



The Girl Who Fell

S.M. Parker

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High school senior Zephyr Doyle is swept off her feet—and into an intense and volatile relationship—by the new boy in school.

His obsession.

Her fall.

Zephyr is focused. Focused on leading her team to the field hockey state championship and leaving her small town for her dream school, Boston College.

But love has a way of changing things.

Enter the new boy in school: the hockey team's starting goaltender, Alec. He's cute, charming, and most important, Alec doesn't judge Zephyr. He understands her fears and insecurities—he even shares them. Soon, their relationship becomes something bigger than Zephyr, something she can't control, something she doesn't want to control.

Zephyr swears it must be love. Because love is powerful, and overwhelming, and ... terrifying?

But love shouldn't make you abandon your dreams, or push your friends away. And love shouldn't make you feel guilty—or worse, ashamed.

So when Zephyr finally begins to see Alec for who he really is, she knows it's time to take back control of her life.

If she waits any longer, it may be too late.

The Girl Who Fell Details

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Author : S.M. Parker

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From Reader Review The Girl Who Fell for online ebook

Jamie (Books and Ladders) says

Disclaimer: I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

See my full review plus an interview with her author on Books and Ladders

Ask author Shannon Parker what she thinks of THE GIRL WHO FELL and she will tell you it's a dark kissing book. And boy, she's not wrong. But it also has such lightness to it that you just need to experience in order to understand what I mean.

Zephyr is on the fast track to success: good grades, amazing athlete, and the best friends anyone could ask for. But then she meets Alec and gets caught up in a whirlwind romance that takes her by surprise. Throughout the book she has to learn for herself what "true love" really means.

I went into this one knowing that it was going to be a rough go. From the synopsis I knew it was going to be a toxic, abusive romance. And THE GIRL WHO FELL didn't pull punches. And really, it shouldn't because this sort of thing happens all the time. Don't get me wrong, usually when you first get into a relationship, your new boy/girlfriend becomes the centre of your world, but if they are telling you that you can't hang out with other people that is where the issue arises.

I think what I loved (and was scared of) the most was that even though I knew what was happening and that Zephyr was spiraling downward into making bad decisions, I could understand why she was making those decisions. I could understand her wanting to forgive Alec for his behaviour and why she kept going back. The majority of this is Parker's writing. Because I knew how bad Alec was, I knew he was responsible for all these things and yet I STILL understood why Zephyr was head over heels and blind to it all.

My only complaint is that I would have liked more of the panic. The panic when you have plans with this abuser and are with another friend or family member and you think you're going to be late, so you start to panic because you HAVE to be there or else you KNOW they will be mad at you. I wanted a little bit of that. I wanted Zephyr to feel the anxiety of Alec's wrath and rage. But, everything else was depicted so perfectly that this doesn't even really matter in the grand scheme of things.

I don't have much more I can say without spoiling it for you guys, but I highly recommend this one to everyone. It is a tough one to get through, especially if you have experienced it from one end or another, but it is so important to know that if you HAVE experienced it or know someone who has, that it DOES happen to other people. It isn't just you, you are not alone and someone will be willing to help you. I know it's hard to ask for help sometimes, but if you are feeling as though you need help, you've already made one giant leap and will be to safety soon.

Pick this one up on March 1st and, as weird as this sounds, you will thoroughly enjoy the experience.

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November 17, 2015 Thoughts:

ohmy. That was everything I needed in my life without knowing how much I needed it. You want to read a good contemporary? I am handing you this one on a silver platter. This book is just incredible and handles this issue in such a delicate but raw way. I really need everyone to read this.

But fuck, THE GIRL WHO FELL is so incredible. It is so beautifully written especially considering how dark and twisted it ends up getting. I felt so emotionally connected to Zephyr and I just, I got it. I got it all. And you will too when you read this one. I'm blown away. I'm surprised I'm coherent enough to form words

about how much I loved this book. I am so thankful that Shannon shared this book with the world.

You can see my favourite quote from THE GIRL WHO FELL on Instagram!

