



Power Play

Charlotte Stein

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Meet Eleanor Harding, a woman who loves to be in control and who puts Anastasia Steele in the shade. Now she's the boss, everything that once seemed forbidden is possible...

From the author of the best selling 'Sheltered', Charlotte Stein's 'Power Play' is the perfect read for anyone lusting after more than 'Fifty Shades of Grey'.

When Eleanor Harding is promoted, she loses two very important things: the heated relationship she had with her boss, and control over her own desires.

She finds herself suddenly craving something very different – and office junior, Ben, seems like just the sort of man to fulfil her needs. He's willing to show her all of the things she's been missing – namely, what it's like to be the one in charge.

Now all Eleanor has to do is decide...is Ben calling the kinky shots, or is she?

Power Play Details

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From Reader Review Power Play for online ebook

Mandi Schreiner says

I made it about 15-20% through. I'm putting it aside for now. I just don't like the set up for this one as I did the other two I have read by this author. Will still continue to read her back list (I'm very excited about it) but I don't think this one is for me.

Max Sebastian says

Another beautifully written and well-paced story from Charlotte Stein, the second of hers I've read, and one that makes me look forward even more to reading the rest of her back catalogue.

This was sizzling hot, with erotic scenes that somehow managed to explore each moment so sensually, yet without threatening the pace. The story is an interesting progression of a woman controlled sexually by her boss, who then gets his job and turns into the controller herself, this time with her sort-of assistant. It offers a nice look at the uncertainties and vulnerabilities of a first-time dominant female - though without going too far into the angst.

The characters were believable and engaging, though not especially detailed, while there was a kind of twist in the tail that gave a nice third act high before a satisfactory conclusion.

Wollstonecrafthomegirl says

It's no secret that I think Charlotte Stein is an erotica wizard (witch, whatever). This was brilliant. The heroine is a sub turned dom. There's not much to say. It Stein and it's completely hot and the heroines inner battle about her desires versus her pride versus her feelings is well developed amidst all the sex. I've re-read it a couple of times and I find more things to like about it each time. Some of her descriptions in this book are very memorable as well (there's one about the hero's eyes being the kind of brown such that if you cupped them in your hand and blew, they'd glow like embers [she puts it much more poetically than that!]). Stein's a great talent.

Katherine says

Ms. Stein reminds me of a British Megan Hart - very dirty stories, with broken and damaged characters, who manage to make a beautiful relationship out of the mess. Power Play features one of my favourite tropes: the boss and employee have a (forbidden, secret) relationship. The story is so well done, full of deep emotions - shame, lust, love, joy - I was constantly on edge to see where the story was going. What started as a seemingly shallow kink-in-the-office story evolved into a rich story.

Kayci Morgan says

This is a book about a woman who is unexpectedly thrusts into power (in more ways than one). I picked up this book because when I read the sample, it was one of the best erotic openings I'd ever read. And the book as a whole didn't fail to disappoint. The sex scenes were creative and well-written, the characters were interesting and likeable. My only complaint was that the middle fell a bit flat. And the ending went on longer than I thought necessary. But with an amazing intro and a satisfying ending, those issues were small. All in all, this was a great book and I'd highly recommend it to anyone looking for some good femdom erotica.

Dee says

Like most things in life, we all have unique tastes. This story didn't appeal to mine.

Ruthie Knox says

Yay for more fun, sexy good times from Charlotte Stein! This story made me smile and laugh and squirm (but in the good way). Of Charlotte's titles that I've read, it's most like CONTROL -- both in terms of the characters, because it's a femdom book with a lovely submissive hero, and in terms of the heat level. This is erotica with a romantic streak, rather than romance with an erotic streak -- though honestly, when it comes to Charlotte's books (and in general?) there's not much point in trying to break it all down into categories.

Here's what the hero looks like when we meet him:

"...and then I think of the new guy in the hallway, spilling his armful of papers everywhere. The way his shirt had been untucked at the back. The look on his face, like someone lost inside a maze created by a superior race that *hates* him."

That's Benjamin, lost in that maze. He's disheveled and bewildered and lovely (though not quite so disheveled and bewildered as he'd have the heroine believe). He's a submissive with a gigantic hard-on for the narrator, Eleanor, and he makes her crazy with lust. As she makes clear:

"I know what's happening to me. He says all the things I most want to hear in a tone like melting butter, and then I turn into a sexual psychopath. Observe:

'So you masturbate often?'

I mean, why am I asking him this? Why? And why is it that the shakier I get, the more confident he becomes? When he answers his voice seems almost...dry. Just hinting at a bank of sardonicism under the clean-cut exterior."

This is a very Eleanor-and-Benjamin moment. Like many of Charlotte's narrators, Eleanor is terribly unsure of the validity of her sexual desires -- constantly feeling ways she wishes she wouldn't.

What I love in POWER PLAY, in addition to the humor and the sexiness, is what I often love about Charlotte's work: her ability as a writer to slow down and take a scene moment by moment inside the

narrator's head, to deal with each and every crazed, interesting, revealing thought that drifts through her mental space. It's easy to write a quick, emotionally and intellectually shallow sex scene, but I can think of very few people who can do what Charlotte does, and do it so well.

Michela Walters says

This one just wasn't really my cup of tea. I just never found Benjamin swoony or hot at all. He always just sounded like a chubby fumbling buffoon and even when she described him as something different w/o his clothes on, I just couldn't get the original picture out of my mind. Just not my thing.

