



Playing the Spy

Maggie Brown

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Hollywood star and the nation's favorite daughter, Eleanor Godwin wants nothing more than time by herself, especially from the persistent press. What better place to recuperate after a particularly gruelling round of interviews than a picture-perfect exclusive island resort in the Great Barrier Reef?

Political reporter Sophie Marsh is used to digging up dirt. When her editor underhandedly snags her the position as Eleanor's housekeeper for two months, she reluctantly agrees to spy on the star. After all, her hard-won position at the paper is on the line.

Against the background of the breathtaking island, passions run high. As secrets are revealed, the assignment becomes Sophie's worst nightmare? write the article or lose her job. She knows that succumbing to temptation can't be an option. But tell that to her heart...

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From Reader Review Playing the Spy for online ebook

Gaby LezReviewBooks says

Sophie Marsh is a journalist who is forced by her boss to disguise as a maid to dig up secrets on Hollywood star Eleanor Godwin. As a political journalist, Sophie is annoyed with her assignment but once she gets to know the ice queen actress and starts to have feelings for her, she is confronted with a moral dilemma. Shall Sophie reveal Eleanor's secrets to keep her job or shall she respect her privacy and the new feelings they have for each other?

This is a well written and entertaining book with the idyllic setting of the Australian Great barrier reef. Ms. Brown's description of the landscape is vivid and is the perfect background for a romance. The main characters are skilfully portrayed, Eleanor is a typical ice queen, very talented but distant. Sophie is vibrant, caring and too well read for a maid. Their chemistry is sizzling and the intimacy hot. However, I didn't find the story very realistic specially at the beginning and the end seemed a bit rushed. Anyway, it's a well written and entertaining book worth a read if you are into I've queens or like romances between celebrities and ordinary people.

Overall, a good romance with a beautiful setting. 3.5 stars.

ARC provided the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

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Anja says

Oh, I liked the story and mostly its two main characters. Mostly because Eleonore talks like a old lady with her darlings and pompous vocabulary. And the chemistry at the end wasn't as good as at the beginning, it made me skip paragraphs to get it over with. Interesting ending, could have been more exciting, more gripping, more romancy :) 3,5 stars

Starsandsun18 says

It's my first one from the author and I really don't know what to expect.

At first I was having a hard time connecting with the characters, don't get me wrong I think it was just me. Good thing I didn't give up. :))

It's sweet. It's light. Yes there's a pushing and pulling and some jealousy. (I find it cute actually)

No major drama. If you're a fan of Hollywood give this book a try.

Btw, I do agree Ellie speaks like an old lady. :)) I think she's only 32? Correct me please, if I'm wrong.

I only remember Sophie's age. 29.

Lex Kent says

4.25 Stars. I really enjoyed this romance. While I liked both Piping Her Tune and In the Company of Crocodiles, this is my favorite book by Brown. This was a feel good romance that I think romance fans are going to enjoy.

Sophie is a political reporter trying to make a name for herself. When her boss tells her she is to go undercover, as a housekeeper, to dig up dirt on one of Australia's and America's most beloved actresses, Sophie wants nothing to do with the job. Her boss gives her no choice and Sophie is off to spend two months, at a private resort, with Eleanor in the Whitsundays. The more time they spend together, the more feelings become involved. Will Sophie do her job or listen to her heart?

I don't know what it is, but a romance between a big Hollywood star and a regular blue collar woman, always works for me. It really is one of my favorite hooks in lesfic romance and this book didn't disappoint. I just really liked how the romance slowly built and how they just got closer and closer. The chemistry was absolutely there, and they were a very believable couple. You just hope and hope for a HEA.

The characters in this book were great. It wasn't just the two mains, but the supporting cast was well done too. Everyone was fleshed out and you remembered all of their names even if they didn't play a huge roll. Brown definitely writes characters well. On top of that the setting of the Whitsundays; you can't get much more beautiful than that.

The only issue I had with the book is that Sophie being there is based on a lie. I don't like when a book starts off like that because it makes it so you are just waiting for the other shoe to drop. But the way Brown handled it, I'm okay with it. She didn't leave it until the last minute, so there was actually time for a proper ending which I really appreciate. Obviously this book has some angst, but it's not a ton and overall this is a feel good romance.

This is a book that is easy to recommend to romance fans. I really enjoyed this and expect others will too. This has made me want to read the few Brown book's I haven't and to keep a sharp eye out for what she puts out next.

An ARC was given to me by Bella, for a honest review.

