, and the author really makes a point of putting emphasis on consent.

Can I take a moment to appreciate that, actually? Because I feel like there's a belief that talking about consent is unsexy for a lot of people, in the same way that talking about contraceptives is. That it's a "mood-killer." Well, Foster shows that this doesn't have to be the case. Contraceptives AND consent are both discussed, and in all sexual encounters, both characters are enthusiastically consenting and I think that's great.

Moving on - with some mild spoilers (readers beware).

Annie works as a research assistant, and is preparing a mock dissertation before going to med school. The only problem is, she's fallen for her post-doc, British accent and ugly Oxford shirts and all. After an awkward and bumbling start, she's delighted to find that he feels the same, but he agrees to the relationship on the condition that she wait until after classes, when he's no longer officially her adviser and has no power over her grades/lab hours/etc.

What follows is a lot of sex, but it's not mindless. Annie and Charles learn many things about one another, some of them charming, some painful. They engage in some light bondage, which raises further issues, like the importance of consent and the consequences of emotional surrender. This sharing creates an intimacy that comes dangerously close to love, which could lead to heartbreak because neither plan on giving up their plans for the other. Other topics of note are privilege (which was actually very mindfully done, with a self-awareness that escapes most new adult characters), obligation, self-care, love, relationships, and psychological well-being.

I started out this book with low expectations, which was a good thing because it meant that this book totally blindsided me with its awesomeness. There was a point where I thought for sure that **HOW NOT TO FALL** would get five stars, but it has some issues that were a bit troubling.

First off, what I liked:

Annie. She's a great heroine. She actually reminded me of *me* in many ways, which is great, because I don't often see heroines who remind me of me. Many people said that she was immature and naive, but that's how I was as a college student; and the way it's portrayed here is very realistically done. She wants to change the world and believes she can because she's never failed at anything in her life. She believes she can change Charles, too, and it's a little heartbreaking when she realizes she can't.

Charles. He's a dominant hero done right. I will admit that I liked him a little more in the beginning than I did towards the end, because I feel like the author jumped the shark with regard to his character development. But I loved his intelligence and his resolve and his control, and his determination to be a decent human being, even - especially - when it wasn't easy.

The sex scenes were very well written, and not at all silly. Even when there were things that I didn't personally like, I never cringed or felt grossed out. Foster is a good writer and knows when to describe and

when to leave things to the reader's imagination.

What I didn't like:

I didn't see the point in making Charles minor nobility (I mean, just because he's English...?) or of giving him a dark and tormented past. Part of what made this book fall in my eyes was the decidedly FSoG turn it took in the second act. Charles's insistence at being in control in all things (not in as many words, but he is pretty controlling in a "for your own good" kind of way - and it's essentially chalked up to noblesse oblige), the suggestion that his childhood and bad parental figures made him this way, and some of the things he does to Annie were highly reminiscent of FSoG. He even gives her a first edition of an old book that she likes as a gift!

I think there were also too many sex scenes. There was a tipping point where the sex scenes began to overtake the plot, and I'll admit to skimming a couple of the more redundant ones in the second act. They were all incredibly well written, but after a while it got a bit dull seeing the two of them using sex as a way to deal with whatever emotional hashing out that they were going through at the time.

Also, Annie is - spoiler - a virgin, and she pretty much becomes a sexual pro right off the bat, having multiple orgasms at the drop of a hat, not feeling any awkwardness or pain or discomfort, and just in general being Queen of the Sex Fairies whenever her clothes come off. I know that's a trope that annoys many people on my friends list, so be forewarned, it's in here.

Charles is also a bit affected. At times, his speech got to be a little irritating. It didn't bother me that much because I knew people who talked like this in college because I hung out with a bunch of highly affected nerds, but if it got too much for me, I know it'll REALLY irritate people who don't like pretentious intellectuals. So keep that in mind. There are pretentious intellectuals in this book.

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED.

Overall, though, HOW NOT TO FALL was a really great read. I'm grateful to the author and to Netgalley for providing me with a review copy because it's not something I would have picked out for myself. In fact, I came very close to not reading this book at all! Boy, am I glad that I did.

Is it December, yet? I need the sequel ASAP.

4 stars!
