



Stand-In Star

Rachael Johns

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

Stand-In Star

Rachael Johns

Stand-In Star Rachael Johns

As an anthropologist, Holly McCartney is more comfortable in a museum than shopping on Rodeo Drive. She isn't prepared for the media frenzy on her arrival in L.A. to accept a posthumous acting award for her late sister...or for her sister's gorgeous friend Nate Devlin to come to her rescue. Though he resents her for some reason, she can't fight their irresistible chemistry—especially when the paparazzi force her to stay at his mansion.

Photographer Nate only agrees to help Holly survive Hollywood for her sister's sake, but she soon gets under his skin in a way no other woman has. The more time he spends with her, the more his attraction grows and he finds himself opening up to her in ways he never expected. But will ghosts of the past stand in the way of their perfect Hollywood ending?

Stand-In Star Details

Date : Published January 1st 2013 by Carina Press

ISBN : 9781426894909

Author : Rachael Johns

Format : ebook 250 pages

Genre : Romance, Contemporary, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Adult

 [Download Stand-In Star ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Stand-In Star ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Stand-In Star Rachael Johns

From Reader Review Stand-In Star for online ebook

Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says

Slick's review posted on Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews

4 Stars

Stand-In Star by Rachel Johns is a fun and exciting look at the Hollywood "star" scene from an industry outsider. I enjoyed this book very much despite a hero that at times was really hard to like and a heroine that made me a little crazy. The plot however was quite unlike anything I've read before and the ending was pretty damn great. Most of all I've "discovered" another new to me author that makes me want to snatch up her entire back list for my reading pleasure.

Holly McCartney is an anthropologist who has traveled to Los Angeles to attend the Academy Awards. Her late sister is nominated for a best supporting actress Oscar and at her parent's insistence, she's made the trip. She hasn't spoken to her sister after a huge falling out, but she's decided it's time to make peace with it all and so she finds herself in L.A. and completely overwhelmed.

Nate Devlin can't believe he's gone to rescue his friend's (and occasional bed buddy) sister but he arrives and sees her overwhelmed with the media attention and decides he'll do it for Daisy. He doesn't think much of Holly who hadn't spoken to her sister in quite some time and he wants to find out why she can make the trip now that Daisy is gone. He's convinced she wants the fame and attention but once he meets Holly he realizes nothing is further from the truth.

This story from start to finish is about two people who make so many wrong assumptions about the other it's a wonder they ever got together. At times I was infuriated with them but in honesty it just made the story that much better. Holly is very naive and has no clue how to handle being in the limelight. Nate on the other hand grew up being a part of the paparazzi and while he's grateful what that job provided him, he doesn't want to see Holly hurt by them.

These two are both very attracted to each other but they really do have a love/hate relationship and it's entertaining to watch them work through their difficulties and overcome the assumptions they've made about one another. I really loved watching Nate who had long ago decided that love, marriage, and family wasn't in the cards for him figure out why he seemed to naturally spill his guts to Holly and why being with her feels so different. I also got a little thrill when he finally realizes why Holly hadn't spoken to Daisy in a long time and how bad he felt for the way he was treating Holly over it. It was fun to watch Holly learn to navigate being in the spotlight and I don't think she would have managed near as well without Nate or his sister, Bec. I felt a little sorry for Holly because she really didn't have a lot of relationship experience and she wasn't very worldly so being caught up in her sister's life was a real eye opener for her in many ways. I do love that through it all she was able to make peace with her late sister.

I very much enjoyed Stand-In Star and I will be checking out this author's other offerings soon. What's not to like about a book that has a fresh plot, characters you love despite their flaws, and is set in sunny, crazy L.A? Not much, so enjoy!

Review copy provided for an honest review.

