



Power Play

Deirdre Martin

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They were acting when they met. They dated under false pretenses. But their attraction was all too real.

A leading soap opera actress, Monica Geary is good at faking it. But pretending to fall for NHL star and notorious playboy Eric Mitchell is going to be her hardest role ever. Yet she has no choice, for she desperately needs an edge in order to maintain her daytime diva status.

Eric Mitchell is a man in demand. First he was traded to save the New York Blades, and now the publicity department has loaned him out to help save Monica Geary's career. What no one knows is that one of People magazine's hottest bachelors is also a closet soap opera fan. He's had his eyes on Monica for years-and can't wait to get his arms around her.

Power Play Details

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From Reader Review Power Play for online ebook

Rachna R says

3.5 stars - I liked this. A little slow, but not unnecessarily so. The first couple of chapters had both Monica and Eric with a massive capacity to be arrogant jerks and I was worried I wouldn't be able to *like* them as a result, but by chapter 3 or 4 I realised this was a PRETEND RELATIONSHIP BOOK!!!!

RIGHT??????

I especially liked the ups-and-downs of the main 'ship, and that's a major compliment from me because I hate manipulative, story-drag-out-y relationship drama, but this never got to that place. And Monica and Eric bonded over things in a really cute way - like their egos. cute. and Eric was nowhere near as irritating as I'd feared he would be, and it wasn't a sudden transformation nor a "this is a disguise he puts on, he's secretly a sad broken intelligent man" thing, just a matter of him deciding to be less immature than his teammates encourage him to be?

and finally - sports romances tend to get caught up in describing the sports action, but this never went to that place - just described the feel of that team, the tension of the work, etc. - and I was very pleased about that. and she was a soap opera actress. excellent.

(I googled for "soap opera romance novel".)

Jac (For Love and Books) says

Why am I still reading this series? Seriously. Why? (WARNING! I will give a spoiler. Sort of. If you've never read a romance. But hey, you've been warned.)

Eric is a jerk. Monica is shallow. The cover sucks and the plot is sub-par. (Ok, so the cover thing is just a jab, because I'm depressed and wondering why I keep torturing myself!)

This book was enjoyable, it really was. I say the plot is sub-par because it wasn't really a romance. It was a story with two parts. Monica and her struggles with the day time soap that she stars on. Eric and his troubles with his new hockey team (The Blades) and his family farm. And then, in the end? They just kind of end up together. Because, well? It's a romance, so they need to have a Happily Ever After. Right?

I'll be honest with you – I kept reading because I wanted to know what happened with Monica's Acting Career. But I found her insufferable. I wanted to know if Eric redeemed himself (he didn't, not really) he was still the jerk that he was in his brother's book (Chasing Stanley) and it just plain got annoying.

There was no real romance – until the proposal scene. At 99%. But, there was hockey (unlike THREE BOOKS in this series that is supposedly about a hockey team.)

So yeah... I suppose you can figure that I didn't really like it. (I am still giving it two stars, because I read it. All of it. And sort of enjoyed parts. Like the talk about Monica's show. And the hockey.)

Anna says

This was fun. I could've been more invested in the characters, but I liked how it was about more than sex. Although that was part of it. But the story was about more than that. Will probably check out more from the same author.

Bookaholics says

Power Play by Deirdre Martin

Mass paperback release date October 7, 2008

4 ½ stars

Deirdre Martin again writes a wonderful novel that thrills the senses with surprising turns and heart felt romance! This book is sure to satisfy even the pickiest contemporary romance reader. Power Play continues Deirdre Martin's 'Hockey' romance series. In this book she seamlessly combines the world of soap opera and professional hockey that is alive with humor and charm.

Monica Geary is a famous leading soap opera actress but she is still insecure about her acting abilities. When a new, younger starlet lands on her show *The Wild and the Free*, she worries her ratings will fall. Eric Mitchell is the ultimate playboy but he has a problem, he's alienated the new team he has been traded to. Eric and his hockey teammates love the soap opera "*The Wild and the Free*". When Monica's publicity contacts him to pretend to be a couple to boost her publicity he readily agrees. Eric has secretly lusted after Monica and is looking for a fling. If he can convince her to meet his teammates, well, it is a win, win situation.

