



## Power Play (Clear Message, #1)

*Kali Cross*

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Jack's up against a master of manipulation—staying one step ahead of his ex-fiancée requires some swift maneuvers. But when Alexandra Simpson enters his life...well, she is a game changer. Dangerous secrets, office intrigue, and sizzling passion will keep you turning the pages of *Power Play*, Book 1 of Kali Cross' new romance series, Clear Message.

Jack Schmidt is getting screwed by his fiancée, Vanessa, in more ways than one. After catching her in bed with her trainer, Jack wants her out of his life. Too bad it's not that easy. As his employee, she parlayed his attraction to the level of fiancée in a matter of months, and in just a few weeks, she'll own a 20% stake in his firm—and she won't give it up without a fight. Vanessa thinks she has him by the balls, but Jack's done being played. He orders a new manager to review all the accounts, suspecting that all Vanessa's late nights working were spent stroking his clients...and not just their egos.

New manager Alexandra Simpson is the perfect candidate for the job. She's sharp, loyal to the firm, and doesn't intimidate easily. Unfortunately, she also intrigues Jack, but getting involved with another employee would be the definition of insanity. Jack wonders if she's like Vanessa, ready to climb over anyone who gets in her way. But something about Alex forces him to believe otherwise.

After a disagreement over a client leads to a searing kiss, Jack wants nothing more than to lock the door and spend the rest of the day getting to know every inch of Alexandra Simpson. But when Alex hears that he's engaged to Vanessa, she lets him know in no uncertain terms that she isn't interested in being the other woman...not again. Not again? Now Jack must go up against Alex's past, and the result could be deadly for both of them.

Content Notes: Hot, Contemporary, Suspense

## Power Play (Clear Message, #1) Details

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Author : Kali Cross

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## From Reader Review Power Play (Clear Message, #1) for online ebook

**multitaskingmomma says**

Original Blog Post: eARC Review & Author ebook #Giveaway: Power Play (Clear Message, Book #1) by Kali Cross

We would like to thank author Kali Cross for donating an ebook copy of Power Play (Clear Message, Book #1), to 1 lucky commentator who gets chosen. Make sure to leave a comment to get a free ebook copy of Power Play.

Review by: Ramona

My Rating: 4.5 out of 5 Stars

If anybody thinks that a corporate takeover is boring, stodgy stuff, they should read what Kali Cross wrote in Clear Message #1, Power Play. The title hints at more than a simple book concerning business though, as the play for power that follows isn't only in the boardroom (although there's some really sexy stuff that happens in there, too) but extends to the bedroom and beyond.

Jack is a self-made, successful business magnate, but when he thought he could finally trust in love and life again, he finds he's been played and he may have no way out. His fiancée thinks she can dictate him and take control of his advertising company. But something is definitely not right and raises so many red flags once he starts taking a closer look at company operations. His main problem now is how to cut her out cleanly and keep the loyal employees safe from a hostile takeover - or is it a coup from within?

The best solution comes in the form of his newest manager, Alex. Since she's not tied in any way to the older employees, he can be sure that she gives an unbiased eye to the pile of accounts laid before her. And she's loyal to no one else but him, which is a major plus. What to do, though, about the instant attraction he feels?

Alex thought she could finally concentrate on her career in relative anonymity. Unfortunately, it wasn't to be. While her discretion is definitely called for, her new boss is making sure she doesn't remain hidden to him! The only reason why she'd left Austin and moved to San Diego seems to have followed her, though. Does it pose a real threat to her, and ultimately, to Jack?

The excitement that permeates this novel makes it a great weekend read. Added to the fact that it doesn't have a cliffhanger ending, the suspense that follows both Jack and Alex keeps you glued. Of course they're connected when it comes to the business problems, but what blindsides them is the high point of the whole story.

One point, though. Why give away that much stock to the employees? In a few years, Jack would have lost control of his company. Just saying. Don't think that was a wise move at all.

