



Maya And The Tough Guy

Carter Ashby

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Maya Bradley is on her own now. With the help of her dear friends, Zoey and Addy, she's determined to give her children the lives they deserve, away from their abusive father. But the journey is destined to be difficult, and she meets her first roadblock when she asks sexy, tattooed bar owner, Jayce Gilmore, for a job serving drinks.

Jayce has two reasons for not wanting to hire Maya. One: she deserves a more respectable job. And two: he's been madly in love with her since he was a young boy. But when he finally realizes how desperate she is for work, he has no choice but to bring her on.

With Maya struggling to earn a living, get an education, and raise two children, Jayce finally finds himself in a position to help her. And though she isn't interested in a relationship, Maya is showing definite signs of physical attraction. Jayce is sure he can keep his love hidden and fulfill her every fantasy. Unfortunately, he has severely underestimated the needs of his heart. As the moment of truth fast approaches, Maya must decide whether to break a tough guy's heart, or open her fragile soul to the risks that come with loving again.

Maya And The Tough Guy Details

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Happily Ever Chapter says

MAYA AND THE TOUGH GUY (Big Girl Panties, # 2)

by Carter Ashby

January 20, 2015

214 pages, approximately.

Romance: Contemporary, Women's Fiction, Comedy, New Adult

** Provided by NetGaller in Exchange for an Honest Review. **

--- From the Cover ---

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Heat Level: 3.75

My Thoughts:

This is the second book in the Big Girl Panties series. It can stand alone, but would be more meaningful if you've read book one first.

Eight years ago, Jayce and Maya almost had a "moment" on the night of their high school prom. When she backed out, Jayce was kind about it. He took her home and gave her his number. That was the night that irrevocably changed Maya's life forever. With Maya trying to gain some independence after a lengthy healing process and having Damon arrested, she tries to find a job. Not an easy task for someone afraid of her own shadow. After discovering the lengths she'll go to to provide for her children, Jayce employs her. Suddenly he's nearly as afraid of her as she is of him!

Emotional. I laughed, I cried. I love Maya and if I thought she broke my heart in the first book, it was nothing compared to this one. Jayce pulls off such a strong and confident persona for the world, but inside, he's still pretty broken too. What a wonderful pair. The secondary characters are terrific. They are strong and

supportive without trying to take over the plot. The interaction and dialogue is real... it sucks you in, makes you *feel*. The plot is terrific and the story flowed quite smoothly. The conflicts are plentiful, some minor while some are complex and most were resolved. It's a small puzzle piece, but no further mention is made of Maya's dad's outcome. Predictability was not obvious. This story concludes well, but leaves you anticipating Addy and Grey's story.

Score: 4.3

Stars: 4

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Fari says

It started off pretty good but then, halfway through, I realized I didn't like anybody, had no attachments to the characters that I COULD stand and the plot didn't interest me. It was only 210 pages long, so I persevered but otherwise, I prob would've DNF-ed.

I don't really have much of a review for this one. It's super short and while this isn't exactly for me, I know a lot of people may like it. If you do decide to read this, I hope you enjoy.

Another thing, I wanted this to have a sad ending. I know, the first romance I read in February, the month of love, I wanted it to have a sad ending. *shrugs* I think that would've gotten some feels out of me, even if it's just sympathy.

There are two other books in this trilogy but I don't plan on reading either one, which is news cuz I can't give up on a series for the life of me.

christine danielle (Bibliophilic Madness) says

Full review posted on my blog:

Maya and the Tough Guy

Cover: 5

Plot: 3

Characters: 4

Overall Rating: 3

Maya and the Tough Guy was a very emotional read for me. The heroine Maya was physically and mentally abused for most of her life starting from her father and then to her husband.

The book starts off with a flashback from the past and how Maya met her husband Damon, and after that is the present where Maya was going through her divorce with him. Jayce was another character I also loved because he was so loving and caring, and looks like a tough guy, but has a heart of gold.