Bree T says

Holly McCartney is an anthropologist in Australia, far removed from the bright lights and red carpets of Hollywood. Her late sister Daisy was a famous actress and posthumously is up for one of the most prestigious acting awards that there is. Holly and her parents haven't spoken to Daisy for some years after an incident at Holly's wedding and to avoid upsetting her parents, Holly finds herself agreeing to travel to America and attend the award ceremony on behalf of the family and accept the award that Daisy is tipped to receive.

What she doesn't count on is the paparazzi. They lay siege to her the moment she arrives at the airport and it's only the intervention of Nate Devlin, a friend of Daisy's that saves Holly. He takes her to the hostel she has booked in to only to find more cameras flashing there. On a whim, Nate takes Holly to his home, one of the few places she will be protected from the journos all looking for a pic and a story.

Nate isn't sure why he's so keen to help Holly – after all he's heard the story of how Holly and her family cut Daisy dead a few years ago and how much she regretted the estrangement. But one look at Holly, who is so different than all the girls he is used to in LA and it seems like Nate can't help himself. He finds himself offering her a place to stay and introducing her to his sister, a clothes designer so that she can find an appropriate dress for the awards ceremony. Through Nate's sister, Holly also finds her hair, tanning and make up taken care of, which is helpful as she has no connections in the country and no idea what she's doing. She needs all the help she can get!

What neither Nate nor Holly counted on was the chemistry between them. Holly has been hurt before and Nate is her sister's former lover – she doesn't want to get involved. Plus she's only in the country for a short amount of time and she's not the sort for a casual type of fling. Nate has his own issues surrounding commitment and has always made sure the girls he's tangled with have known the rules – it's fun only, no long-term. But both of them are going to challenge the other in many ways as they share secrets and passion. Is there anyway that they can get a perfect happy ever after just like in the movies?

This story is kind of like the ultimate fairy tale. Holly arrives in America and is pretty much besieged by paparazzi, all clamouring to get the gossip on her as she is the sister of famous and beloved Hollywood actress, Daisy McCartney, recently deceased in a tragic manner. She is rescued from this scenario by a handsome stranger named Nate Devlin, former paparazzi himself turned portrait and landscape photographer. When circumstances force Holly to stay with Nate during her time in LA, sparks fly. In more ways than one.

Holly has always been the lesser-admired sister, the one that was overshadowed. Despite the fact that she's different to all the women he's used to, or perhaps because of it, Nate is wildly attracted to Holly, even though he wants to resent her because of what he has learned of Holly through his association with Daisy. The attraction between them is definitely complicated by the relationships that both of them had with the late Daisy – Holly was betrayed by her in a pretty bad way, one of the worst ways in which a sister can betray another. Nate doesn't know the full story of what happened to cause the estrangement between Daisy and Holly, just that there was one and that Holly had no interest in repairing it.

Despite his initial antagonism towards Holly, it doesn't take long for her to crack through the protective shell surrounding Nate. All throughout his life he's only cultivated very casual relationships, ones where the women know the score and not to expect anymore than friendship and a mutually beneficial roll in the hay. With Holly however, he finds himself confessing things to her, including the truth of his painful childhood and adolescence and the hard work behind his now-privileged lifestyle. In a short time they connect in ways that are real and serious even though Nate doesn't actually want to recognise that.

I enjoyed this book so much! Holly is such an everyday sort of girl that it's very easy to put yourself in her place and imagine how she must feel, travelling to a new country under such circumstances and being harassed from the time she arrives. I'd be super grateful for someone like Nate to come and rescue me too! Nate had his moments where he needed a wake up call but as far as heroes go, he was pretty dreamy – handsome, successful, sweet (the way in which he cares about his sister and his family is lovely) but with a touch of vulnerability that leaves him ripe for someone like Holly to soothe. Holly is down to earth and practical, not prone to dramatics and she's able to help Nate see things the way they really are, not in the guilt-tinged way that he has previously.

Stand-In Star is a read that delivers on so many levels – it's funny and sweet but also serious, giving a well-written insight into the dysfunctional family relationships of these characters. Both of them have their issues and things they both need to address and work through before they can really give themselves to each other and that process is so fun to read. Definitely a book that most people will want to get through in one sitting.