Each of them do not count on getting their emotions involved and then suddenly, 'pretend' becomes all too real.

This is an atypical romance. Each character has valid emotional reasons they are wary of a serious relationship. They aren't the usual 'tacked on' circumstances/misunderstandings that keep them apart but rather their own insecurities. Monica and Eric have to accept themselves before they can take the leap and make their relationship real. I think what I love most about Power Play is Deirdre Martin's characters are; fully fleshed people that make you care about them. The development of their relationship from business, to respect, to love, kept me up all night! If you are looking for characters with depth and vulnerability you are sure to find this book a winner!

Reviewed by Steph at Bookaholics Romance Book Club

Erin says

This was not the Eric that we've seen in previous books. I did not like that Eric.

I like this Eric more. But that's the point, he's grown yada yada.

I didn't ever really connect with Monica. She was very shallow and vapid. But then, she is an actress. No,

she's not an actress. She is a writer's idea of an actress. In fact, all the new secondary characters were ideas of actors and actresses. From the Turban wearing Grand Dame, to the Silk Cravat Wearing Snob, to the blowing the executive newbie.

There were just so many cliches regarding the acting side of the book that it got boring.

Jason and Delilah are doing well and it was good to see them. Delilah has definitely grown on me. Seeing Jason and Eric's parents again were nice.

This one though seemed to lack substance of the others.

But it was damn good for this to be a HOCKEY book again. Even if the Blades didn't make the Playoffs. Well, it'd be boring if they did every time.

Laura says

I've read all the books in the Blades series and so far this was my least favorite. I didn't like the h/h until near the end of the book. They were both far too egotistical, arrogant, and immature.

There wasn't nearly as much humor as in the previous books. I almost stopped reading midway through, but I'm glad I finished because it ended much better than it began. I finally started laughing about 2/3 of the way through the book. I started warming up to the characters at that point, too. Cheesy ending, but aren't they all?

Julie (jjmachshev) says

Reviewed for queuemyreview.com; book release Oct08

Let me just start off by admitting that I've never watched a hockey game (I'm a southern girl, born and bred), and I'm also not a big fan of the 'sports' genre of romance. But it didn't take more than a chapter or two for me to realize that good romance is good romance regardless of the setting; and "Power Play" by Deirdre Martin is good romance! He's a hockey star and she's a soap opera star, but they have more in common than either would have guessed.

Eric's a tomcatting hockey star who's just been traded and is the 'new guy' with big shoes to fill. His big mouth starts him off on the wrong foot with his teammates and his poor playing starts him off on the wrong foot with the fans. Maybe his guest spot on the #1 rated soap will help with the fans AND his teammates since the whole team is addicted. It will also provide him the opportunity to meet his fantasy woman, leading lady Monica. The meeting between Eric and Monica doesn't exactly go swimmingly, but Eric's ego is stroked when he gets a call from Monica's PR rep to act as her escort. He knew she couldn't resist him!

Monica can't quite believe how pitiful both Eric's acting and pick-up lines are! But when a young ingénue called Chesty, I mean Chessy, is hired for the soap, she places a panicky call to her PR rep who suggests that Monica go out to see and be seen and get some ink. When said rep suggests Eric as an escort, Monica isn't thrilled, but hey...how bad can it be? They'll just have a little mutual business thing that'll be good for both their images, right?

These two made me laugh...a lot! Eric with his often stereotypical playboy 'jockness' and Monica with her

soap star insecurities are quite the pair. I liked that there isn't any immediate hopping into bed between these two, there's attraction sure, but Monica isn't 'into' casual flings and she sets the boundaries right up front. They're just business associates...until gradually they become friends...and then lovers. And it's all the more believable because of that gradual growth in their relationship. They each have ups and downs, both personal and professional; they have to learn how to work through them while still supporting their 'friend'.