Alienor ✕ French Frowner ✕ says

Trust me, if there is a book I wish I would have loved, it's this one. From the moment I read the synopsis, I knew that I *had* to read it : a different take on all the instalove bullshit YA romance is feeding us way too often? Count me in! That's why I can't even express how disappointed and sad I am after closing The Girl Who Fell. The concept is so interesting and important, but the fact that Alec and Zephyr shows not an ounce of chemistry fails the whole purpose : how am I supposed to believe in their instant attraction if I don't feel any connection with them?

But **my biggest issue with The Girl Who Fell is the fact that Zephyr comes as TSTL and kind of dumb, and I'm pretty sure that it should be the opposite** when dealing with someone suffering from an abusive relationship : we should see how hard it is for her to realize that she's been manipulated, that IT'S NOT HER FAULT, but that's not what I saw and it makes me so so pissed - at the book, at myself, at the way this important issue was handled. Oh, yes, of course the book **tells** us that it's not Zephyr's fault if she's in a relationship with a psycho. Fortunately. But what does it show us? **It shows us Zephyr making poor and selfish decisions, as if it was her fault to begin with, and I, for one, can't accept that.**

Look, I know that the book is supposed to describe how a relationship can escalate into unhealthy territory without the girl (or the boy, for that matter) being aware of it but honestly, **there are SO MANY warnings. Every plot twist is glaringly obvious and I saw them miles away.** God, Alec isn't even a master of manipulation, and could have worn a "psycho" sign that his issues wouldn't have been more blatant, even at the beginning of their relationship. (view spoiler). I don't want to state that she's stupid to trust him, but really? She seems like it, she's portrayed as such when she doesn't notice HUGE warnings, and in my opinion it ruins the purpose of the book itself, because it doesn't deal properly with the manipulation used by abusive people. **I don't want to think, Well, DUH. I want to see how hard it is to deal with that kind of manipulation.** I didn't, and at some point Alec's explanations were so far-stretched and frankly **unbelievable** that I couldn't understand her buying them. (view spoiler)

This said, as someone who reacts strongly when manipulated into guilt - I try to work on that, though - I have to admit that some of his pleas seem pretty accurate. See, reading their exchange, it is obvious to me that she's being manipulated into thinking that she did something wrong, but she only sees how upset he is. I understand that, and I wish the book felt more real that way.

Last but not least, what maddened me is **the underlying feeling I got that nothing would have happened if only she had accepted her best friend's advances.** Ugh, NO. You don't get to imply that. It is damaging, and so untrue, it pisses me off. Perhaps I am wrong to analyze it in that way but in my opinion the book sent these vibes. Not to mention that I didn't quite get how her feelings for Gregg would be filled with confusion like that. (view spoiler)

Read it and tell me if I'm wrong.

Most of all **the story lacked tension, making the book excruciatingly boring to me, especially in the beginning.** Their everyday life just didn't hold enough sparks to make me interested, even if I know - I *know*

- that it was written in such a way to parody regular YA romance. Well, good job : it bored me all the same, and I would have wanted to feel despair, angst, SOMETHING. No such luck. If I did like the ending, it felt rushed and didn't make up for the lack of connection I felt throughout the whole book.

Oh, and, before I forget : **there's a thing called *native speakers*. Please use them.** I do believe that, with the internet and all, they're not *that* hard to find. No, Google translation doesn't count. Actually, Google Translation is *better* than what is written in the book. What? I did my homework :

The first sentence means something, and the second one is grammatically correct at least, even if we would never use "êtes-vous bien?" but rather, "Vous allez bien?" This is still better than this :

"Bonjour mes etudiants. Es-vous bien?"

This shows a complete lack of research about French language. I could forgive the absence of accents, but really? It doesn't even make sense. Also, I speak both French and Latin, and I don't believe that knowing Latin and "educated guessing" can get someone scoring high on the placement test for AP French on Senior year of High-School.

If it is, sorry, but your language course sucks big time.

For more of my reviews, please visit:

Laurie Flynn says

Let me preface this by saying when I first heard about THE GIRL WHO FELL, it was the bookish equivalent to love at first sight. The concept gripped me. I knew it was the kind of book I not only wanted to read but had to read. So when an ARC arrived in the mail last week in all its gorgeous glory (seriously, have you seen that cover?), I was more than a bit excited that my time to read it was finally here.