A. Bookzilla. says

I loved the opening scene of this book! Holly, a cultural anthropologist from Australia lands in LA where she is instantly overwhelmed by the paparazzi because of her famous, estranged, now late sister, Daisy. Nate comes to her rescue, although grudgingly so, because he feels he owes it to his friend (with benefits), Daisy, despite his dislike of the woman who caused Daisy so much heartbreak because she wouldn't speak to her sister for three years.

For those looking for instant connection, you won't find it here. Oh, there's some sizzling chemistry between the two and you can tell they'd be so good together, but they both have issues with the other - him thinking she's the wicked sister of the woman he cared about, and her put off by the clear hostility he's sending her way. It's a love/hate relationship in every sense of that term.

Holly could never get over her sister's betrayal and never tried to mend their relationship. The betrayal also left her self-confidence in shreds and you can see that in how adamant she is that there's no way Nate would pick her over Hollywood starlets. What she does have is incredible intelligence and I enjoyed her curious nature.

Thanks to Nate, she learns that everything she thought about her sister was wrong, and the guilt that she feels for not making things right between them really got to me. Nothing should come between sisters like that.

Nate is a complex character. Everything he has in his life he worked hard for, going from a poor kid with an alcoholic, abusive father to a famous portrait photographer. He is also incredibly closed off emotionally, even with his own family. He takes care of them, and they mean the world to him, but it's obvious he's uncomfortable being around his sister (she's the only one we really see) because he still feels like he failed them somehow.

I really wanted these two to work through their issues and this giant misunderstanding because they both knew the different side of the story. You can tell family is extremely important to Nate, and on the other side you have Holly who flat-out refused to acknowledge her sister after everything that happened. And then you have the issue of Nate and Daisy's relationship, making Holly feel just as much of a traitor as she thought her sister was for feeling attracted to him.

Despite this, they still form a close relationship, slowly opening up to each other, and once the pieces fall into their places and there's nothing left holding them back, their mutual attraction just explodes.

Yep, there are a couple of graphic sex scenes in this (and they are *hot*), so beware clean-romance readers.

The writing is great, the descriptions of LA painted a great picture and you feel like you're right in the scene. The way they subtly fall in love without even realizing what's going on felt very realistic, and I already said there's great chemistry between these two characters. I loved the supporting characters, as well - Bec and Linc, whose love for each other was wonderful to read about, and Stella, the barely-there best friend whose presence is all over the book even if you only meet her once. And of course, Daisy, I mourned her along with Holly because it sounded like she really was a good sister despite the things she did.

I loved this sweet story by Rachael Johns, the two people learning to trust and overcome their prejudice in order to find the love neither of them expected. I definitely recommend this book.

Christi Snow says

My Review:

ahem Holy erotic photoshoots...whoa!

Holly and her movie star sister, Daisy, haven't spoken in years...not since Daisy slept with Holly's husband on their wedding day. Six months ago, Daisy died suddenly in an automobile accident, but she's up for the Academy Award for best supporting actress. Holly is in LA from Australia to stand up for her sister at the awards ceremony.

Nate and Daisy were friends with benefits, but more friends. He knew that Daisy and Holly were estranged, but not the reason behind it. All he knew was that his friend Daisy hated the estrangement and was incredibly hurt by it, so when Holly comes to town, Nate is fully ready to hate her.

When Holly gets to town, she is immediately overwhelmed by the paparazzi and Nate comes to her rescue several times, before he decides to take her under his wing and into the protection of his home. He quickly begins to discover that Holly is nothing like he expected and is incredibly drawn to her, much to his dismay.