The sheer cattiness and shallowness of the acting world is beautifully (and hilariously) written and had me rolling a few times. And Martin's portrayal of locker room jesting and antics is much like I've imagined it would be. The initial façade for both of these characters is pulled away slowly to reveal what's beneath their masks...and every step was clearly described. Some of these revelations come about via some interesting secondary characters that further the plot instead of detract from it. And the sexual tension between the leads is very steamy and very well done.

I'm altogether glad I read "Power Play" by Deirdre Martin. It was both more and less than I'd imagined a 'hockey love story' would or could be. For me, the important and memorable scenes from this novel are the ones which show the changing way the characters relate to each other and their stubbornness in recognizing their growing feelings. That is a part of love and romance that never seems to change, whatever the scenery!!

Cindi says

The writing style in this book is OK and the storyline is OK, but the characters are so unlikable that I never could get into it. Why bother rooting for a HEA between a "nice" (read: whimpy, unselfconfident doormat) soap actress and a cocky, smug hockey player? They come together originally as a publicity stunt, decide they really do like each other but can't tell "which" persona they actually like. The hero in this case is such a jerk and is so clueless that the "dumb jock" stereotype would have been a compliment to him. I really am upset by this book and that I forced myself to finish it but just wasted my time.

Haven Hart says

3.5 Stars.

I really like how both characters not automatically or instantly crazily into each other after their first meeting, and I loved it even more, because the hero is an infuriating, arrogant, egomaniac man, which I don't usually like in a book, but he is the only exception here. Took me by surprise.

But the only put down of this book is that the heroine took a lot of time to accept the hero apology even though after the hero lower himself so that she will accept him back.

Overall, its a fun read and make me craving for more of this kind of book!

Patti TheLoveJunkee says

(I hate the cover. Eric is supposed to be blonde, his twin Jason is brunette.)

Okay, okay...I know you're tired of my raving about the hockey books. This is my last one, I promise! It's

just that I really liked it. Of all Ms. Martin's NY Blades books I've read, this one and the first one, Body Check, are my favorites.

Monica Geary is a soap opera star at the top of her game. She's on the number one rated soap opera and her character tops the polls month after month. When the producer brings in a chesty young thing who tries to take Monica's spotlight, Monica knows she's got to do something...

Eric Mitchell is the NY Blades' newest player. He is the twin brother of Jason (the hero in Chasing Stanley). When I read Chasing Stanley, I thought Eric was kind of a selfish jerk with moments of goodness. Eric was traded for a beloved member of the team, so the fans (and other players) are a bit standoffish. Eric knows he has to do something to impress them...

In the Blades series, the team loves to watch soaps, and Monica's show is their favorite. Eric ends up with a 4-line scene in the soap, and he hits on Monica, who is repulsed by his cheesy lines. Then, her PR person suggests to Monica that she should consider pretending to date Eric to "get her image back out there". The suggestion is mutually beneficial, as the team is thrilled to meet Monica. Of course, things progress and perhaps things aren't "just for show" anymore. Their twisty road to happiness was fun to read, and the ending was sooo sweet!

This book was great - I loved Eric and Monica. The way their relationship progressed from fake to real, the fears that Eric had about falling in love, Monica's lack of confidence in her acting choices; there were a lot of storylines going on and Ms. Martin kept my attention and made me smile. Eric turned out to be a great hero. As a bonus, I especially loved Monica's friend, Gloria. Her one-line recollections of her life in showbiz made me laugh out loud.

I'm giving this one 4 1/2 of 5 stars.

Kari Pontinen says

Monica is a hot soap opera actress and Eric is a hotshot professional hockey player. Both could use some good PR to boost their professional careers. What happens when they hatch a plan to pretend they are dating? Will true love follow?