Jayce and Maya had a *history* together and I loved how here in this book it was the guy who was in love with the heroine for a longer time. Jayce was really sweet and doing everything to help Maya get back to her feet by giving her a job, helping her with her kids and by agreeing to her to have a no-strings attached relationship.

(view spoiler)

Maya as said before has been mentally and physically abused ever since her childhood so she had reservations on entering a new relationship but doesn't have any if it's going to be a no-strings attached kind of thing. I know what Maya went through was tough but sometimes the way she treats Jayce was really harsh. I believe that being a victim is a matter of choice you could choose to be one or choose to become a survivor.

That was what was lacking in Maya from the start of the book. She was scared and timid, letting people walk

over her so she was a victim. But later on, she didn't take bullshit from anybody and learned to stand up for herself then she became a survivor.

The romance between Jayce and Maya was sizzling but at times it was getting too repetitive. I don't think this book was meant to be Erotica but the amount of sex scenes would make you think otherwise. I guess if the sex scenes were lessened, the book could've been able to focus more on the important things like what I wrote in my spoiler. Overall Maya and The Tough Guy was a good read but not something really spectacular.

Received digital edition exchange for an honest review

Mandy says

I loved everything about this book! Maya is recovering after leaving an abusive marriage. She had an abusive childhood and then an abusive marriage and she has a hard time trusting men and believing in herself after years of put downs. She wants a better life for herself and her two kids so she is doing everything she can to better herself. When she gets a job working at Jayce's bar, it opens up all kinds of opportunities for her. Jayce is amazing. He's been in love with Maya for almost his whole life but has never told her. He isn't perfect and he can be a jerk at times but he's sweet, kind and caring. I loved the chemistry between these characters. This book is also pretty steamy, which I loved. I highly recommend this book (and this whole series) to anyone who loves a good romance! I can't wait for Addy's book next!

****ARC provided in exchange for an honest review****

practical_dreamer says

ARC Provided by NetGalley

I hate to be superficial, but I chose this book only for the cute cover!

It was a nice surprise, the story is well balanced between serious topic, funny moments and sexy times. The hero is a perfect example of tough guy, but he is also funny, charming, sweet, and overall a very good friend. He has been in love with the heroine from pretty much all his life. He had a chance in the past, but he was a little rough expressing his feelings, that remained unknown to the heroine, and other circumstances brought her in the arms of a man that abused her and destroyed her self-esteem.

Now she is divorcing him, trying to rebuilt her life. She has to take care of her two children, so she need a job at the hero's bar, but he is trying to keep his distance because of the strong feeling he has toward her.

What I like about the hero is that, despite the fact that he was pining after her emotionally, he wasn't a vagina-man. He had friends with benefits, he enjoyed his good times, but he never lose the charm that a good hero should have.

There is also a funny circle of friends that create some interesting dynamics: Zoey, Maya's best friend, is dating Maya's brother-in-law (brother of the abusive ex-husband), who is a good friend of Maya and a father figure for her children, and in turn is also the hero's best friend! It's an unusual situation but it's kind of sweet.

I think I will read the first book to know more about this little family of friends and I'm curious to know what

will happen between Addy and the professor in the next one. :)

The premises of the story seem dramatic, but it's actually a very enjoyable read. No drama or angst, just an easy read without being frivolous.

Jen says

Note: This ARC was provided by Patchwork Press Cooperative via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Maya and the Tough Guy is the second book in the *Big Girl Panties* by Carter Ashby. The focus shifts to Maya Bradley and Jayce Gilmore, both secondary characters from the first book. They've both known each other since they were kids and while Jayce recalls all his moments with Maya, Maya fails to remember much of anything to do with him. They're both survivors of abusive fathers but Maya's experience with abuse spilled over to her marriage, traumatizing not just her but her children as well.

Maya Bradley has left her abusive husband and is living with her best friend Zoey Odell. She's appreciative of the support she's received from Zoey, as well as their other best friend, Addy Hart, and Maya's brother-in-law and Zoey's boyfriend, Kendell Bradley. However, Maya knows she needs to become more independent and provide for her two children, Matthew and Sophie. She goes to Jayce Gilmore in hopes of being able to get a job as a waitress in the bar that he owns.

