

*Read books by Emma Scott
in English:*

Beautiful Hearts Duet:

**Bring Down the Stars
Long Live the Beautiful Hearts**



In Harmony

To be continued...

EMMA SCOTT

BRING DOWN THE STARS

Freedom

2025

УДК 821.111-31(73)

ББК 84(7Coe)-44

S41

Emma Scott
BRING DOWN THE STARS

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Художественное оформление *Анастасии Яковенко*

Scott, Emma.

S41 Beautiful Hearts. Bring Down The Stars / Emma Scott. — Москва : Эксмо, 2025. — 352 с. — (Freedom. Романтическая проза ЭММЫ СКОТТ).

ISBN 978-5-04-215055-5

I fell for Connor Drake. I didn't want to; I fought against it, but I fell in love with him anyway. With his words. With his poetry. With him. The gentleness and beauty of his soul that speaks directly to mine. He writes as if he can feel my heart, hear its cadence and compose the exact right lyrics to accompany every beat and flow.

I'm in love with Connor...so why do I feel an inexplicable pull to his best friend, Weston? Grouchy, sullen, brooding Weston Turner, who could cut you down with a look. Fiercely intelligent with a razor sharp wit and acid tongue, he's the exact opposite of Connor in every way, and yet there's electricity in the air between us. The thorny barbs Weston wraps around himself can't keep me away.

But the more time I spend with these men, the more tangled and confused my emotions become. When they both sign up for the Army Reserves during a time of increasing strife in the Middle East, I fear I'll never unravel my own heart that sometimes feels as if it will tear straight down the middle...for both of them.

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«Эксмо», 2025

Acknowledgements

Robin Hill, if I never wrote another word, I'd still email or text you a hundred times a day and never run out of things to say. Thank you for every day. Love you so much.

Melissa Petersen, you are family and have shown that a thousand times over. You're in my heart forever.

Joanna, I found the energy and confidence to finish this book because of you. Thank you for giving me that last push over the hill. Love you.

Grey, Sarah, Angela, Suanne, Joy, and Mom for helping me chisel the raw mess of words into something I hope pays proper tribute to Edmond Rostand's masterpiece. Love you all so much.

Amy Burke Mastin, I see the house you built for her and I feel stronger. Thank you is not enough.

Joanne and Sharon, for LP. For connecting me directly to one of my deepest sources of comfort. Thank you, and with so much love.

Jade West, for knowing the rarity of a decent night's sleep; we are stronger and will get stronger every day <3

Danielle Sanchez and Kelly Brenner Simmon of Ink-Slinger PR. You both have been more than business associates from Day One, but have proven to be an amazing support system, above and beyond. Thank you for being there for me. <3

Kate Stewart, just knowing you are there, in the world, being Kate, brings me peace. All my love.

Kennedy Ryan, you are gift to the human race, and I thank the universe every day our paths crossed and now run together, hopefully forever (and with a beautiful curb running alongside with which we can stop and serenade the unwilling masses.) Love you.

And to the book community. I have no words. Not enough. The volume of support, care, and love you have shown me and my family has been extraordinary. I will never be able to thank you for not only being there during the sharpest agony, but through the longer, lonelier days where the ache dulls but doesn't fade. Thank you for not leaving me alone. For remembering her. For being the best collection of women supporting women—not just me, so many others. I am indebted forever. Thank you and with much love.



Playlist

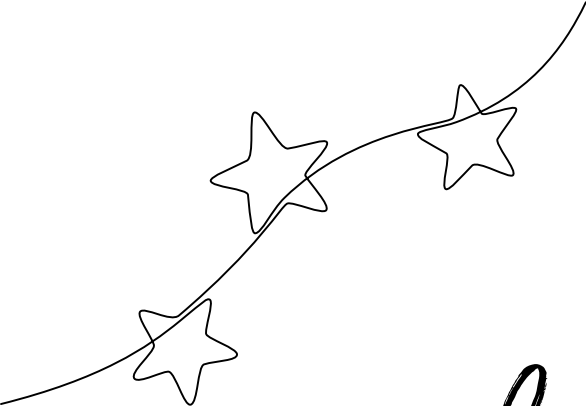


Father of Mine, Everclear
Ocean Eyes, Billie Eilish
Be Mine, Ofenbach
I Feel Like I'm Drowning, Two Feet
Just Friends, Morgan Saint
Little Lion Man, Mumford and Sons
The Night We Met, Lord Huron
&Run, Sir Sly
Give Yourself a Try, The 1975



AUTHOR'S *Note*

This book was written in the Before. Before my life changed forever. Before I stepped into the dark forest and realized I could not go back the way I'd come. It was closed to me forever. The duet itself is a story of transformation and overcoming tremendous adversity, and it's happened more times than I can count in my writing career that art and life intertwine in mind-boggling ways. There are no coincidences. I cannot go back, only forward, and so I give you this book, from the Before, with all my hope, best intentions, and my love because the first lesson the After taught me is that love is all that's ever mattered; now, then, and forever.