I knew it would be an emotional book. I knew it dealt with difficult subject matter. What I didn't know was that I'd hold my breath while turning pages, get sucker-punched in the feels over and over, and feel so attached to the characters that they were real people to me. That, everyone, is the talent of Shannon Parker.

THE GIRL WHO FELL is the story of Zephyr Doyle, a senior hell-bent on attending Boston College, which has been her dream since forever. She's a fierce field hockey player and driven to succeed in all aspects of life. But on the inside, she's hurting—reeling from the fact that her dad picked up and left her and her mom, and trying to deal with her feelings of being not good enough in his absence. When she is instantly attracted to new student Alec, she's swept up in how he makes her feel—like she's the only girl in the world, a girl worthy of his love. But when Alec starts to become more and more possessive and pull Zephyr away from her old life, she is torn between the boy who says he loves her more than anything and the things she wanted more than anything before him.

As a heroine, Zephyr is someone you'll cheer for, laugh with, and want to hug more than once. You'll want to point out the warning signs, the glimpses into Alec's true nature. You'll want to scream at her that it's not her fault, none of it, and tell her over and over again that she's worthy of everything good in life. But that's

what makes this book so vivid, so true. Real life isn't like that. In real life, those warnings signs aren't always easy to see, especially if you want to see someone for the person you think they are, the person you desperately want them to be.

The language in this book is like poetry. Shannon Parker takes risks with her writing and they pay off, big time. Her choices of words are evocative and lush, never expected, never familiar, never something you've read before. This story is beautiful and romantic and shocking and dangerous and sad and real and hopeful, and Shannon's writing goes to all those places.

This is also an important book. So, so, important. Anyone who has ever been manipulated by someone they love, by someone they thought loved them, needs this book. Teens need this book. Adults need this book. Because if you've ever been someone like Zephyr—if you still are—you need to know that it's not you. That you deserve better. That you deserve the world.

I could probably talk forever about THE GIRL WHO FELL. That's how much my heart is bursting with it, how heavily my brain is still processing its pages. Once in awhile you read a book that burrows into you and fills you with a whole kaleidoscope of emotions, and that book for me is THE GIRL WHO FELL.

Brittany (Brittany's Book Rambles) says

4.5/5 Stars

The most crucial thing that I need to talk about when it comes to *The Girl Who Fell* is the astonishing writing. Shannon M. Parker's writing style instantly grabs the reader and throws them onto the emotional roller-coaster that is this book, which I read in one sitting and only put down momentarily to literally catch my breath. Right off the bat, the prologue warns the reader to beware of Alec, but amazingly, as you watch his relationship with Zephyr develop and grow, your emotions fight against your instincts until you're as tangled up and confused as Zephyr is. This book is so incredibly important for everyone to read because it's truly eye-opening. It forces you to feel what it's like to be in an abusive relationship, and it realistically depicts how this changes your life (and even your sense of self) entirely.

Check out my full review for The Girl Who Fell Blog Tour + an interview with Shannon and a giveaway!.

Marci Curtis says

OH MAN. This story totally wrecked me. Seriously, there aren't enough adjectives. I absolutely mainlined it, staying up way past my bedtime to read just... another... page. It grabbed me by the throat in the first paragraph and never let me go. The writing is absolutely STUNNING. Honest, raw, thought-provoking, The Girl Who Fell tackles a heartbreaking issue with grace and strength.

FIVE BEAUTIFUL STARS.

Kathy MacMillan says

I received an advanced reading copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

This story begins with a snippet of the end - the dark place where Zephyr's relationship with handsome, brooding hockey star Alec will lead. And then we go back and see how it all started. That disturbing prologue is a necessary and brilliant touch, as it primes readers to see the oh-so-small warning signs that the relationship is not the paradise it seems. And that, of course, is the point: an abusive relationship often looks like any other in the beginning, and Zephyr, a strong-willed field hockey player who dreams of attending Boston College, gets swept up in the romance. Her friends grow concerned when Zephyr's relationship with Alec isolates her from them, and her own insecurities about her talents and her father's abandonment of her push her to see Alec as the only one who understands. Alec's manipulations pull her in ever more deeply, until he goes so far that Zephyr can't explain his behavior away anymore. But Alec, of course, can't let go, and his obsession crosses into physical abuse.