There's a lot of latent emotions to this book. Holly is dealing with the guilt of having her sister die before she forgave her. She also thinks that Nate and Daisy had a more serious relationship than they truly did so there are all kinds of skeavy feelings to do with that too since she's now feeling a good deal of lust for him too. Then there's Nate. He knows he should hate Holly for the pain that she put his friend through, but as he gets to know her, he can't hold on to that anger. Nate also had a hard childhood with makes it difficult to connect with other people. Holly is quickly breaking through those barriers.

In the midst of all this is the hoopla to the build-up to the Academy Awards. Nate's sister, an up and coming designer, is making Holly's dress and takes her under her fashionable wing. Add that to the constant of the paparazzi and Holly having to deal with interviews about Daisy.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable book. I loved the added story that Nate is a photographer who has a paparazzi background. His art plays creates an interesting effect to the story. And seriously, when he plays with his photography with Holly...seriously, WOW! Everything about that scene is HOT, HOT, HOT!

The tumultuous history between Holly and Daisy is so hard for her. I liked that Nate was able to shed some light on that for her so that she can heal from Daisy's betrayal. I liked Nate's sister and her husband and how they appear throughout the story to add so much more to the story.

From what I understand, this is the start to a new series and I can't wait to see where Rachael takes it from here. This was a GREAT start!

I received a complimentary copy of this book in return for an honest review.

Emily (Kindles & Wine Book Blog) says

Review and author interview posted on Kindles & Wine

Rachael Johns's *Stand-In Star* gives us a fun glimpse of the whole Hollywood lifestyle, but from a perspective that I could appreciate – that of an outsider. (I know – you are all shocked that I don't frequent awards shows, but it is true!) We see the Hollywood glamour from the point of view of Holly McCartney, an Australian anthropologist who comes to Hollywood to accept an award for her deceased sister, Daisy. We learn that Holly and Daisy had serious issues and had not spoken in years.

Daisy's friend Nate Devlin is suspicious of why Holly would come to town now—after Daisy is dead—and questions her motives. He does not know why they had been estranged and thinks Holly deserted her sister. Despite not wanting to like her, Nate can't seem to help himself from showing up to “save” Holly and explain Hollywood peculiarities to her. Whether it be helping her avoid the paparazzi or securing her an awards show dress, we can see Nate falling for Holly, and vice versa.

While the plot of *Stand-In Star* centers around the death of Holly's sister, and Nate has a pretty heavy backstory as well, it did not read as sad or tragic. It honestly came across to me as a fairly lighthearted romance with tons of sizzle and chemistry between Holly and Nate. Some of the sizzle is captured when Nate, a celebrity photographer, takes nude photos of Holly. I know, pretty Hollywood, right?

While I enjoyed the story as a whole, there were a few times I was begging Holly to just come clean to Nate about why she and Daisy had been estranged. I don't want to say the pacing was slow, but once you know why they did not get along, you quickly want them to put it to rest and get together! In addition, Nate's backstory could have produced its own stand-alone book. There were tons of details and references to his past, and some of it did not really help this story (for example, one sister was mentioned a lot, but did not do anything in this book). Maybe some of this will flesh out in future stories, as I learned in my interview with the author that this book is the first in a series.

Bottom Line

Stand-In Star was a well-written romance with tons of Hollywood glamour and chemistry. While there was a lot going on that did not seem important to the main storyline, it keeps you guessing and wondering all the way until the very end.

Rating: B-

Review copy courtesy of the author in exchange for an honest review

Kim says

This contemporary romance starts with an interesting story line. A cultural anthropologist from Australia

travels to Hollywood to accept her dead sister's Academy Award. They had been estranged due to a past betrayal. Her sister's friend Nate reluctantly ends up coming to her rescue with the paparazzi and takes her into his home and helps her deal with Hollywood.

Nate is not sure what to make of Holly at first. He is prejudiced against her for preconceived notions about how she treated her sister. He has all kinds of deep seated issues dealing with his past that make affects his ability to have relationships. He worked his way out of his past and became a professional success, but feels he does not have much to offer anyone personally. He cannot deal with his responses to Holly.

She'd thrown his off course in less than a week.