Dedication

For Katy,
a gift from the universe; the kind of person Izzy would
have run up to and hugged on sight

For Bill,
my love, my partner in this life; we clasped hands tightly when the forest became impossibly, agonizingly dark, and we're still holding them as we slowly emerge into the light. All my love, honey. Always.

PART I

Sinclair Prep

PROLOGUE

“Almost Empty”

by Weston J. Turner, age 12

I was seven-years-old when my dad left us. That morning, he showered, shaved, and dressed in a suit and tie, same as always. Drank his coffee at the kitchen counter while we ate breakfast, same as always. He kissed Ma on the cheek, told my sisters and me to be good, and drove off in his Nissan Altima. Same as always.

At school, in Mr. Fitzsimmons’ math class, I got a funny feeling in my stomach. By noon, my stomach churned and my skin was hot. I barely made it to the big gray trash can at the end of the row of tables in the cafeteria before puking my guts out.

The lunch supervisor sent me to the nurse, and the nurse called Dad, but he wasn’t at his office. Ma had to come and get me, grouching the whole time that she’d had to take a bus from work—Dad drove our only car.

Ma and I got off the 9 bus, and walked down the street toward our house. We lived in Woburn, a little north of the city, in a shabby little house with blue siding and a white roof at the end of a cul-de-sac. On the street, with two huge suitcases in hand, was my father. He was stuffing one into

the trunk of his car and the other was at his feet. He froze when he saw us.

Ma started walking fast, then running, demanding to know what my father was up to, louder and louder. She let go of my hand because I could hardly keep up, and left me on the curb while she rushed to him. They talked, but I couldn't hear what they said through the fever that stuffed my head like cotton.

Ma looked more scared than I'd ever seen her. She started crying, then screaming. Dad talked in a low voice, then threw up his hand and slammed the trunk of the car. In my delirium, the sound was huge. A bomb going off. A meteor smashing us out of our home, destroying everything, leaving behind a huge crater. A hole blasted in the center of each of us.

Dad tore out of my mother's slapping, grasping hands, and climbed into the front seat to start the car. Ma screamed and screamed that he was no kind of man, and then collapsed to her knees, sobbing and telling him to go and never come back.

Dad drove the car off the curb and around the cul-de-sac. He slowed in front of me and waved once from behind his closed window. Guilt had turned his features into someone unrecognizable.

I shook my head no, and kicked the passenger door.

He kept going. I slammed my hand on trunk. No!

He didn't stop.

For a second, I stood with my pulse rushing in my ears and my face on fire, watching the car roll away. Then I ran. I ran after him as fast as I could. I shouted at him as loud as I could, hot tears streaking down my burning skin.

Did he see me in his rearview? He must have; a seven-year-old boy screaming for his dad to come back, while

running as fast as his legs could carry him. Not fast enough.

He sped up, turned the corner, and was gone.

The ground tilted out from under me. I stumbled to the asphalt, scraping my knees and palms, my breath wheezing through hard sobs.

We later found out he'd quit his job weeks ago and hadn't paid the mortgage on the house in three months. Instead, he kept the money for his escape.

Did he wonder what we'd do with only Ma's pay from cutting hair? Did he care that we'd lose our little house in Woburn? In the months to come, did he ever wonder if we cried for him? Did he consider my sisters and I blamed ourselves, because of course we did. If we were good enough, he would've stayed.

Or taken us with him.

Instead, he took his clothes and the stuff from his bathroom. Dad scraped out his closet and drawers, taking everything...except for one dress sock. Black with gold-colored thread at the toe.

I looked at that lone sock in the drawer and pictured the other one in his luggage, now traveling with him—wherever he was going. He couldn't be bothered to grab the other one.

Like us, it wasn't worth going back for.

His children were left behind like a sock in a drawer that was almost empty, and that was a million times worse than if there was nothing left at all.

The bank took the house. Ma started drinking a lot of beer at night and had to ask Uncle Phil for money to get us into an apartment in Southie.

I burnt the sock.

I was only seven but the anger in me felt so much bigger. Hotter. Like a fever that would never go away. I had