This story is honestly painful, and painfully honest. It's riveting stuff - I read the last third of the book with my heart in my throat, pulling for Zephyr to get out of the pit of abuse. Zephyr is no weakling, and this book is a powerful statement about the many forces in our society that limit girls' choices. (An early scene in which Zephyr chooses not to eat even though she's starving, because Alec isn't hungry, made my stomach clench with its verisimilitude.) It's easy to see, through this story, how anyone, no matter how strong-willed, could end up drawn into a abusive relationship. Alec is all the more frightening because of how fully realized he is as a character; he fully believes that he is working for Zephyr's good when he's "teaching her a lesson".

An important book that will launch many discussions about abuse, consent, and female empowerment. Don't miss it.

Julie Eshbaugh says

I'm not sure I breathed while I read the final third of this book. **THE GIRL WHO FELL** is a startling, compelling, important read. It's the kind of book that you have to put down at times, just so you can walk around and catch your breath and remind yourself that everything's okay because the things happening to Zephyr in the story are not actually happening to you. But the thing is, this book is very **REAL,** and the things that happen to Zephyr happen to real girls every day. That's the thing that will stay with you after you finish reading.

I was struck by way the author portrayed each character with so much empathy... even Alec. And even though I couldn't help but think how all young women (and even young men) should read **THE GIRL WHO FELL** so they would be aware of what a manipulative relationship looks like (it's so hard to see that when you're in it!) I also hesitate to say things like, "This should be required reading!" because that makes it sound like a book weighed down by a "lesson," which **GIRL** is definitely not. It read with the pulse and steam of a romance and the tension of a thriller. It was gripping and breathtaking and kept me turning pages long after I should have gone to sleep. It's everything a book should be. SM Parker, you have made me a lifelong fan!

I read an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Lala Books and Lala says

DNF'd at 60%

I can sense an animal cruelty storyline, which I just don't fuck with...and the rest of the book has not been compelling enough to continue on past it anyway.

I think this is an incredibly important topic, and one that literature should not shy away from addressing, however I just don't think this book is covering it particularly well.

Ruth Lehrer says

I was lucky enough to get an ARC of THE GIRL WHO FELL. This book was so well written it was kind of excruciating. The pain of watching a woman destroy herself for a guy; The subtle and not so subtle manipulation of an abuser. The mental process of the woman who is first enchanted and then ensnared. The reader is stuck on the sidelines yelling, Don't do it, don't go there! but she can't hear you. Just when you think she's got a handle on everything, it gets worse. If you're up for a bit of really well written emotional torture, this is your book.

The book is written in first person, and as the reader I felt all the emotions an outsider feels when their friend makes a bad choice. You can totally see it coming. They can't.

The secondary characters are a relief from the madness. Thank goodness for women friends! As an additional perk, the field hockey scenes are so live you can hear the crack as the puck is hit, you can feel the crowd roar. Look out 2016, Shannon Parker scored a goal and won the game.

Jen (Pop! Goes The Reader) says

Did you find this review helpful? Find more of my reviews at Pop! Goes The Reader!

My love for him is a deep blue love. So blue it is black. Like an ocean under the ocean. The beginning and the end.

High school senior Zephyr Doyle had things all figured out. Namely, to help lead her field hockey team to victory and spend as much time as she can with her best friends, Lizzie and Gregg “The Slice” Slicer, before fulfilling her lifelong dream of attending Boston College and pursuing a career in marine biology in the fall. No deviations. No distractions. So, when Zephyr meets the handsome and enigmatic Alec Lord, a recent transfer student with a scandalous reputation, he seems like little more than an unwanted complication. After a few chance meetings, whispered confidences, and a shared history of parental dysfunction and insecurities, however, Alec begins to work his way into Zephyr’s life, as well as her heart. Soon, the two are inseparable. Suddenly, caught up in the thrill and exultation of her first love, the things that were once so important to Zephyr – Lizzie, Gregg, field hockey, and even Boston College – don’t seem to matter much anymore. But as their connection continues to deepen and love turns to obsession, Zephyr will learn that things – and people – are not always what they seem. Not every love story has a happy ending.