Pin says

Playing the Spy is the sixth novel by Maggie Brown, but only my second by her. I have read her debut I Can't Dance Alone, and was not happy with it. I am glad I tried again, because her growth as an author and storyteller is really visible.

Playing the Spy is a contemporary romance predominantly set in an exclusive island resort in the Great Barrier Reef. Eleanor Godwin (34) is an Australian Oscar winning actress and Hollywood star who must recover her health after a particularly difficult and exhausting role. Her housekeeper for two months is Sophie Marsh (29) an undercover journalist looking for revealing informations about the reticent star. We already know what to expect when a relationship starts with lies and deception. The question is only

when and how it will crash. The author made a pretty good story with that "when and how" with a solid plot and nice epilogue. I liked the protagonists and the setting, and there were a few good supporting characters. Overall a good, well-written and enjoyable book. Will definitely try Brown's other backlist titles because I think I missed some pleasant reads.

3.75 stars

Jan 14, 2018

A review copy of this book was provided by the publisher.

Tiff says

Lies and deception is never a good way to start a relationship. It is a damn good way to start a romance novel though. Add in chemistry and a whole lot of sexiness and you have a book by Maggie Brown you just won't want to put down.

Eleanor Godwin is a mega-star in Hollywood and beloved by many. As a household name, Eleanor has very little privacy and the small amounts she does have she guards fiercely. After wrapping up a punishing role, Eleanor is exhausted and ill from the toll she reeked on her body to get into character. She decides to return to her birth country of Australia for some much needed rest out of the public's eye.

Our other main character is a journalist on the political beat. Sophie Marsh is forced by her editor to take an undercover role, as a housekeeper/cook to infiltrate the life of Eleanor Godwin. Sophie has no interest in Hollywood or reporting on entertainment news. Her sexist boss forces her to take the role or hit the unemployment line. The young journalist reluctantly agrees knowing that this is so wrong on so many levels and decides upon arrival at the private island she will not do harm to Eleanor Godwin's reputation no matter what.

This adorable and sweet relationship blossoms from a reluctant friendship to an all-out burning love affair. The two main characters are delightful and you love them for their kindness and strength as well as the many missteps they make on their journey to happily ever after. You root for their success all the way through. A fantastic read!

Kara says

"Playing the Spy" wasn't what I expected, because once again I failed to read a book blurb and picked up the book because of lots of good reviews, which I obviously didn't read as carefully as I normally do either! So the book isn't about a government spy, it's about a reporter who is assigned to spy on a celebrity to get some dirt and sell papers. I figured I'd finish the story to justify the 1* I immediately planned to rate the book.

I consider myself a very tolerant person. But I have very little tolerance for journalists. They are as manipulative and generally as much of lying scumbags as the politicians and businesses they write about. Wow...did I just write that? Well, ok, it actually felt kinda good to get that off my chest. Maybe I need to

quit reading newspapers and political stories for awhile...lesfic makes me so much calmer and happier!!

With regards to the story, in-the-closet MC Sophie is assigned to work undercover for two months as housekeeper and cook for in-the-closet MC Eleanor. Eleanor is an Academy Award winning actress whom everybody loves, and the newspaper editor decides she must have juicy secrets to uncover, ethics be damned.

Eleanor is retreating to an exclusive island for two months to recover physically and emotionally from a grueling role she's just completed. She's truly physically ill, and under a specialist doctor's care. So Sophie accepts an assignment to get the ill, emotionally trusting and caring, and intensely private Eleanor to share something that the world has no right to know, so Sophie can betray Eleanor's trust. She's even excited that she's being paid by Eleanor as well as earning her salary from the newspaper. I hate this theme, I hate this theme, and I can't wait to hate Sophie and I can't wait to write a blistering review.

And then I read past the set-up. The book is funny; hilarious at many points! The first time our MCs encounter one another, and the first time they meet make me laugh even as I still couldn't wait to justify a 1* rating. And then I read further. I read of Eleanor's frustration with her private life, despite her highly successful career. I read of Sophie's frustration with her private life, and her frustration with her professional life...especially being forced into being a tabloid reporter when she dreams of more.

Sophie is caretaker for Eleanor while she is ill. Sophie and Eleanor spend time together, and I enjoy, more and more, reading of their time together. It's a small island, but the other characters are fun too, and play great secondary roles. Eleanor's agent Carol, and famous singer Austen (who has a history with Eleanor) and Eleanor's aunt Ginny arrive on the island, and play great parts.