Kali Cross hasn't disappointed me yet, with the hot action and hotter bedroom gymnastics that take place within the pages of Power Play. I also appreciate the machinations of the master puppeteer and the plot twist that plays out in more ways than anybody could expect. Although, I'm glad I hadn't lost my touch completely when what I suspected of Amanda was true. All those guessing games kept the story interesting but I'm

waiting for who's next. Taylor and Mike? I hope!

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### **Marlena Salinas says**

I given a copy of this book to read for an honest review, so here it is...

This book was hot, and I really liked the general idea of the story and the wit & charm of the characters and their relationships. Overall a decent read that I would recommend. Had a little bit of everything, starting over story, down to earth rich hero, mystery, danger, sex, real and honest friendships, crazy ex's, etc.

Although, at times I thought less would be more with both the story line and character development, as it was hard to distinguish what the actual main plot was and it seemed some stuff was thrown in just to fluff it up a bit. But again, overall it was an exciting story that I enjoyed regardless.

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### **Pixie says**

\*\*\*I was provided an ARC for an honest review\*\*\*

Oh the ARC....how I've laid awake at night trying to come up with a system to rate these that takes in to account that I got something for nothing. I don't want to give too harsh of a review (when warranted) as to completely lose sight of the fact this is in fact someone's pursuit of a dream or too light of a review that's its really dishonest and merely padding the numbers/skewing the star rating. What I came up with is a couple of things 1. Always thank the author (so Kali Cross thank you for considering me worthy of a free copy) 2. Always remind the reader that my review is 1 opinion that honestly doesn't matter to anyone besides me so take it with a grain of salt. And on that note....here's my review.

I DNF'd this at 60%. This book had me fuming. The Hubs asked to stop hearing about it as it wasn't real life. Oooooh where do I begin....so let's start with Jack. So the thing is I was/am in finance/accounting. I own a firm, but before owning it I worked in mergers & acquisitions for a national company. I was that company's first woman on the corporate team. When it comes to business I am...well honestly probably a horrible person but I'm fine with that as its business & that's what I get paid to be "heartless & horrible" all for the sake of the company's bottom line. No need to comment on it as it won't defrost my heartless soul I've had my car keyed by people who it's mattered more to & I'm still "heartless & horrible" so let's move on.

Jack to me was a character so insanely stupid to me I couldn't go on. If he was a real man I would provide each woman in this story with the names of some ruthless lawyers who would gladly assist them in suing this man for his livelihood cause he deserved to lose it.

1. Don't fuck at work. Not just don't fuck your employees...DON'T FUCK AT THE FUCKING OFFICE.

Don't fuck your spouse, don't fuck your mistress, don't fuck the kid who delivers your pizzas (ours is cute), but most importantly don't fuck your employees. This guy seriously had a Netflix date cued up by his assistant at the office. God I would sue you....

2. If you do happen to find yourself falling for your employee & entering a relationship that's your 1 get out of jail free card. You cannot start a company with your wife, once she dies within less than a year get engaged to a female member of your team after barely knowing her & give her an employment contact that has her gaining something like 49% of the company ownership (did this shit really vest in less than a year) all because honestly she's fucking you, only to then break off your engagement & then within days start FUCKING another new female employee IN YOUR FUCKING OFFICE.

I have no idea what the rest of the book was about. I wanted Jack to lose the company, he could play all wide eyed but dude you have an established pattern. Also how dare you take such risk with a company you and your dead wife spent 20 years building? If I was her I would haunt you for eternity.

Other than the fact I could not get past Jack being an absolute idiot it could have been a great book. You should make up your own mind. Again thank you Kali Cross for the free copy.

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### **J.H. Croix says**

Power play by Kali Cross is a hot cotemporary romance with a twist of suspense. Quick summary: Jack discovers his fiancée, Vanessa, was only interested in him to get a 20% stake in his company, along with sharing her charms with clients. Enter Alexandra (Alex), the loyal manager whose job it is to sort out the mess. Jack's about-to-be ex-fiancée is crazy and spiteful, and Alex has some baggage she's running from. The sparks between Alex and Jack are too hot for them to resist.