I really love romances where the characters are on a mission together (pretending that they are dating for their own selfish reasons, trying to solve a mystery, stuck on a desert island, etc.) and then love develops over the course of the book. However, the key is, you have to like the characters. Monica and Eric are both so shallow it was offputting at times. I kept going because I do find Ms. Martin to be good with snappy, humorous dialogue and she didn't let me down. She had a few secondary characters that were very strong and interesting. Too bad she also had a few that were caricatures with no redeeming qualities.

Positives: a few plot twists weren't as predictable as they could have been; Gloria, the aging soap star, was a hoot; Monty was a nice secondary character that helped develop Monica's character; the soap opera references were funny as were the hockey players' obsession with the show; Eric's family issues were a nice addition

Negatives: Chessy and Christian were caricatures; Monica took too long to admit her love for Eric which made things drag on; the hockey playing parts were lacking somehow which made them boring; Eric could really be a jerk and Monica's need for attention was a turn off even though they both made some changes by

the end

Christa says

Power Play was a great addition to Martin's New York Blades series. The hero and heroine were not always the easiest characters to feel empathy for, but considering that they were a professional hockey player and a popular daytime soap opera star, their sometimes egotistical behavior is understandable. Regardless of their occasional self centered behavior, I ended up liking both of these characters quite a lot. Deep down, they were truly caring individuals. The hero had to learn how to love someone other than himself, and the heroine had to realize that love was worth the risk to herself.

Monica Geary feels threatened when the soap opera she stars in writes in a new, younger female character. The new addition to the cast obviously wants to push Monica out of the forefront. Monica's publicist suggests generating publicity by being seen at events around town with a handsome, well known escort. Monica is not thrilled when her publicist suggests New York Blades player Eric Mitchell for the role. Monica's one encounter with Eric left her with the impression that he was an egomaniacal jerk. Monica decides to go along with the advice and invites Eric to be her escort at a dinner. Feeling that she is using Eric, she admits to him that she only asked him to accompany her at the suggestion of the publicist. Eric takes the news much better than Monica expects, and he agrees that being seen together could have a positive impact on both of their careers. Eric and Monica began a "fake" courtship which soon feels very real to both of them. Monica is impressed with Eric's demeanor as her escort, and she soon notices that there is a "jerk" Eric and a "real" Eric. Recognizing that Monica is developing deep feelings for him causes Eric to feel panicked, but that doesn't stop him from becoming passionately involved with Monica. Eric and Monica finally talk about their relationship, but Eric's fear causes him to refuse to define what they are to one another. Monica agrees to take things day by day, but when she feels betrayed by Eric, she ends their relationship. After Eric's actions cause Monica to break up with him, he finally realizes that he really loves her. It will take determination and patience for Eric to persuade Monica to ever give him another chance.

I have enjoyed all of the books in this series, and Power Play was no exception. The hero and heroine were both flawed, but this made them all the more human and realistic. The hero, used to adulation, was quite self centered, and he didn't know how to react when he started to care for a woman. It took losing the heroine to see himself as the egotistical person he was. The heroine was warm and loving, as seen by her treatment of her elderly friends, but after she felt that the hero betrayed her, she was unable to open herself up to him again. She was insecure over her talent and her career decisions, and she had to come to terms with these issues before she could really trust in a relationship with a man. I have read books where I felt that the hero or heroine weren't as sympathetic or didn't measure up to what the author meant them to be, but I didn't feel this way about this book. I felt that the author fully meant for these characters to be flawed individuals who grow and develop into better people before they can find happiness together. I probably would have given this book 5 stars if it wouldn't have taken the heroine so long to give the hero another chance. I got tired of her putting him off, but at the same time, I felt that she had to face her own feelings of inadequacy before she could commit to him. Overall, this was a good book that was pleasant to read.

Ellen (more books, please) says

I so wanted to like this book. The whole time I was reading it I felt like there must be missing pages. Nope. All the numbers accounted for. The heroine seemed nice enough, but the hero was a total jerk. Even after the heroine felt he might be a

pretty good guy, I still didn't see it.

