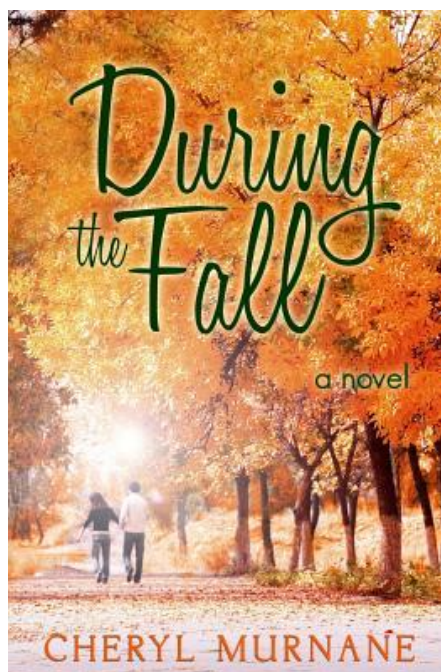




During the Fall

Cheryl Murnane

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Jenny and Alex are high school sweethearts intertwined in an idyllic romance that spans several decades. Their journey carries them through unexpected trials that challenge the security and the very foundation of their relationship. Jenny's fears of losing the only man she's ever loved quickly become overshadowed by a tragedy she couldn't have imagined. This is an emotional tale about how life can force you to grow when you least expect it. This provocative story will fill your heart with the belief that you can survive the most unforeseen and intense moments when you learn to trust. Enjoy this debut novel of love and faith by Cheryl Murnane.

During the Fall Details

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Author : Cheryl Murnane

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From Reader Review During the Fall for online ebook

The Author Visits says

FTC Disclosure: I received this book for free from Cheryl in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

Review by Kristin Lundgren on behalf of The Author Visits.

This is Cheryl's debut novel. *During the Fall* is a story of Jenny and Alex, two high school sweethearts who meet for the first time at the beginning of the book, and then go on a whirlwind of life, through love, college, marriage, kids, perseverance and loss. It is also a story of how two people can push apart and come back together, and it is this push-pull that drives the story, and eventually allows them to come together in a bond of trust and faith. Their's is a relationship of balancing - his love for Jenny with his love for a professional career in hockey. Hers for her love of Alex, and her desire to let him follow his dreams, but yet wanting him and a life together. How they solve this is what happens to real people - a give and take.

The story is really in two parts - the first, the story of their life, the second, leading us through a loss. At times the narrative is filled with beautiful imagery, showing the author's command of a scene, and how she understands the importance of feeling through words. Their love is real, and goes through the normal bumps in the road that any couple does, and that is refreshing. This is no starry-eyed teen two-some, but a real couple, grounded in life, but at times lifted up by dreams.

But the two main issues for me are the dueling twin POVs, one from each, and the lack of backstory in the first half - the rushing through the flotsam and jepsion of life that makes up a couple's daily life. We are treated to the bullet points in their relationship, but not always the ones you might expect, like their first date, their first kiss, all those are missing. The things she focuses on are more the turning points, or the areas where Jenny has concerns or doubts, or Alex. The sentences were declarative in many cases, making it like a double auto-biography. He said. She said. Not so much about how they felt for much of it, unless it developed the plot-line.

Going from POV to POV also means some backtracking, or even jumping ahead in the timeline, and occasionally the timeline suffers. Some things don't just ring true - it seems like they got married and had their first child in their mid 20s, but later, the timeline has them having their first child at 31. Small things, but they added up. What was also lacking were the support players, her mom, her brother that I didn't even know about for the first half, and his parents, except for her aunt Sally, who is rendered in wonderful vignettes. And her best friend as an adult, although that friendship is again hurried through, and a main event in her friend Julie's life is told through her telling Jenny about it in a flashback. Flashbacks were numerous, and at times I felt a bit of whiplash.