Their daily life together on the island is described in rich detail. The theme of spy and betray retreats into the background as a slow burn romance develops for our MCs, and the book is becoming more and more enjoyable. Delightful sex scenes occur, and the book is becoming even MORE enjoyable. I begin focusing on more typical lesfic flaws rather than the theme I hate. First, the rich-girl-poor-girl class differences is overdone after awhile. Secondly, Sophie being a doormat at work and with her best friend Brie just doesn't match with Sophie being super confident and amazing in her interactions with the rich & famous on the island.

For 75% of the book, I enjoyed that the betrayal theme wasn't the focus of Sophie's time with Eleanor, though it was predictable that the shoe would drop and create the dreaded angst moment. I was disappointed that, once again, a lesfic MC declares love and then immediately won't even listen to her love. Sigh...

Well, Sophie behaves well, friends continue to play a role in bringing our girls back together, lesbians come out to family, friends, work and the world and we have an HEA. I found tears in my eyes I was so happy for Sophie and Eleanor.

Well, damn. I want an audiobook - Voice Dream did a fine job, but I want Hollie Jackson or Abby Cramer. I want to read/listen to "Playing the Spy" again. I smack myself on the side of my head and realize I loved this book and am considering rating it 5*. I would, except there's still part of me pissed off at trash journalism and Sophie planning to betray the trust of a nice person. Still, I recommend "Playing the Spy" and rate it 4* instead of my planned 1*. A good author can overcome a bad first impression!

Tiffany says

I loved this book from start to finish. Sorry, I'm not much of a reviewer...so that's all you'll get...just had to express how happy I was with this book. Now, on to the next! ?

Heinerway says

Great story. Wonderful characters. What's not to like?

Alexis says

This was like a roller coaster; up, up, up till chapter 30 and then... the ride gets stuck!

Have you ever read fanfiction that the author marked as complete and during the last few chapters you're scratching your head wondering what's happening? I feel like at one point this author thought to herself "*f*ck it, i'm bored let's wrap this up and start another fic*".

I was thoroughly enjoying this story. The pacing was great, the main characters had sizzling chemistry and it was all written interesting enough for me not to skim any pages at all. And then the inevitable break up happened. From that point on not only did the story start to drag but I was truly confused as to why all of a sudden these characters seemed to undergo a personality change. One minute they're ready to say goodbye but then orgasm(s) happen and they're back to saying I love you.

The ending felt rushed which is a shame because this ends up with a 3.75* rating when it could have been a lot higher.

Lia says

This is a decent romance.

I love the pace, and everything in between. Eleanor is that elusive queen that isn't predictable at most time, you'd wonder what she'd do next. Then Sophie is that kind-hearted person whose personality is so fragile although can be resilient. I like these characters, they're quite likable.

The romance just flow, well-paced and typical rich girl poor girl, well add some deception into it.

This was a good romance for my 2018 read. I enjoyed thoroughly, but the ending is way too rushed, I can't even seem to comprehend anything. The writer left me hanging lol, i feel like "i need more of it" but damn it's the end of the book already.

Nina says

loved this book. Lots of fun (and some heartache) with a really good story-line. The two women have great chemistry and you just hope they'll end up together. Maggie Brown certainly has the knack of making her characters "real" people and the book is littered with interesting women and men. I like that she doesn't just concentrate on the major characters, but gives everyone in the book an excellent profile. The setting on the island is magic as well, making this a top read.

Netty says

Average, predictable romance, I was frustrated to the point of wanting to climb in the book and kick carol in the bloody arse (pushy fucker), good sex scenes though, I can't say i favoured any of the characters but if I had to choose I'd favour Sophie just because he didn't have a perfect body ?.
Recommend to romance fans....

Joc says

I enjoyed this. I liked both Sophie and Eleanor as characters and the fact that Sophie was just as concerned about coming out as Eleanor was. They had good chemistry, lots of dialogue (maybe not enough about the important things) and a some space to develop. The secondary characters are well-rounded and added a nice dimension to the story.

Arien says

3.9 stars. I quite liked it. Decent characters, good story, an alright supporting cast.

It's a bit predictable but that is always the case with these deception or rich girl poor girl stories. I wish the characters would be a bit more realistic, besides the deception angle they're both 1% of the top 1% - smart, beautiful, kind, patient, cooks like a chef, talented and successful in writing, best actress in the world, add another positive trait here. They're too idealized for my liking and come off as fairy tale characters rather than actual human beings.

Otherwise a solid read. Shoutout to Kurt, sharing is caring.
