



Winter Garden

By Kristin Hannah

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Can a woman ever really know herself if she doesn't know her mother?

From the author of the smash-hit bestseller Firefly Lane and True Colors comes a powerful, heartbreaking novel that illuminates the intricate mother-daughter bond and explores the enduring links between the present and the past

Meredith and Nina Whitson are as different as sisters can be. One stayed at home to raise her children and manage the family apple orchard; the other followed a dream and traveled the world to become a famous photojournalist. But when their beloved father falls ill, Meredith and Nina find themselves together again, standing alongside their cold, disapproving mother, Anya, who even now, offers no comfort to her daughters. As children, the only connection between them was the Russian fairy tale Anya sometimes told the girls at night. On his deathbed, their father extracts a promise from the women in his life: the fairy tale will be told one last time—and all the way to the end. Thus begins an unexpected journey into the truth of Anya's life in war-torn Leningrad, more than five decades ago. Alternating between the past and present, Meredith and Nina will finally hear the singular, harrowing story of their mother's life, and what they learn is a secret so terrible and terrifying that it will shake the very foundation of their family and change who they believe they are.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Female bonding is always good for a good cry, as Hannah (*True Colors*) proves in her latest. Pacific Northwest apple country provides a beautiful, chilly setting for this family drama ignited by the death of a loving father whose two daughters have grown apart from each other and from their acid-tongued, Russian-born mother. After assuming responsibility for the family business, 40-year-old empty-nester Meredith finds it difficult to carry out her father's dying wish that she take care of her mother; Meredith's troubled marriage, her troubled relationship with her mother and her mother's increasingly troubled mind get in the way. Nina, Meredith's younger sister, takes a break from her globe-trotting photojournalism career to return home to do her share for their mother. How these three women find each other and themselves with the help of vodka and a trip to Alaska competes for emotional attention with the story within a story of WWII Leningrad. Readers will find it hard not to laugh a little and cry a little more as mother and daughters reach out to each other just in the nick of time. (*Feb.*)

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From [Booklist](#)

The Whitson family is rocked by the sudden death of patriarch Evan, a warm, loving man who doted on his two adult daughters, Meredith and Nina, and his reserved Russian wife, Anya. Meredith, who runs the family business, and Nina, a photojournalist whose job takes her to war zones around the world, have never been able to connect with their cold, forbidding mother. When Anya begins to act strangely, Meredith thinks she belongs in a nursing home, but Nina decides to try to fulfill her father's dying wish and get her mother to tell her and Meredith the elaborate fairy tales she used to share with them. Anya is initially reluctant, but once she begins, Nina realizes these tales are actually the story of Anya's life in Stalinist Leningrad. Meredith and Nina decide to attempt to uncover the truth about their mother's tragic past in the hope of understanding her, and themselves. Though the novel starts off fairly maudlin, it evolves into a gripping read, although it's a tearjerker. Hannah's previous books, including *Firefly Lane* (2008) and *True Colors* (2009), are tailor-made for book clubs, and her audience should find plenty to discuss in this equally enthralling entry. --Kristine Huntley

Review

'Movingly written and plotted with the heartless skill of Greek tragedy. You'll keep turning the pages until the last racking sob' Wendy Holden, Daily Mail 'A gripping tale of family love, grief and forgiveness' Sunday Express 'A guilty pleasure' Daily Express 'A moving coming-of-age story' Heat

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Hester Crutchfield:

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Evelyn Rodrigue:

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