How could one man be so dangerously sexy and so irritatingly rude at the same time?

Holly is trying to come to terms with issues related to her sister's betrayal and her own insecurities of feeling not good enough. She is out of her element in Hollywood and totally naive at how to deal with the attention and Press. She is attracted to Nate, but he just makes her feel more insecure as he fights his own attraction to her.

"Damn, Holly, you make my head hurt."

"Trust me, the feeling is entirely mutual."

Nate and Holly are so gun shy that they really do not know how to interact with each other. They have chemistry, but fight it. He is hot and cold. She is confused, scared, and does not think he would ever be interested in her.

She'd lost her sister without realizing how much she loved her and now she'd found the man of her dreams, only he didn't want to be anybody's Prince Charming. He didn't think he was good enough.

She was worthy of more than his love--she was worthy of the world. He wished more than anything that he could love her back; but he didn't think he knew how.

I found myself waiting for them to connect both physically and emotionally. And when they connect it is fireworks! I really wanted this couple to work out. I loved seeing how both Holly and Nate changed after spending time together. And how they realized truths about themselves in the process.

It was a sweet read and I really loved the ending. This author's writing style was easy to read and flowed well. I liked that you got both character's POVs especially since they had such inner monologues going on while trying to sort out their feelings and issues.

Thanks to Carina Press and netgalley for the chance to read and review this book before the release date of January 7, 2013

<http://tammyandkimreviews.blogspot.co...>

Lauren K says

3.5 stars

Stand-In Star is a contemporary romance story, a little different to the rural romances I've read by Rachael

Johns in the past. In her latest release with Carina Press, Holly McCartney leaves behind Australia for L.A where she intends to accept an acting award for her sister who died six months prior.

A cultural anthropologist and estranged from her sister Daisy for three years, Holly has avoided all things glam and fame, determined not to remain in her older sister's shadow. But the moment she steps off the plane at LAX, she realises that remaining under the radar is going to be a lot more difficult than she thought. Until handsome photographer and ex-lover of Daisy, Nate Devlin arrives and rescues her from the paparazzi. Once a pap now a glamour photographer, Nate has made his mark in Hollywood along with a reputation for meaningless flings.

With just one week in LA, Holly intends to make the most of her time abroad but without Nate's help she won't be able to see any of the sights without the paparazzi snapping her every move. The chemistry between them is instant but conflicted. Holly has no intention of being Nate's second choice, not that she believes she's attractive to him anyway. And for Nate, he is loyal to his best friend, Daisy who was devastated by the falling out with her sister.

As their attraction grows, Nate and Holly act on their impulses and agree on a no-strings-attached fling. Without intending to, the couple become emotionally intimate in conjunction with their bedtime shenanigans and inevitably risk their hearts.

Stand-In Star is a fun, light-hearted romantic comedy by Australian author, Rachael Johns. I enjoyed the prospect of a naive Australian woman arriving in the big smoke and being saved by a hunky yank. I also thought the way in which the author explored Holly and Daisy's relationship, without presenting Daisy as some heartless floozy. There was a depth to her that Holly discovered and was finally able to find peace in the passing of her sister and the difficulties in the past they shared. Though I feel the characterisation is much stronger in Johns' rural novels, I accept that this story has a different purpose. It's solely focussed on the relationship development between Nate and Holly while they discover something new about themselves in the process. There were times when I would've preferred to be shown rather than told about the depths of their personality, but it's a lot to ask in a novella-length story.

What I did love about Stand-In Star (and didn't expect) was to observe the conservative and self-conscious Holly find a confidence within herself both as a woman and in her sexual curiosity. Nate was a loveable hero; loyal with an underlying vulnerability that endeared to Holly. The ending was romantic and suitably set back in Australia. I don't doubt Stand-In Star will appeal to both Australian readers and those abroad. An enjoyable, quick and pleasant read.

Stephanie Collins says

This was a story of love and forgiveness which makes you wonder how well you really know those you love.