The couple went from using each other for publicity to being deeply in love. Then the hero freaks out with that whole commitment thing, says some things he shouldn't. As luck would have it, she hears freaks and dumps. Then she ones a total jerk.

After much senseless/useless groveling and sucking up by the hero, the heroine has a career meltdown, calls him and he leaves the team to comfort her. Huh? What coach would allow that. Again, she just wants a friend. Huh? If I need a friend to lean on, I don't call my friend who is the farthest away from me, especially a friend that I have ignored forever.

There were so many inconsistencies and distasteful actions between and amongst the h/h that I could find nothing redeeming.

Auntee says

Very cute and often funny--I enjoyed this latest offering in the New York Blades series. Although I had a few problems with it, they weren't enough to ruin the overall enjoyment I got from reading the book.

This is the story of two egotistical but often vulnerable and unsure people--New York Blades hockey star Eric Mitchell, and soap opera star Monica Geary. They meet on the set of Monica's soap, called "The Wild and the Free", where Eric is filming a cameo. He tries to pick Monica up, with a really lame come-on. Monica is repulsed, even though she thinks Eric is gorgeous.

When Monica discovers a hot new ingenue is being added to the show, she starts worrying that maybe her popularity on the show could be waning. With the help of her publicist, they determine that Monica needs to get her name out there in the public to boost her popularity. If she was dating New York's most eligible bachelor and seen about town, she would be sure to get some publicity.

Eric Mitchell could use a dose of good publicity too. Since he was recently acquired by the Blades in an unpopular trade, the fans have been on his case, especially since he hasn't played up to expectations. He's also gotten off on the wrong foot with his new teammates, coming across as an egotistical jerk. He and his teammates are big fans of "The Wild and the Free", and it doesn't help his case when he's boastful about his appearance on the show, and lies about hitting it off with Monica.

When Monica approaches Eric about being her 'pretend' boyfriend, for publicity purposes only, he's happy to oblige. Here's his chance to win the fans over, impress his teammates, and maybe score with Monica. How could he lose?

What starts out as a publicity stunt, soon turns into the real thing, as Monica and Eric spend more and more time with each other. Both Monica and Eric start revealing their 'real' selves to each other, which are much different than their confident public personas. But when they make it 'real', Eric gets scared of his feelings, and does something really asinine that hurts Monica's terribly. Even though he apologizes and does everything he can to win her back, Monica doubts that she can ever trust Eric again. Will Eric be able to win Monica back, and convince her he's changed and is not the man he used to be?

I think if you're a fan of soaps or sports, you'll really enjoy this book. There are some truly funny moments in this one, especially some of the remarks from Monica's soap friend--grand dame Gloria. The woman is a hoot with all her old time Hollywood anecdotes! For sports fans, there's some funny locker room talk, although a lot of Eric's teammates come across as very immature.

I had a few problems with the book. The H/H aren't always likable--they often come across as very egotistical, immature, and self-centered, at least at first. I will say that Eric really grew on me, showing a lot of growth from the immature jerk he started out as--by the end of the book I was rooting for him to get a HEA.

Monica was egotistical too, which I attributed to being an actress, and she did have a softer, vulnerable side. However, I didn't like how she used Eric after they broke up and kept him dangling while she waffled about her feelings for him.

Two other small points--any sports fan knows that athletes rarely, if ever, have a weekend off during the season. Yet Eric managed to make a weekend trip to his parents farm in North Dakota not once but twice during the season. Also, the team gave Eric permission to leave the team and fly across country to be at his girlfriend's side for what was clearly not an emergency. Minor points, I know, but it bugged me just a bit.

However, this was a quick read, and was never boring. I was curious to see how it would all turn out. There were a couple of really hot sex scenes, and there were moments where I teared up, and moments where I was laughing out loud. And while the ending may have been a bit hokey, it did leave me with a smile on my face. For anyone who's ever been a soap fan, sports fan, or just a fan of light-hearted contemporary romance, this book delivers.

Doris says

No.