Lying on my bed, my brain cyclones with thoughts of men and boys and boys and men. All making the wrong

choices.

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month and I can think of no better way to honour this important occasion than to discuss a novel that deals with the topic with as much insight, subtlety and compassion as Shannon M. Parker's 2016 contemporary debut, The Girl Who Fell. According to Love Is Respect, "one in three teens in the U.S. will experience physical, sexual or emotional abuse by someone they are in a relationship with before they become adults." It is for this (and many other) reasons that novels like The Girl Who Fell are so vital and important. At turns haunting and unsettling, at others provocative and pulse-pounding, Shannon M. Parker's debut is a powerful testament to the ability of fiction to create our reality and shape our perspective in a novel about love, lies, and blurred lines.

His chest hovers over mine, our hearts building a staccato rhythm. And when he fills my mouth with his kiss, I want our heartbeats to sync. I want to forever be connected to this person. All at once he feels like my now, my future, my everything.

Zephyr Doyle's life is that of one in transition as she struggles with the formidable prospect of entering the next phase of her life without knowing precisely what that might entail. Intelligent and driven, Zephyr is a girl who, despite a wealth of skills and accomplishments, is left emotionally devastated and insecure after her father's sudden abandonment four months prior to the beginning of the novel. His disappearance (and the ill-thought out note he left behind) leave Zephyr all too vulnerable to Alec's careful machinations and it isn't long before she is careening headfirst into her first love without the objectivity to recognize how deep and dark the cave into which this maelstrom of emotion has thrust her. Despite this, however, Shannon M. Parker makes it all too easy to understand how Zephyr found herself in her present situation. The Girl Who Fell speaks volumes about the author's mastery of the craft as Parker is able to accomplish this as adeptly as she does, transforming Zephyr into a sympathetic and accessible character in a role that might otherwise have proven grating or superficial under the direction of a less capable author. The reader is predisposed to dislike Alec, knowing the eventual, inevitable trajectory of their relationship. And yet. There is something undeniably seductive, even sexy, about Alec's pursuit of Zephyr and the way in which he draws her in, as the author does the reader. The protagonist's story is beautifully enhanced by that of the characters around her, as Shannon M. Parker seamlessly weaves these seemingly disparate elements into a cohesive narrative, touching upon the themes of transition, empathy and forgiveness that underscore the entirety of the novel. Zephyr's relationship with her close friend, Lizzie, is of particular note, emphasizing the value and importance of positive female friendship and of a strong support system for victims of domestic violence.

I close my eyes and catalogue my injuries. My skull. Ribs. Places others can't see. He was precise, and I am glad for the careful placement of my wreckages. So I don't need to show the world my shame. My stupidity.

Visceral, intoxicating and unequivocally enthralling, Shannon M. Parker's writing is a force of nature whose skill far exceeds that of what might be expected from a debut author. In The Girl Who Fell, the author perfectly captures the electricity of attraction, a force so strong that it both entices and repels in equal measure. This is expertly illustrated in the case of Zephyr, who is immediately drawn to Alec's apparent quiet understanding and empathy, but is frightened by the rapidity and strength of her feelings and level of commitment a relationship with him would entail. One might mistakenly believe, as I initially did, that knowing the eventual direction of the novel beforehand – a young couple's seemingly idyllic relationship transforming into one of terror and abuse – might detract from the tension and momentum of the narrative, but this could not be further from the truth. Instead, Parker uses this understanding to best effect as the reader becomes unintentionally complicit in the events of the novel, sure in their knowledge of the eventual direction of Zephyr and Alec's relationship but unable to do anything to prevent it. As a result, The Girl Who Fell is nothing less than a pulse-pounding psychological thriller that shines an uncomfortable but necessary light on the intricacies of an abusive relationship and its gradual, and often insidiously subtle, evolution. The manipulation. The isolation. The control. Despite all this, however, The Girl Who Fell is far from a story of victimhood from which Zephyr must be rescued. In fact, Zephyr takes a great deal too much upon herself as

Parker examines the complicated feelings of shame and culpability often experienced by victims of abuse. The author's examination of Zephyr's emotional state is nuanced and sensitive, and easily understood by readers otherwise entirely unfamiliar with this experience.

I think about that other girl a lot.