Holly has been guilted in to attending the Oscars by her parents. You see her estranged sister was nominated for one after her sudden death and they would like a family member there to accept in her memory if she wins. When you find out why Holly was estranged from her your heart breaks but when you find out the truth as to why her sister made that horrible decision it is just made that much sadder. I mean I cannot condone what her sister did but at the same time there is a part of me that understood the sheer need that caused it. I don't know if I could have forgiven that big of a betrayal but in a twisted way I felt for both of them for the time and love that ended up lost. Holly is not comfortable in the limelight but finds herself drawn to and falling for our hero. She truly sees him and not the wealth/fame he has. They both have a ton of

issues to work thru but even in just a week you can sense that there is something true and strong there.

Nate is a troubled man. He was the on/off again lover of Holly's sister but they never truly loved one another. It was more a deep friendship that occasionally allowed for a moment of sex to satisfy their needs. He doesn't know the whole story of why the sisters were estranged but believes at first that it is all Holly's fault. He treats her with scorn but at the same time finds himself extremely interested in her to the point where he lets his true self peek through. When he has these talks with her we learn how screwed up his childhood was and this causes him to think he isn't capable or worthy of a real committed relationship. He keeps pushing Holly until the horrible truth comes out and he realizes that she is truly the wronged party in everything which causes him to finally let the walls down. Of course it wouldn't be a romance without stupidity but the ending left me very happy and hopeful that we can see the two of them in a few years time... I'm hoping that they both get the true happiness and devotion neither of them got from their parents when they were younger.

This was a sweet story and I think most will enjoy it although the whole fall in love in 7 days thing does try the limits of belief but in this case I happily went along for the ride. Special thanks to NetGalley.com and Carina Press for giving me the chance to read this in exchange for my honest review.

Lady Allison says

This review & others also found on Red Hot Books

Cultural anthropologist, Holly McCartney, is flying into LA from Sydney, Australia in order to attend the Academy Awards in her sister Daisy's stead. The popular actress died in a car accident and is up for Best Supporting Actress. However, Holly is the opposite of prepared for the amount of paparazzi attention (damn you, Lady Gaga, for making me think of your song every time I see that word!) She is close to completely freaking out the moment she steps off the plane - only to be saved by a dangerously handsome man that claims to be Daisy's friend, Nate Devlin. Nate just wanted a look at the sister who abandoned his friend and only showed up when she was nominated for an award, so he was fully prepared to hate her. However, the minute he saw her, even though he actively disliked her, he also couldn't help but be drawn to her... and ended up saving her. For Daisy's sake of course.

After convincing her to not only take a ride from him, but to stay at his house for her safety, they're stuck with their awkwardly growing desires and a complete misunderstanding about the drama of the sisters' divide.

The tension was written very well in this story, both emotional as well as sexual. Even though the whole timeline was under two weeks, the author took good care of her characters, sharing what needed to be shared at exactly the right time, not revealing the truth until the story called for it. In such a short time, Holly went through such a roller coaster of emotions, it was almost hard to read. Self doubt, guilt, anger, grief, joy, love, determination - but it also made her more human and more relatable.

I also really enjoyed Nate's sister, Bec and her adoring boyfriend, because I love when the couple in question has a solid couple they can use (consciously or subconsciously) as an example.

Even though I'm not a fan of fast timetables nor of the Hollywood stereotypes, this story was well written, emotionally fulfilling, and an absolute blast to read. I will definitely be on the look out for more books by Ms. Johns!

Grade: B+

**ARC Provided by Carina Press via NetGalley*

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

I am being generous and giving this book 3 stars. This book was a totally middle of the road read for me. I didn't dislike it by any means. It was sweet and cute, but there was no UMPH to it. There was no humor or quirkiness to set this book apart from all the thousands of other romances out there. I hate to say it, but it was a bit bland. It didn't hold my attention. Nothing put me off from this book but I wasn't compelled to pick it up as I was reading it.