The plot has suspense and mystery, office antics, a scary stalker, and a steamy romance. The pace was good, the story had a nice balance. Some romantic suspense stories lean so heavily on the suspense that it's barely a romance, and that can happen in the other direction too. The author does a nice job with keeping both moving in this story. The sex scenes are steamy with some light BDSM. Overall, I really enjoyed this!

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### **Kristin says**

\*\* I received this book in return for an honest review \*\*

4 1/2 stars

Power Play is the first book that I have read by Kali Cross. I really loved this book. Alexandra is a feisty, stubborn, independent and scared woman. She moves to a new city/state and gets a new job working for Jack. Alex is running from something/someone in her past. She doesn't want to let anyone in or let them help her. Jack is the owner/CEO of the company, who has a crazy fiancé. Vanessa is definitely crazy and does discover that karma is a bitch. Jack and Alex have scorching, hot sex scenes with some mild BDSM. I really liked it, when the bossy/dominate Jack came out to play. The book has suspense, intrigue and mystery due to

both of the characters' pasts. There were many twists and turns that kept the book very interesting. When the final mystery was revealed, it was not what I was expecting. But it was still a good surprise. I would give the story / plot 4 stars. I wish (sorry spoiler alert) the stalker situation would have been addressed some more. Of course after reading, I see why the author did it that way. I would give the sex / romance part of the story 5 stars. Talk about hot and yummy, like the scene on the boat or the use of Alex's office desk. I would recommend this book to anyone who likes a hot romance with suspense and intrigue.

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### **Cassie Hess-dean says**

I absolutely loved this book. There was enough suspense to keep me guessing. The relationship between Jack and Alex was hot! The potential for Mike and Taylor is there. And Vanessa, she is just a greedy, money hungry little twit!

Alex has moved and taken a new job to get away from the bad things that have been happening in her life. On her first day at work she feels the talons from Vanessa before the two are even introduced. It is certainly a love at first sight kinda heat between Jack and Alex. Unfortunately Jack is the boss and Alex doesn't want to mess up her chances at this job. Mike is hitting on her the second he sees her but the two are instant friends, like brother and sister. Can Alex bring in some fresh ideas to this advertising company? Or will her ideas and presence at this company be a threat to Vanessa and Jack's relationship? Will this fresh start be good for Alex or will "Leah's" troubles follow her to her new life?

Can't wait to read the next book in this series...

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### **Emma Jaye says**

Office politics, a nasty ex and an even nastier stalker plus a steamy hot love affair. The identity of the stalker keeps you guessing till the end, which was a refreshing change from the normal damsel in distress scenario. I loved Alex's character, feisty bold and not afraid to go after what she wants while (mostly) keeping her personal integrity intact. Love scenes were detailed, steamy but tasteful.

At first I was a little dubious about the first person style as it isn't easy to pull off, but Kali Cross does it beautifully, and the story flowed so well I forgot all about my personal pet peeve it after a while.

The secondary characters were excellently portrayed, leaving scope for a sequel without leaving a cliffhanger on Jack and Alex's story.

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### **E.L. Ervin says**

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

This book was a whirl of secrets, lies and love! Alex and Jack are a steamy, hot couple who each have their own trials and tribulations to work through, but, that doesn't slow them down one bit. This book is full of suspense, mystery and romance...throughout the entire story. The secondary characters are all fleshed out with their own personalities, my favorite being Mike.

I loved everything about this book from the crazy ex to the characters to the sizzling love between Alex and Jack. I definitely feel this book is worth the read and would recommend it to any and everyone.

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## **Christine Karan says**

I had requested the author, Kali Cross to send me a copy of her book Power Play because of the synopsis she had posted. It was the first hook and oh boy did I get hooked on. This is definite a page-turner and a book you want to sit with a cup of tea and your phone on silent.

We have Jack, a later thirties, very successful, Adonis kinda guy. He is breath of fresh air, when you describe the main lead with such words. First off, he has no arrogance, he is a guy you meet in regular life ( you are lucky, if you meet someone with the described physic) and not just a fantasy guy from the books.