I wish I knew her. Now.

I wonder if she has a mark on her hip. If she's safe. And I wonder if there were other girls before her, and if those girls had people who would listen to them the way I did.

I want to tell the girls it's not their fault.

I want them to tell me I'm not at fault. I want them to hear me say, "I know".

I know.

Dark and disquieting with a powerful undercurrent of empowerment that reminds readers there is hope and a chance to begin again, even in the most dire of circumstances, Shannon M. Parker's 2016 contemporary debut is a must-read for fans of realistic fiction unafraid of exploring difficult but vitally important subject matter. Insightful and informative without ever becoming sanctimonious, insensitive, or insulting the reader's intelligence, The Girl Who Fell should be mandatory reading for young adult audiences and those who care about them. Share this book with your daughters. Your sisters. Your friends. The Girl Who Fell holds within it the power to change – and save – lives. It has already changed mine.

Please Note: All quotations included in this review have been taken from an advanced reader copy and therefore might be subject to change.

Trina (Between Chapters) says

This was very hard to read. But it's so important.

If you don't know, this book is about an abusive romance. You know that going in and so it's very hard to watch the relationship progress and watch the girl fall for this jerk. But the story did a great job at showing how easy it is to fall into this trap of manipulation. Sometimes there are no warning signs.

I've been through a similar relationship and so this book had a lot of meaning for me. My experience did not match the story in this book perfectly but so much of it hit home.

There were times that I wished the book were a little more subtle. For instance, not every abusive relationships involves beating, or will play out like a horror movie. Not every victim has to have daddy issues. The real life relationships that don't play out in this way are no less harmful so part of me does wish more stories were able to emphasize what abuse is without relying on stereotypes. However, this did encompass many aspects to manipulative relationships, so on the other hand that's a good thing. It was able to explore more and give more examples. The situations presented absolutely can be real for some people.

I enjoyed the writing, I was always gripped by the story. I enjoyed the long build of getting to see this relationship from the very start. I enjoyed the friendships and parent relationships portrayed. And I loved that the main character was a jock.

If I had teenage daughters, I would want them to read this book. The only fault is that I wish more books covered this topic and also showed that it's not always the male who is the abuser, and abuse is not limited to only straight relationships. But that's not a fault of this book itself and hopefully it can be a tool in opening a larger conversation.

You will probably hate this story, but man, you should read it.

Laura says

I'm not the biggest romance fan, but this dark spin on a young adult love story had me interested. It's the story of Zephyr and Alec's relationship from the moment they meet in French class to their inevitable dark end. The prologue, of sorts, is actually an excerpt from the end of the novel with Zephyr afraid in her own house, so from the beginning we are given that intensity you find in thrillers.

The novel then goes back three months earlier to show this unhealthy relationship from the beginning. This story really shows the all consuming power that love can have on a person. Zephyr has so much going for her. She has a plan for her future that she intends on following: get out of small town Sudbury and go to Boston College. Unfortunately, Zephyr believes she is falling in love with Alec. She doesn't realize that love shouldn't make you feel scared, embarrassed, guilty, or controlled and makes all sorts of bad decisions screwing up her future.

It's very much a story where you just watch the protagonist go down the rabbit hole, yet the entire time you're rooting for her to make the right decisions. I already feel like I've ventured into dangerous spoiler territory, but all of that and more is revealed in the synopsis. I'll let you read the book for yourself. I felt like the book was reminiscent of the movie *Swimfan* at times. Just swap the gender roles.

For a story that is a YA contemporary dark romance, I liked this story. I think there are great lessons to be learned for high school aged girls.

I received an ARC in exchange for an honest review via edelweiss.

Emily May says

The saddest thing about this book is that I believe the author really did have the best intentions. **Too bad none of it really worked.**

I've had this book on my radar for a long time. The blurb promised a story about a girl who falls into a bad relationship of obsession, control and - eventually - fear. It seemed like the perfect YA novel to counter all the awful romances I've read where asshole boyfriends are portrayed as something sexy, and psychological abuse is portrayed as the norm. AND the perfect novel to deconstruct the assumption that abuse victims are somehow at fault for not simply leaving their abusers. It seemed **not only potentially awesome, but needed.**

The problem begins with the unconvincing relationship. In reality, these "intense" relationships that darken to control and abuse are gradual. Trust me, I've seen it happen. The guy (or girl, perhaps) is incredibly charming and affectionate. **They don't look like psychopaths.**

It's a long path of manipulation that pulls the victim away from supportive friends and family. And most of all - contrary to what many people assume - it CAN and DOES happen to strong, smart men and women.

