



Waiting in the Wings

Melissa Brayden

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If you don't get lost, there's a chance you may never be found. Jenna McGovern has spent her whole life training for the stage. She's taken dance classes, voice lessons, and even earned her performance degree from one of the most prestigious musical theater programs in the nation. At graduation, she's stunned when a chance audition lands her a prime supporting role in the hottest Broadway touring production in the country. In more exciting news, Jenna discovers acclaimed television star Adrienne Kenyon is headlining the production.

Jenna settles easily in to life on tour and has a promising career laid out in front of her, if only she plays her cards right. She's waited for this opportunity her entire life and will let nothing stand in her way. The one thing she didn't prepare for, however, was Adrienne. Her new costar is talented, beautiful, generous, and the utmost professional. As the two women grow closer onstage and off, they must learn how to fit each other into a demanding lifestyle full of unexpected twists and difficult decisions. But is Jenna ready to sacrifice what she's worked so hard for in exchange for a shot

Waiting in the Wings Details

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From Reader Review Waiting in the Wings for online ebook

Vic says

This book was an absolute pleasure to read. The kind of book that reminds me why I love reading romance books in this genre. Pure escapism and enjoyment.

The main character Jenna was refreshing, likeable yet flawed, interesting and alluring. As was the character of Adrienne (who was even more alluring). I like to read about women with lives unlike my own, in situations I can sympathise with and understand even if I'd never find myself in similar circumstances. I like to read about smart, attractive women who make mistakes yet make you care about them despite those mistakes. This book had all that in spades for me.

Two people drawn to each other, a heady mix of passion, emotion and choices. Every scene made a mark (especially the intimate ones). Every bit of dialogue felt important. I can't find a flaw in this book. I completely adored it.

A very well written first book, and I've enjoyed every one of Melissa's newer novels almost as much. Can't wait for the next one.

Diane Wallace says

Loved! an emotional ride that took an enjoyable turn to an eventually loving ending..its also a well written story..highly recommended to everyone

Valerie Anne says

[I hate cheesy romance novels. This story has Lifetime movie written all over it. Everything happened WAY too easily for Jenna: She's naturally and effortlessly beautiful, she's an off-the-charts triple threat, she got a Off-Broadway role out of college afte

Carleen says

There's something about me that most people don't know. It's not a deep, dark secret, or anything...but, there's just something that most people wouldn't exactly expect from me.

I have a theatre background. Yes, I do. I even have an MA degree in Theatre. Acting, directing, lighting design, set design, stagecraft...I've done a little bit of everything (with varying levels of expertise). I'm actually a pretty good actor, but I don't sing nor do I dance. (Amazingly, however, I've been in a few musicals.) I admit to being a better Assistant Director than a Director. And I can build a muslin flat or a plywood platform like nobody's business!

I'm really good with power tools, too. Mmmm...power tools. *ahem*

But I digress.

Considering this, it seems pretty obvious that I would be excited about Melissa Brayden's debut novel, *Waiting in the Wings* (Bold Strokes). It tells the story of Jenna McGovern and her journey from recent college graduate to up-and-coming new star to famous leading lady. Jenna is young, talented, and ambitious. Will her ambitions bring her happiness? Or will they drive away the one thing in her life that means the most to her?

So, there were basically 3 things that drew me to this book:

- 1) Well, theatre. I love the theatre. Throw in that this was also about MUSICAL theatre and I'm hooked.
- 2) It's a romance. Honestly, it's been a while since I've been able to sit down with a bunch of just really good romance novels. When I'm in reading cycles, it's often because I have to and am under a deadline to get the novels read...and I usually end up reading Suspense/Intrigue. While those also have romance, it's just not the same.
- 3) The darned thing just won TWO Goldie awards! That has to say "well-written" – and I'm a sucker for a novel that is written well.

The sections of the book that describe the various aspects of putting on a live show were a lot of fun for me. I was able to reminisce about the various theatre venues I've worked in – each with their own pros and cons. Brayden does a very nice job of describing the goings-on backstage. She provides just enough detail to keep it interesting not only for readers who are very familiar with what goes into producing a staged show, but also for the reader who may have never seen the back stage. At the same time, she doesn't get so bogged down in the details that all I wanted to do was skip pages to get to better stuff.

I love a good romance and this was a good romance. I'll admit that, at first, I was a bit thrown by the incredibly fast relationship development between Jenna and her beautiful co-star, Adrienne Kenyon. I had that "it's too good to be true" sort of feelings at first. Sure, being instantly attracted to another person is certainly believable – that's happened to be before. But I was feeling like things were moving so very quickly. Then I sat back for a moment and thought about it and things fell into place for me. This is a theatre setting. I've worked on enough shows and done enough summerstock to know that when people spend nearly all of their time together, friendships form very quickly. Add that instant attraction and, yeah, a romantic relationship can certainly grow out of that in a short period of time. So I was back on track.