SaturNalia says

Over the top but still sexy. The situations Ben and Ms Harding place themselves in, especially the work place ones, are just ridiculous and improbable. Ms Harding is a budding Dom and Ben her eager sub. It reminded me of the movie The Secretary, but in reverse. The first 75% of the book is just them playing kinky games at the office.

Interesting to see an unsure, beginner Dom which made me nervous for Ben's safety. I liked Ben. He's big, clumsy with boyish charm, unapologetic about his need to submit and be humiliated. His seduction techniques were cute. He did things that annoyed her just so she would punish him.

I was losing all hope for an emotional connection and then in the last few pages they were very sweet. This was pure smut with a little emotional connection thrown in at the end, but still fun.

The Reads says

This is the book I have read from Charlotte Stein, and I loved it. It was filthy erotica but had a very vulnerable storyline behind it, with very likeable characters. I have to admit I love reading about powerful women and this story worked very well with the equally likeable sub, Ben.

Las says

More like 2.5 stars. There's a lot I liked about this Birth of a Dom story. A woman goes from falling into a submissive role in a sort of BDSM "relationship" with her superior at work. When that ends abruptly, she falls into the dom role with a subordinate, learning as she goes along and enjoying (and worrying over) every minute of it.

There were few things that bothered me about the story, plot-wise. The only two that really jump to mind: not enough buildup to that scene with Aiden, so it felt a bit random; and the whole Woods stuff near the end. No, what really took away from the story for me was the strange, almost cryptic prose coupled with the first person POV. I like cryptic, but if you're writing in the first person that's just not going to work. I couldn't get a handle on who Eleanor was--I actually understood Ben and even Woods more than I did her. It was a huge

distraction, and because I had no idea where she was coming from, everything she thought and did felt almost out of character.

This story would have rated a lot higher if either it had written in the third person or if the prose were more straight forward. As it is it makes for an awkward, frustrating reading experience.

MaggieReadsRom says

4,5 stars!!

There are times in a romance reader's reading life when you come across a book that floors you in so many ways, words fail to accurately describe your thoughts. A book in a subgenre that is normally not what you prefer to read. A book in a narrative that you always shout from the rooftops that it's not your thing. A book that is from an author you've never read before. A book of which a casually read excerpt grabs you immediately and intrigues you to the point that you don't care about all of the above trepidations.

POWER PLAY was such a book for me. Far from an easy, quick read it took me quite a while to finish it. This was mostly due to the style of the first person narrative. This is my least favorite narrative in reading. I've explained it before: I don't like reading this narrative for several reasons, most prominent one being that I only get one person's POV and in my romance reading I prefer both main characters' POVs and if there are secondary ones I'm an even happier reader. Recently I've read several books in first person narrative (mostly from fave authors who've gone the 1st person route) and I've discovered one 1st person isn't the other.

It took me a few chapters to get into Charlotte Stein's writing style and I suspect it's because her 1st person style (at least in this book, since I haven't read her prior to this book) is to go deep into the character's head and lay open all the feelings and thoughts. This influences the pace and for me it made the pace much slower than the fast-paced books I love to read. I had to switch gears and get into a slower paced mindset and once I did that the beauty of this book and the talent of the author telling this story smacked me square in the face.

Once the interactions between Eleanor and Benjamin really started (the elevator, the stationery cupboard, the meeting room after the effed up PPT presentation), that's when I started to find it impossible to set this truly fascinating book down. That's when I started to enjoy scenes that normally are pretty far from my comfort zone and I started anticipating the next happenings just as much as Ben and Eleanor were anticipating their next dirty encounters. And yes, I'll admit I would have loved a direct peek into Benjamin's thoughts and POV during some of the scenes but Stein did a brilliant job of giving me sufficient satisfying glimpses through Eleanor's.

And here I was so mesmerized by this book, the writing and the dynamics between Benjamin and Eleanor I almost forgot to tell you how freaking hot this book is! Dirty, filthy hot! Stein didn't pull any punches and penned down a feast for lovers of dirty talk like yours truly. But what made it extra hot for me was the wonder and seemingly innocent way Benjamin reacted to every dirty thing Eleanor said to him and his own seemingly naïve deliveries. I say seemingly because as much as Benjamin appeared to be clumsy, innocent or naïve, I didn't believe it for one minute. Benjamin knew exactly what he was doing, what he wanted and how to get Eleanor to give it to him.

POWER PLAY and Charlotte Stein managed to not only broaden my boundaries and horizon when it comes to erotic romance, she also utterly trampled my dislike for the first person narrative, which goes to show that

narrative is neglectable when the author has a great voice in which she delivers the most exquisite dirty erotic romance.

Fave Scene:

- the scene when they are at Eleanor's place > OMG! Red-hot doesn't even come close to describing this! Charlotte Stein fried some of my braincells and owes me a pair of panties...they have melted!

Limecello says

Maybe more like 2.5? I've read this book before - so maybe this time the novelty was gone, but more it's just ... super stark stories and erotica aren't my thing, especially these days.

Ms. Stein does an excellent job though at writing titillating stories.

karinova says

Nope.

Sara says

This is just porn without plot. I didn't really see a strong emotional connection between the two characters until the last two chapters. I also don't buy how the heroine just instinctively knows how to be a Dom. It doesn't seem like something you just pick up one day, but I could be wrong.

I also didn't really enjoy the author's writing style. It felt jumpy, and I often had to reread passages in order to reorient myself about what is going on.