In *The Girl Who Fell*, however, Zephyr and Alec have no chemistry. Alec has no charm. They simply fall into **instalove** from the moment he walks into class. We should have been seduced into this relationship along with Zephyr (we're inside her mind!) and yet it's hard to shake the sense that Zephyr is being

unbelievably dumb. There is no gradual fall into a relationship with a charmer who turns sinister - Alec is so obviously nuts that you can see the crazy coming from a mile off. He's such a creeper!

Zephyr's behaviour is not realistic. She's immediately willing to abandon her friends and teammates for no good reason. She refuses to see the glaring red flags, blaming Gregg when it's laughably obvious that Alec is behind it all.

I wasn't sure how to write this review and was afraid it would sound like I was victim-blaming myself. But I just think that everything about this book serves to **reduce complex relationship dynamics that lead to abuse into simplistic, blind idiocy.** It felt like a *Lifetime* special, rather than an important look at the subject.

The Girl Who Fell should be deconstructing misconceptions held about abusive relationships and abuse victims, NOT portraying Zephyr as a weak fool from day one. As I said, I'm sure it wasn't the intention, but it almost feels like the story itself places blame on Zephyr.

And, you know what? That isn't even the whole problem. The book just isn't that good at doing what it promised.

For one thing, it opens like a **cheesy horror movie** with the MC alone in the house. Uh oh, then the lights go out. Quick, reach for the phone! Oh crap, the line's dead... It really does feel like a cheap thrill drama. **No complexity or depth.**

Also, for a book trying to change the way we see women who get into abusive relationships, lots of **other female stereotypes rear their heads.** All the cheerleaders are airheads who only want to sleep with the sports guys. Zephyr **woman-hates** on Lani for having too few brain cells for Gregg. Gregg perpetuates the **"friend zone"** idea, that Zephyr owes him attraction for being a "good guy" all these years. Here's the thing, though: good guys don't try to make girls feel guilty because they don't want to sleep with them.

And, frankly, **it's really quite boring.** Especially in the beginning where we're repeatedly taken through the motions of Zephyr's everyday life - she wakes up, goes to school, goes to hockey games, plays hockey, obsesses over Alec, talks about her absent father (that "moms" sentence early in the book is, sadly, a typo)...
snore

I'm just left with the feeling that Parker unfortunately doesn't understand anything about her subject. From the silly way abusive relationships are simplified, to the way these teenagers talk with a few too many "dudes" and "obvs" thrown in, to the fact that these super smart 18 year-olds are learning about Pythagorean theorem (this is usually learned around age 10/11).

Wasted potential.

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Kim Savage says

S.M. Parker's Zephyr Doyle in THE GIRL WHO FELL is the girl everyone wants to be: level-headed, insanely athletic, Going Places. You know a girl like her, or maybe you are a girl like her. Then she meets Alec, and for the first time in ever, she lets her heart lead, and what follows is both devastating and thoroughly believable. And that's what makes Parker's debut so terrifying. I read TGWF with my heart in my

throat and at breakneck speed, because I couldn't stop. You will too.

I read an ARC of this book in exchange for a honest review.

Jeff Zentner says

Recently, there was a kerfuffle in the YA community over comments made disparaging YA as morally uncomplicated.

THE GIRL WHO FELL is the most perfect rejoinder imaginable to this and any future criticism of YA literature as morally uncomplex.

Morally complex, tightly paced, taut, gripping, romantic, shocking, perilous, and hopeful--this book has it all and more. As the cherry on top, the prose is luminous and elegant. The characters are fantastic--vibrant and leaping from the page. Zephyr Doyle is a YA heroine for the ages. You'll root for her even as you scream for her to look out. You can't bear to see any harm befall her.

THE GIRL WHO FELL has some very important things to say about abuse and courage. This should be required reading.

I received an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review.