Jayce Gilmore has had feelings for Maya Bradley for far too many years, ending up hurt and confused when he finds out about her relationship and subsequent pregnancy and marriage. He wants to be able to help her move on with her life after enduring years of abuse, even if it means having to watch her work in his bar on a regular basis. He's heartbroken that she doesn't easily recall any good times between them and that she seems to be constantly fearful of and on her guard with him.

As the days pass and the more time they spend together, Maya sees that Jayce is nothing like her soon-to-be ex-husband. Jayce is kind, generous, and trustworthy. The fact that he's good looking is a bonus and Maya begins to become attracted to him. However, she's hesitant to become involved with him, insisting that they remain friends. Jayce offers to become her "love slave" and swears that all he has is a "crush" on her and that his feelings are in no way more than what he claims.

Maya takes Jayce up on his offer and the two begin sleeping together, all the while it becomes obvious to everyone around them that Jayce's feelings go much deeper than a mere crush. Try as he might, Jayce isn't able to pretend that what's going on isn't affecting him and Maya simply isn't ready to dive into something more complicated than being friends with benefits. When she realizes that she may actually feel the same thing he's feeling, will it be too late for Maya and Jayce to finally get their happy ending?

This book had a lot of good elements going for it--an interesting story that went beyond the usual good girl needs saving by the bad boy with a good heart. The element of abuse is delved into and the fact that both Maya and Jayce have undergone abuse in their own households yet are dealing with them differently shows that not all victims are the same. I liked that their small group of friends is more like family, especially since it appears that they all come from very dysfunctional ones.

I really loved Jayce and my heart broke for him as he tried to pretend that he wasn't hurt each time Maya

looked at him and saw nothing more than a friend she could sleep with. While I get that Maya had endured too many years of abuse at the hands of both her father and her husband, she seemed okay with using Jayce. Yes, she had moments of doubt but she still continued to sleep with him even though she knew that the guy was in love with her. Fortunately, there was more good than bad to her so I didn't totally hate her.

I enjoyed *Maya and the Tough Guy* more than I did the previous book in the series and I would have to consider this the author's best work to date, having read two other books prior to this one. Abuse is never an easy subject to write about, even in a fictionalized sense, but it was handled well and in a manner that I have yet to read in books I've encountered before. I'm looking forward to reading Addy's own story in the third book and will gladly give this second installment 4.5 stars out of five. ❤

Bette Hansen says

I absolutely adored this book!! There wasn't a thing I didn't enjoy. Great writing and the characters of Jayce and Maya found a place in my heart right away. Maya is just out of an abusive relationship and Jayce knows he should leave her alone but he has loved her for so long he just can't stay away. It's a wonderful journey with these two and seeing Maya get stronger and find her way is heartwarming. I highly recommend this one.

Aurélie says

It's a sweet & emotional story ^^

<http://lilisbooks.canalblog.com/archi...>

Carter Ashby says

Bethany says

3.5 Stars

I have mixed feelings about *Maya and The Tough Guy* by Carter Ashby. I liked the story and I loved the main guy Jayce but I had major issues with the Maya.

So Maya and The Tough Guy is the story of Maya Bradley and Jayce Gilmore. Growing up they both had a violent childhood. Unfortunately for Maya that violence continued into her marriage. Trying to start a new life Maya is divorcing her husband and has moved herself and two kids into her friends Zoey houses. To help support her new life, Maya takes a job at a local bar working for Jayce Gilmore.

Jayce has been in love with Maya since he was young. He would do whatever he could to help her which he does by giving her a job at his bar. Maya is scared and timid around most guys and especially Jayce. To Maya he looks like a violent man and that is something she wants nothing to do with anymore, but she slowly starts to realize that Jayce is none of the things she's been scared of. He would do anything just to be able to be near her even if she doesn't love him in return.