He is a widower, but when the book starts he is engaged to a very... fiery lady Vanessa.

Then we have Alex AKA Alexandra, a young, career oriented, girl next door kinda girl ( again with an amazing body). She is lovely, smart; beautiful and knows what she wants- in her career and life. However there is a secret lurking behind those confident, beautiful looks.

Enter Vanessa a 'i-will-do-anything-to-get-what-i-want-anything-at-all' kinda lady. She is engaged to Jack, but the beginning scene literally shows the character of Vanessa and how Jack has been blinded by love from him see Vanessa's true nature.

Finally Mike, a typical 'ive-got-your-back' kinda guy. Jack's right hand man and a trusted friend. I actually liked him a lot.

Now, the lives of these four revolve around Clear Message Inc. a fire cracker in the advertising world in San Diego.

Eventually, Jack and Alex start having feelings for each other. Jack reveals himself to Alex and Alex after a lot of steamy persuasion reveals her to him. she does have a justified reason to why she keeps mum.

However this being said, the author keeps you guessing that the secret that Alex hides is a certain person, but the last few pages has a good twist that would make you go and back and re read the lines again. I assure you, you would be like 'WTF?' or 'are you serious?'

The whole office romance was great, however, I thought it was bit too soon with the sex part. Alex starts her job as a senior manager and within a week she is in Jack's bed. Erm.... Ok. Lets say they both needed some sort of outlet and found each other. But the sex itself was hot- especially the one on the boat. Sex in the sea...anyone?

This book also gives you an inside into how the advertising world. A lot of deadlines, client meetings, brainstorming, weekend work, I totally loved how the author described it and how much the employees loved working for the company.

All in all, the book was a hit with me. the characters were well developed and very distinctive. They had an aura of their own. When the two main leads got together, there was respect, love and lust which made the scenes even hotter.

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### **Kendra Rose says**

I really enjoyed this read. I have been asked to be honest in my review which is something I always endeavour to do. When I received the e book, I wasn't sure how much could be told within the storyline due to a very in depth synopsis. However I was pleasantly surprised yes I knew the jist off the plot, but there were some nicely added layers to the main plot. The protagonists were very likable as well. a nice relaxed read with some nice steamy sections to get the blood pumping. I felt though that everything got wrapped rather quickly, before I knew it everything was fastforwarded and complete, perhaps it could have been allowed down in some areas so it felt less forced. but that is just my own personal take. Like I said I enjoyed the read and would recommend to anyone who likes a bit of steam and drama in their chilled out readathons. :)

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### **Lovebunny says**

4.5 stars

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

I really liked this book, the writing was so well done and the story flowed well. All of the characters in this book were so well thought up and written. All the extra details about the secondary characters were just great and made me want to read a book about Mike and maybe Taylor?!

I have to say that there were some twists and turns in this book I did not see coming, and that was just awesome! This book has the whole package, from falling for a co-worker to HOT sex to suspense/adventure with a little sub plots thrown in for a little something extra.

The relationship between Jack and Alex was great and didn't feel rushed or pushed at all. I like that Alex was such a strong character and didn't let herself be pushed around (view spoiler)

If you are looking for a book that will keep you on your toes so much so that you have to keep reading to know what is what, then look no further this is definitely it.

I can't wait for the next book in this series :)

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### **1-Click Addict Support Group says**

I really liked this story. It was original, flowed well and the characters were relatable. There were parts of the story that left me on my toes, and had me doing a double take when they happened.

Alexandra, or Alex as she prefers, just moved to town and started a new job at Clear Message. It's clear from day one that she has a "thing" for the boss. She vows not to act on it, especially after she finds out he is engaged to the wicked witch of the office.

Jack is the CEO of Clear Message, and it's pretty clear from page two on that his world is not all sunshine and rainbows. When he finds himself attracted to the new girl, he vows he will not act on it, as it didn't work out so well the last time.