The book is about a girl, Holly, who agrees to accept an Oscar on behalf of her dead sister (Daisy), a famous actress. Her sister's "friend" Nate, takes Holly under his wing and... dah dah dah... romance ensues. There are "misunderstandings" and "miscommunications" galore.

I'm sure some people will really enjoy this one. It isn't poorly written and maybe a year ago I would have liked this one a bit more as well. But now a romance book needs more of that special something to keep my attention. This one didn't have it.

This was a read-to-review book from Net Galley

Kari says

With a premise inherently painful, but a hot and overall fun payout, Stand-In Star is as sweet as it is intense. With an immediate dislike between Nate and Holly, yet a just as instant lust as well, these two fly off the pages from the start. While a few aspects of the plot didn't mesh quite right with me, I still enjoyed this one and definitely couldn't wait to see how everything played out.

Holly is a bit of a mess, torn up over the death of her sister, complicated by their three years of silence. While she clings tightly to her anger at her sister over a past betrayal, she isn't so tight fisted with it that she can't accept other takes on the situation. With an overall sense of sorrow at the entire thing riding with her, there is something vulnerable about Holly even while she holds her chin high. She certainly has her breaking moments, yet she is a solid character with a lot going for her. Though Nate certainly flusters her, she can easily hold her own against him and doesn't back down even when he tests her.

Nate is more damaged than messy, still hung up, in a way, on things in his past even after breaking out of them. With a big heart, despite his dislike of Holly, and plenty of guilt and sorrow of his own about Daisy's death, he is that right mix of cocky, sexy, jerky outside with the softness inside. The kind of guy who has friends with benefits, rather than outright one night stands, and definitely doesn't do committed relationships, something about Holly catches him off guard. Watching these two get close, without realizing it, and watching them try to fight the chemistry that was present from their first meeting, made for a great story with plenty of moments to make you grin.

This book takes place over a week, though so much happens within that week it felt like it was longer as I was reading. Though Holly and Nate fall fast and hard, given their situations, and the things that happen, it didn't at all feel forced for them to feel that way. While in some ways, this one didn't totally go to the emotional depths I prefer, it still toed that line, and had far more than sexiness to it. Not to mention, there are few things better than watching two people fall for each other when they start out wanting to tear each

other's throats out, and this one plays on that beautifully.

Moon Love says

I fought through tiredness and falling asleep to finish this book. I'll write a better review in the morning!

Morning has come and gone, and I'm still thinking about this book!

Holly McCartney has entered the crazy world of LA to attend the Academy Awards to represent her deceased and estranged sister Daisy, who just happens to be nominated in the Best Supporting Actress category. Holly is overwhelmed by the paparazzi who meet her at arrivals. She's saved by Nate Devlin, a close friend of Daisy's, who's already prejudged her. Holly's instantly attracted and not knowing anyone else accepts his offer of help. But how can she depend on him when she knows he dislikes her? And knowing that why, oh why, can she not stop thinking about how much she'd like to lick him all over?

Wow. This book packed a lotta punch. You've got sweet and geeky-sexy Holly and just straight out help-me-I'm-melting he's so hot, Nate. The chemistry between them is amazing. And even though they want each other so bad, Nate's preconceived notions about Holly keep them apart. Holly wants him but knows it'd only be temporary and she's not too keen on enlightening Nate as to why his judgement of her being the one at fault for the estrangement between the sisters is wrong. It was great reading to see them butt heads, but I really wanted to shake Nate and tell Holly to tell him already.

I've got to say though, missing out on an hour or two's worth of sleep was totally worth it.

Laura says

This was a really cute rom-com. Holly McCartney is heading to LA from Australia to sit for her sister who has passed away at the Academy Awards. Her sister is up for Best Supporting Actress. What she doesn't expect to find her knight in shining armor, Nate Devlin, former Paparazzo Prince.