What I did love about this book was Jayce. The man would walk through fire to protect Maya and her kids and he showed it every chance he got. I also loved seeing Maya growing a backbone and start standing up for herself. It made me want to yell "you go girl". Lol But even though I loved Maya's growth but she also annoyed me. I understand that she is just coming out of a very bad situation and the last thing she needs is to start a relationship, but I felt that she led Jayce on (view spoiler)

Overall Maya and the Tough Guy was a good story and I'm sure a lot more people will enjoy this story more than I did and will be able to overlook the problems I couldn't.

Mignon Mykel says

Right away at the beginning, you have major feels for Maya. She stops the boy in the car from going too far -- she's not ready. He steps out, smokes a cigarette, and she starts getting that ill feeling that he's going to be mad and hit her. Instead, he proves her wrong and drives her home, giving her his number and telling her to call him (to which I had to sit back a moment; they go to prom together, nearly go 'too far' in the back of his car, but haven't even exchanged numbers?!). That receipt ends up being her talisman -- she holds it when she falls to sleep after he drops her off, she clings to it as her father beats her, and she holds on to it as she's leaving the house and is picked up by her best guy friend's brother. And in the morning, after said friend's brother has slept with her, she burns it.

That right there, the burning of the receipt with tattooed, smoking Jayce's phone numbers, is symbolic for the loss of all that could be good in Maya's life; had her choices been different, she may have not become a statistic, leaving one abusive situation for another.

It is extremely understandable that Maya has hang-ups and issues after she leaves Damon. Not only did she grow up abused, she just spent the last eight/nine years in an abusive relationship/marriage. She's going to have issues.

But when your friends vouch for this man, and he's kind to you, pulls you out of a bad situation and offers you a job -- not only offering the job but trying to teach and help you with things that will arise when waitressing at a bar... at some point you need to realize he might actually be worth something.

Jayce... man, oh man, is he a stand-up guy. He's been in love with Maya since high school (at least) and has watched her on the sidelines. When she agrees to prom, he thinks he's finally getting somewhere, and when she asks him to stop when they start to go too far... he does. He doesn't reprimand her, he doesn't yell at her...

He stops and respects her. Even as adults, he's just... nice to her. He's kind to her kids (even though they terrify him) and he treats Maya with kid gloves until he figures she can handle a little more, then a little more...

And still Maya holds him at arm's length... again and again and again.

I wanted Maya to grow, and I felt that rather than two steps forward, one back, gradually moving forward, she did more backsteps than forward ones. I am, however, interested in seeing how their relationship progresses in the following book(s).

Sidenote... while I liked this book, and am excited to read book one (Zoey's) and the next (Addy's)... I am a little put off that that books are dealing with late-twenty-somethings but the covers are very much teenaged-somethings. Don't get me wrong -- I love the cover. Wasn't a big fan of Zoey's, which is part of the reason why I didn't bother reading the synopsis... but **MAYA AND THE TOUGH GUY** has a great cover and it drew me to the book. So when I saw -- Eight Years Later -- and realized it wasn't a young or new adult book, I was a bit taken aback.

Roxanne says

Thank you to Patchwork Press via Netgalley for my free review copy in exchange for my honest opinion.

I really liked some things about this book, but I was reading some extraordinary books in and around the same time as "Maya and the Tough Guy", and unfortunately, this one didn't stand out as much as I had hoped.

Let's see, we've got Maya, the girl who's been abused by men all her life. We met her in the first book of this series, "Zoey and the Nice Guy", when she finally left her husband after a brutal beating. Then we've got Jayce, the "tough guy", who's been in love with Maya since grade school, despite her seeming lack of interest. We know that these two will get their happily ever after, because that's how romance books work, but the fun part is in the journey. How will these two get past their hang ups in order to be together?

I really enjoyed how Jayce was able to bring Maya out of her shell a bit - he showed her how to stand her ground and not feel bad about demanding the respect she deserves. I know it is difficult to put yourself first, especially when you're used to putting your own needs aside to please everyone else, but by the end of this book, I felt confident that Maya had made some big, positive changes in her life and that she will continue to become stronger and more confident in the future.