What Brayden does next completely settled things for me – Jenna and Adrienne have a sudden and rather dramatic (pardon the pun) breakup. On the one hand, this fits the formula I expected in a romance – the inclusion of conflict. However, the conflict that I expected to come from one direction completely side-swiped me by coming from a different direction. I thought it was telegraphed for me – the struggle of a long distance relationship, the adapting – over time – to the juggling of careers and relationships. But no! Instead, I got the breakup! ARGH!

Brilliant!

The second half of the story gave me what I had initially expected – the getting to know each other and gradual building (rebuilding) of a friendship. Jenna and Adrienne are older, more mature. While I wouldn't say that either is necessarily settled in life, each has a slightly better understanding of what she wants her life to be. That is, until their work once again throws them together. Brayden now begins an emotional roller coaster that lasts through the rest of the book – she's not afraid to throw more obstacles in Jenna and Adrienne's way, that's for sure. I think it's delicious!

With the exception of some few, minor inconsistencies (which I won't detail here – that's how few and minor they are), this was a well-written novel. The Goldies for Debut Author and Traditional Contemporary Romance were very deserved, in my opinion. Waiting in the Wings is a novel that is tightly written – if it's on the page, it has a purpose in the story. I love the way Brayden writes dialogue. It's crisp, it's clean, and it's witty. Most importantly, it's believable. Not once did I think, "Who says stuff like that?!"

The story is told entirely from Jenna's point of view. While Brayden does a nice job of maintaining Jenna's "voice" throughout the novel, what's even more impressive is how that voice matures. From the first words to the last words, it's very clear that Jenna is telling the story. But it's also very clear that the Jenna on the last page is not the same naive Jenna on the first page. This was very nicely done, I thought.

So, here's the thing...

If you like the theatre, give this book a read.

If you like romance, give this book a read.

If you like award-winning novels, give this book a read.

Oh, for pity sake! Just read it!

Les Read says

Out of the les-fic novels that I've read, these story-lines seem to be pretty common:

- Teacher + Student
- Lonely and married "heterosexual" female falls in love with her cool new lesbian friend
- Hollywood A-List Actress x 2

Who hasn't fallen in love with a teacher? Or a straight woman? (or two, or three... hundred) And raise your hand if you didn't trip all over yourself when you found out that Portia de Rossi is gay.

Yeah, I see no hands raised.

This story though, is less Hollywood than it is New York Broadway. It's written in the author's biography that she's a theater director in her home state, so she's not just a storyteller that researched a topic and wrote about it on the fly. She's a subject matter expert and it shows, not just in the details written of the theater acting world in Waiting in the Wings, but also in the execution of her writing style. An example of this would be the ending of Brayden's novel, How Sweet It Is. The author has the ability to draw from her own personal experiences and expertise to create fresh, original stories for her readers to enjoy.

Has anyone watched the movie Tangled? There's a scene in the movie that reminded me of one of the important messages gleaned from Waiting in the Wings:

Rapunzel: I've been looking out of a window for eighteen years, dreaming about what I might feel like when those lights rise in the sky. What if it's not everything I dreamed it would be?

Flynn Rider: It will be.

Rapunzel: And what if it is? What do I do then?

Flynn Rider: Well, that's the good part I guess. You get to go find a new dream.

Like Rapunzel in Tangled, Jenna pursues one dream to find another. Jenna ventures out into her new world with innocence and naivete. Eventually, she finds the way to her heart and her home. It's normal if you want to give this book a big hug when you're done. It's really that cute and heartwarming.

Waiting in the Wings is a wonderful introduction to Melissa Brayden's work, and I guarantee that when you put down this one down, you'll be reaching for more!

Amanda Brown says

This is the second book I have read by this author and I am pretty sure I read them in the wrong order. I just picked whichever one sounded more interesting to read first. But still, they are standalones and it isn't a huge deal which order they are read. They are both freaaaaaking awesome.

This book is a romance (F/F) but only written in one perspective (Jenna).

Honestly though, I feel more connected with these characters and this type of story than I do with some of the M/F romances I read. The chemistry was intense and I freaking loved it. Yes, I am repeating myself.

I am a sucker for Broadway and New York and the Entertainment Biz. This book nailed that entire genre, moreso the Broadway side of things. I thought it was going to be an instalove type of story and everything was super peachy and beautiful until BAM - it wasn't. The conflict was written and developed so well. Everything was. I am dying to read more of these type of stories, hopefully by this author - because she is brilliant. I am a suuuuuuucker for this kinda love.

If F/F is your thing, add this to your TBR immediately.

Stephanie says

needed a Brayden fix. This is one of my faves! I loved it just as much!

T.B. Markinson says

A delightful debut novel.

T says

This is a very well written book, that given the right audience, is most likely a sure hit. I recommend it if you are interested in theater or actresses or Access Hollywood reality tv drama. (i know several people that would love this book!) However, i'm not one of those people, so this book was just 'OK' for me. So the rating i'm giving it, is merely a measurement of my enjoyment of the book, and not of it's quality.

