

Fall Girl

Toni Jordan

ISBN 978-1-921656-65-1

RRP AUS \$32.95, NZ \$40.00

Fiction, Trade Paperback



A reader's introduction to *Fall Girl*

The term 'rom-com' is more commonly associated with fun, light-hearted engaging films but is a great fit for this novel. With all the skill and craftsmanship Toni Jordan applied in creating her first book, *Addition*, she now gives us another sassy novel, which holds you in its realm from beginning to end. What a realm it is too! Via the eyes and voice of Della, we are taken into the bosom of the highly unorthodox Gilmore family. Their home is somewhat rundown and big enough to be a private hotel or small hospital. Saved from modern renovations, innovations and de-characterisations, this house has been extended and 'improved' by the many loving generations who have lived in it and is a mass of crazy corridors, trapdoors and outhouses with underground connecting passages. It is the perfect place for a family of con artists.

After years of sitting in the family's weekly planning meetings and listening enviously to the fantastic scams and money spinning projects of her father, brother, uncles and cousins, Della has a hit to beat them all. All she has to do is play the role of evolutionary biologist, Dr Ella Canfield, seeking funding for an ambitious research project into the possible existence of Tasmanian Tigers in Wilsons Promontory National Park. The aged academic considering her grant application should be a pushover and as for Daniel Metcalf, the man behind the funding, well he seems willing to give the money away to anyone. The \$25,000 is practically leaping into her carefully chosen handbag. That is until the good-looking, witty millionaire decides he needs to get up close and personal with Della's research and perhaps Della herself.

Throw in a family friend who has set his sights on making Della his wife, the erratic behaviour of the head of the family and the complication of some highly forbidden giddy feelings Della is experiencing each time she sees Daniel and this book will have you enraptured right to its climactic ending.

About Toni Jordan

Toni Jordan was born in Brisbane in 1966. She has a BSc. in physiology from the University of Queensland and qualifications in marketing and professional writing. Her debut novel *Addition* was first published in 2008 to critical acclaim. It was shortlisted for the Barabara Jefferis Award and longlisted for the Miles Franklin in 2009. It has been published in sixteen countries worldwide. Toni lives in Melbourne where she works part-time as a freelance copywriter, and has a column in the *Age*.

Questions for discussion

1. Is Della's childhood a case for nurture winning out over nature? It seems that through the family's diligent and all encompassing training, the general rules of right and wrong have truly been subverted. Is this your reading of the family or have they simply created an adjusted system akin to the Robin Hood way of thinking?
2. Could Della ever be truly happy with someone from outside the unorthodox world she has always lived in? Would a life with someone like Daniel really be possible or should she be keeping her eyes on the hapless Timothy, who at least understands her background?
3. It is her father's surprising bungling of his latest emerald scam that brings about the family's downfall. However, Della's refusal to cash her \$250,000 bounty is what leads to the family being disbanded and divided. Why do you think Della doesn't step in to bail everyone out?
4. How well do you think the author sustains the intricacies of the Gilmores' extraordinary lifestyle and professional pursuits? Does it become too implausible at times or, like the screwball comedies of the past, does the story's charm and the likeable characters allow you to suspend disbelief?

5. Are there any hints along the way that Daniel may not be as gullible as he seems? Are there ways in which Jordan allows us to see greater depth to his character?
6. What is it about Della that appeals to Daniel? If he was first attracted to her Dr Canfield persona, could he then be equally attracted to Della Gilmore, con artist? What does this then say about the fundamental basis of attraction? Is it primarily a physical thing or is a person's profession/ background a factor?
7. For those who have read Jordan's previous book *Addition*, how did this book compare? If this is your first experience of Toni Jordan's writing would you now go on to read her other book?
8. How does *Fall Girl* fit into the tradition of screwball comedies? In film, think Katherine Hepburn's 'Holiday', Cary Grant in 'His Girl Friday' or the two starring together in 'Bringing Up Baby'.
9. Having thought about those fabulous old movies, now think about *Fall Girl* being adapted. Could it work as an Australian film, with its rightful setting in Melbourne, or does it need the Hollywood machine and a rom-com queen like Jennifer Aniston or Katherine Heigl to truly earn its place in that popular genre? Who would you have play the roles of Della and Daniel?