I also really enjoyed how Jayce's relationship with Maya's son developed. Matthew started off hating Jayce and didn't have a problem letting Jayce know his feelings. Eventually, through giving the boy time and space, as well as some boxing lessons, Jayce was able to build a bond with Matthew, and I thought this part of the story was exceptionally well done.

Although it seemed to take forever for Jayce and Maya to finally hook up, I think that slow build up was probably necessary, considering Maya's previous abuse. Still, I think the slower pacing is why my interest wandered while reading this book. The other problem was Jayce's temper, and there was one incident in particular that really turned me off! I don't want to give anything away, but I suppose I can say that even

though things were resolved reasonably well, I was still irked.

All in all, some good, some not so great, but I'm glad I read "Maya and the Tough Guy" and I would recommend it to anyone looking for something a little bit different in their contemporary romance reads.

Heather andrews says

You can't help but love Jayce he's a caring guy, "come upstairs," he whispered. "I'll be so good to you, Maya. Come upstairs, please." Maya she's confused and she kinda has a right to be if that girl would only open her damn eyes and see what's in front of her which happens to be Jayce. She made me laugh at times, "I'm not here for sex," she said. He grinned. Those words could only mean that she actually was there for sex. "I'm really not," she said in answer to his thoughts. "I'm here for friend stuff." I enjoyed this book I liked Maya and Jayce together he was the push to her pull, her ying to his yang.

Christy Wilson says

This book tells the story of Maya, who you met in Zoey and the Nice Guy. Maya is a battered woman; she was abused as a child and followed that pattern by marrying an abuser. She finally leaves her husband after things go too far.

Jayce is a friend that dates back to high school. Jayce has been in love with Maya since they were teenagers. Jayce is smart, sexy, owns his own business (a bar and a gym), and is willing to accept any type of relationship that Maya is willing to offer him, on her terms...while trying to hide how much he cares for her, as Maya feels she has many things to work out as far as her own state of mind, as well as that of her two children.

Maya is way more timid than Zoey; and in this book, she is really finding her way and finding her voice. One scene in the book has her standing up for herself in a Sunday School class taught by a very, very conservative, older married lady whose philosophy is (for lack of better phrasing on my part): the man is the boss, and as his wife you should do whatever is necessary to make him happy and keep the peace.

I have to say that in this book, my heart felt more for Jayce than it did for Maya. The reason for this is I have gone through the "unrequited love." It is hard to be willing to accept whatever the person you love is willing to give, no matter how big, how small. You just want a connection with them. To be with them. And that is Jayce.

Not that Maya takes advantage of this. As she becomes aware, she does do the right thing. I don't want to say because I do not like posting spoilers in my reviews.

While Maya is not Zoey (and Zoey, Kellen and Addy are included in this book, and are the needed "comic relief" and "advice givers" when needed), her story is still a good one and is a great read; but I have to admit, for me – it was because of Jayce.

??iM says

Maya and The Tough Guy..

Few... Spoilers.....

This book was really good. I didn't like how people treated him like he was the bad guy when he was nothing like Damon at all or her father. I like how her father apologized for his mistakes, but her ex-husband didn't. It's crazy how she didn't call Jacey she had his number she should've ignored Damon when was a teenager. I did crack up when her son was evil towards Jacey he was scared of the poor boy until he started to become friendly towards Jacey. Plus Maya treated him Jacey wrong in my own opinion I understand that she was in an abusive relationship but the way he treated him was wrong but cry when he got smart with her. Knowing he had feelings for her like girl what do you suspect. Then when he was all over the women and flirting she got jealous of it, I said finally she gave into her feelings for him, it took him to talk and flirt with other women for her to see she did love him and that he didn't use her children to sex her. I was with him when he got mad at her when he stated that. I'm like the woman didn't you realize this man isn't like Damon or your father and that he was in love with you since grade school. I mean high school. But you were too blind to see him.

<https://ladiikeiii.wordpress.com/2017...>

Oh, I did think that her ex-husband was going to get out jail and start something, but he didn't. Also, I knew something was up with her eight years old son and the reason why he acted out glad he confined in Jace and told him the reason.