Don't get me wrong, you don't have to be hugely into the theater theme to enjoy this book, but for me, the first 1/3rd of the book seemed heavy on that plot, which while it was well done, still slowed the book down for me. That first part also made me want to slap one of the main characters repeatedly... which didn't help. After the 4 year fast forward, the book definitely picked up for me though. Yet, looking back i see how it wouldn't have been as real or believable if it weren't for that first 1/3rd that i mentioned.

The writing is well done, i don't think i noticed a single typo. The characters were all well developed, main characters and supporting roles. The romance was a slow, slow burn that requires patience from the reader. It gets 5 stars from me for the ending though. I love epilogues and an author that makes sure all lose ends are tied up, giving the reader closure. Overall, this was a good book, and i recommend it if you like the theme, and a romance drawn out over time.

Luce says

Re-reading while I wait to read First Position.

Up from 3 stars when I first read this book. When comparing with other Brayden books it is 3 stars when compared to other books I've rated it is 4 stars.

It lagged for me in the middle, but it might of been because I could only read it in small snippets of time. The POV is Jenna, because of that I didn't get the connection I wanted from Adrienne. I loved Adrienne. It seemed to take forever for Jenna to get a clue. But when success is so close at hand in an industry that rarely gives second chances - I understand why she chose the path that she did.

Starsandsun18 says

I love the plot, everything is in perfect timing.
You'll never go wrong with this book.

A must read for me.

Mar 26 2017

Listening to one of my favorites ever is kinda of exciting.
I love the book even more! I wish there's a sequel. I would have love to read more from them especially after they move in together. I was hoping they got married sometime after but I guess Brooklyn and Jess beat them to it. I was happy to have a preview of them again on First Position.
Still no major update on them. :(

6stars :)

Frank Van Meer says

There's a risk in reading an author's first novel after you've read the rest of her work. On the one hand, it's great to see how someone started and progressed through her work. On the other hand, there's a chance it fails to meet the expectations you have, which are based on the knowledge of the former.

To get to the point: this book is so very formulaic in the lesbian actresses genre, it's almost painful. And that's coming from someone who, not long ago, gushed over the four books he read in the same genre. The only difference is that this one is more focussed on the theater scene, and less about movies. But all the elements are there, which are kind of expected. Yet this story failed to capture me and I found it down-right boring.

A major issue I had is that the characters are too good to be true, and everything is amazing, and everyone is at a minimum gorgeous and nothing is happening besides the requisite stormy romance, the inevitable break-up and the getting back together. (which, I admit, is a staple in romance, and I really shouldn't be expecting anything else). And, because it's required, the award ceremony, which we can't possibly do without. That's fine, but there's a distinct lack of the witty banter that defines Ms. Brayden's later works, and I didn't really like the protagonists. Even the supporting cast didn't add anything.

If this is your first foray in Ms. Brayden's work (or the lesbian actresses genre) don't give up because I think it sucks, because I genuinely enjoyed the novels that came after it. I can honestly say I wish I hadn't read it.

Fia says

I think this was the first Brayden's book, wasn't it? And the one I did not enjoy that much.

The first half was kindly putting it...boring. I skipped a lot of parts and I didn't like the fact that they got together almost immediately. So I expected some drama... but there was a time jump. And I liked that part much better. Otherwise I would give it only 2 stars, but the second part of the book was okay. I didn't skip as much as before.

Brayden got much better in her following books and she remains my favorite FF author.

MJS says

I'm not sure why it's taken me so long to get to this one, I think it's because I knew it was a past/present book and I'm not a huge fan of those.

This one is different in that it's not told in flashbacks, rather in two separate time periods. Jenna and Adrienne first meet doing a play together, are instantly attracted to each other and begin a relationship that's then sidelined by injury, and as you would expect in show business, distance. Jenna is young and not yet established, and when given a huge break, is cast as the villain by Adrienne for taking it and they break up. Four years later they meet up on a film and after much rehashing of the past and some annoying other

relationships, get together again. That's pretty much it.

I guess my main issue with this one was that it was told from Jenna's POV which mean the that I had a limited view of Adrienne and her motives. I also thought her 'you have to chose me' thing was ridiculous. The whole issue could have been solved if she (who at that point had no ties) just went with Jenna. There's somewhat of a miscommunication around the issue, but it still bugged me.

Anyway, this isn't my favourite Brayden (and I thought the dance/working relationship thing was done better in First Postion) but it's still Melissa Brayden, and worth a read.

D. Leigh says

If the bio hadn't said "first book," I would have never guessed this was a debut novel. It is witty, agonizing, sweet, believable and has perfect pacing and dialog that sings. Jenna is just starting out in show biz, while Adrienne is an battered veteran who has managed to still maintain a sweetness that makes her character incredibly appealing. I absolutely loved this book. I finished it at 2:30 a.m. and woke up wanting to re-read my favorite scenes. I'll definitely snatch up this writer's next book.