When the fates collide and these two finally get hot and heavy, they ignite the pages like a spark to gasoline. And you know what happens when you fuel a fire? It's much harder to put it out.

There was a twist in the book that I never saw coming and I think Kali did a great job at giving you just enough to want more, but keep you in the dark at the same time. ~ Devlynn, 4 stars

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## Pam says

*4 karma's a bitch stars*

***Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.***

What a tangled web we weep... Jack Schmidt may have been going through the motions after the death of his wife, distracted by the first pretty thing that crossed his path, only now it's not so pretty. Once he catches Vanessa in bed with her trainer, he starts to see things clearly and sees her for what she truly is, a conniving-gold-digging-bitch. His first priority is getting her out of his life, but since he's been blinded by her for so long, she has fully ingrained herself inside his company, and is weeks away from owning 20% of his business. His only solution is the smart, witty and sexy Alexandra Simpson, and as much as she seems to be the solution to not only get Vanessa out of his life, she sparks some life back into him. But is he stupid to mix business with pleasure again, hasn't he learned his lesson ??? Only this time, Alexandra appears to not be seduced by his status and wealth, she sees the man he is and as much as she wants him...she won't let herself get involved with a man attached *again*.

***"I fight for what I want, Jack. I'll wait until you extract her from your life...or rather...should I say we'll be waiting."***

**Power Play** is a smart, sensual read, it was as if it was a massive chess game and you see each player making their play for power over one another. Vanessa is a bitch, there is no denying that fact, she slept her way to success and took advantage of Jack. He may have had fun and thought he had what we needed until Alexandra walked into his life. Alexandra although reserved, was no wall flower, she didn't hesitate to put anyone in place. Unlike Vanessa, Alexandra did it all with class. No non-sense, steamy and sensual, it was a story I fully enjoyed, even the addition of the small side plot added a hint of mystery. Recommended read for sure!

*ARC kindly provided by the author, in exchange for an honest review.*

\*\*\*Quotes above are taken from the ARC version of the book and may differ upon publication.

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### **J luvs books says**

\*I received an ARC copy of this book in exchange for my honest review\*

I was super excited to read this book by Kali Cross, because I loved Pushing Limits by her. And, I was not disappointed in the least by Power Play.

This book has a great storyline with some hot office action and a bit of suspense to keep you guessing. The book flows well and its a light, sexy, read. I absolutely loved Jack and Alex together and their personalities were the kind you would like in real life. Even some of the side characters like Mike, Jack's best friend were extremely likeable. I would love to read about him in the future. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone that likes a good erotic romance with a little splash of bdsm and suspense.

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### **Debbie Hanson says**

I received this book in exchange for an honest review.

I really enjoyed this, well written and great characters.

So Jack Schmidt is owner of Clear Message an advertising firm and happily engaged to Vanessa Richards, that is until he walks in on her having sex with her personal trainer...

All hell breaks loose and he is hell bent on removing her permanently from his life and company. But with a share contract in place for after she becomes his wife, so removing her from the business will be harder than Jack thought. Vanessa is a cold bitch with her own vendetta against Jack and she uses every trick in the book to get back into the good books with Jack.

With women issues and a fiance who can't keep in her pants, Jack also is dealing with a new employee, Alexandra Simpson. He has an instant attraction to her and makes his stand on her very clear, he wants her but can he trust her with outing Vanessa... Time will tell!

Jack's best friend Mike, also a manager at Clear Message, rakes quite a liking to Alex, nut she has eyes only for one man.

Alexandra is running from a former life and brings a "who dunnit" vibe to the story. With a stalker from her previous home finding her at her new job, she is threatened with flower deliveries at work, blood scrawled notes on her home walls and no one to talk to about it, she deals with it as best she can under the circumstances... Until, Jack finds out.

Without ruining the ending, and the who dunnit let me just say I didn't see that coming but worth the wait till the end. :-)

Looking forward to seeing if there will be more Clear Message stories from this author, so many great characters, with their own stories to tell.