The second half of the story is very different - the pacing is slower, almost glacial at times, but this time the details are there, along with the feelings that were missing in the first half. It did become a little repetitive, especially in such a short book. It would have been better for me as a reader to expand the front half, and add more depth, so that we can connect to the characters better, especially in the second half. Although her writing is such that we connect anyway.

Fans of story driven fiction, and who look for the parameters of love, faith, and loss heartache, will be drawn to this quiet book. Although faith plays a central role at the end, in the beginning it is only a background for one of the characters, and I believe non-believers as well as lovers of Christian fiction would find this story appealing.

My rating: 3 stars

Melissa Walles says

Beautiful love story that emphasizes the power of faith, love and family.

Julie Sabo says

I won this book through a Goodreads giveaway. This is Cheryl Murnane's first novel and for a first time author I thought it was a decent book. I absolutely loved the first half of the book. It was fast-paced and I very much enjoyed the characters. However, the second half of the book moves at a much slower pace. Not to say I didn't enjoy the story but it started to become a bit repetitive in its overall message towards the end. Overall I liked it and would recommend it to a friend.

Donna McBroom-Theriot says

During the Fall is an inspirational book and a nice read. At the core of the book was the simple, yet profound message that we are not in charge; God is. It is a heart-warming story of a young Christian family that must go through a tragedy to find their faith.

While I found there were parts of the book that could have been edited down to make the story more concise, it was a great book. The story showed a deep and profound love between the characters and their families. In today's fast-paced world, we tend to get bogged down in the day-to-day mundane happenings and we forget to look at those we love as people. We tend to forget to open the door, pull out a chair, or even give our spouse a kiss hello. These are the important things in life and that is what the book was about. It gives the reader pause to check their own actions and to contemplate the important things in life.

I also loved the cover of the book. In addition to being a beautiful cover, it was a great cover for the story.

"Even though I lost your Aunt Sally too soon, we knew we loved each other. I don't think differently about it. She left this world with as much love as she could take with her.

I smiled, 'You're right Mom. I guess I need to make sure I give Alex as much love and attention as I can and appreciate the time we have together, because in the end, love is all there really is.' I smiled, realizing those were the words my mother had said to me my whole life.

...I took a personal oath during my drive home on that sunny spring day to spread joy in my husband's life, hoping it would fill both of us with an endless amount of love, so that in the end neither of us would ever forget the depth of our love for each other."

I am giving During the Fall four stars.

I was given a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Cheryl says

This is not the typical type of book that I would read (usually I like thrillers or humorous books), but I thought I would try a different type of genre. The first half of the book I enjoyed and quickly read. The second half of the book was slower paced and too religious for my taste. The book would be good for a church group discussion or a book club. Overall, I was impressed by the writing especially for a debut novel.

Patricia Bateson says

I loved this book "During the Fall!!" I very quickly connected with the characters and found myself completely immersed in the storyline waiting with anticipation for what was to come!! It's heart warming, delightful and I so enjoyed the serendipities and synchronicities which were weaved throughout the book. It makes you a "believer" in what is possible for yourself and the world...with a little bit of faith, hope and trust. Would highly recommend it to anyone on their journey!!!

Toni says

I had a difficult time identifying with the characters and felt like they were very flat. Everything was a bit too perfect and unrealistic. I found myself rolling my eyes alot.

Angelica Dimeo says

I won this book from goodreads.
I liked how it went in to how Alex and Jenny met
and their daily lives and interactions.
I did not like how at times the pace was slow and
difficult to read through.
Thanks for the opportunity.

Stacy says

I won this book as a FirstRead.

For Jenny and Alex, it was love at first sight when they met in high school. The first half of the book covers the highlights of the first 26 or so years of their relationship, and the second half of the book goes into detail about the tragedy mentioned in the description on the back of the book (which I don't want to spoil).

I enjoyed the story. The author did a good job of letting us know the thoughts and emotions of both Jenny and Alex. It was a good first effort by Cheryl Murnane.