This was a cute and fun read. Holly and Nate were great together, even when they didn't want to admit in the short week they knew each other that there was definitely something between the two.

Laura Chapman says

A cultural anthropologist makes a unique study of people -- particularly a hunky photographer -- when she spends a week in Hollywood during award show season in Rachael Johns' Stand-In Star.

Holly McCartney leaves her home in Australia to spend a week in Los Angeles to potentially accept an Oscar on behalf of her deceased and long-estranged sister, Daisy. Carrying the guilt from never making peace, and still hurting from the betrayal that caused the rift, only loyalty to her parents can take her halfway around the world to face these demons. When paparazzi descend Nate Devlin, an ex-paparazzo and friend to Daisy, swoops in to the rescue.

Nate was given a skewed version of the conflict between the sisters, which means he carries animosity for

the beautiful woman now in his charge. Warring with the growing attraction for this woman, he also wants to confront her about what he perceives as unfair treatment of his old friend. Sparks fly when both are forced to face elements of their past and their physical and emotional connection.

As an award show junky -- I would call them my Super Bowl, but as a fan of football, the Super Bowl is my Super Bowl -- this book instantly appealed to me. Throw in an Aussie traveling to Tinsletown to represent her deceased sibling at the Academy Awards, and I was reminded of the buzz surrounding the late Heath Ledger during his award wins, and I was intrigued.

The sizzle in this story was strong. There is instant attraction between the leading characters mixed with a healthy dose of skepticism each has toward the other. This mixture created great sexual tension for the reader to wonder "will they, won't they." This is a romance, though, so of course they do, and the pay-off was worth the wait.

Holly is a likeable character, who proves to be more forgiving and kind than I would have been in her situation. Based on the details behind her sister's betrayal, I understood why she had been hesitant to have her sister in her life. No matter what caused Daisy to do what she did, there is no valid reason for anyone to do that to someone they care about, at that time and in that way without expecting a bad reaction. Especially not to a sister. (I hope I'm speaking cryptically enough not to give away what happened, but also clear enough not to leave you wondering.)

Still, Holly proves what a nice person she is, not only by ultimately forgiving her sister and speaking well of her, but in the way she treats everyone from Nate's housekeeper to his sister. You just knew this poor girl was going to have her heart broken again at some point.

Nate was a little tougher for me. Even though he seems to possess a relatively good heart, this was initially negated by his immediate judgement of a situation he only knew one side about and his preoccupation with getting Holly into bed. After learning more about his past and the circumstances that brought him to his present, he earns back some of those good points he lost earlier on. Still, I think he got off the hook a little too easily.

I'm a fan of making men grovel and pay.

Though a romance novel at its core, the story also gives the characters valuable lessons beyond finding love. Holly learns to never take a day for granted and the importance of forgiving if not forgetting. Nate learns that while history may contribute to your future, it does not have to define it.

A fast-paced book, with enough elements of surprise to keep it from being predictable, this was a quick and fun read. With plenty to offer fans of love stories and the glamor of Hollywood, Stand-In Star is a solid story to pick-up as award show season begins.

Rating: 4 of 5

I was given a copy of this book in exchange for a fair and honest review. It was originally published at www.change-the-word.blogspot.com.

Darcy Daniel says

I really enjoyed this romance. This is the first Rachael Johns novel I've read, and I'll certainly be reading her others.

It was easy to relate to Holly who has to travel from Australia to LA to attend the Academy Awards and possibly accept an Oscar on her deceased sister's behalf (a famous Hollywood star). The backstory of Holly's sister betraying Holly in the worst possible way makes for a great internal battle that Holly needs to overcome by the time the Awards arrive.

Nate is sexy as hell, and has his own internal struggles to overcome, which gives him a nicely fleshed out character.

Together Holly and Nate combust in some pretty steamy sex scenes – which are tastefully written and appropriate to the story.

An enjoyable read all round, with no complaints from me. Looking forward to reading more from the author.
