



## Telling Lies

*Cathi Stoler*

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How many lies does it take to get away with murder? Magazine Editor Laurel Imperiole is vacationing in Florence, Italy, with Aaron Gerrard, Chief of Detectives of New York City's 13th Precinct Identity Theft Squad. A chance encounter brings Laurel to a startling realization: she's just bumped into a dead man: Jeff Sargasso, an art dealer and husband of a close friend who supposedly died in the World Trade Center on 9/11. When he vanished, Sargasso had been brokering the sale of a priceless masterpiece that was lost during World War II to CEO Alfred Hammersmith and billionaire Miayamu Moto. Hammersmith perished along with Sargasso on 9/11, and it is believed that the access codes to the \$15 million deposit--ten percent of the asking price--died with them. Could Sargasso have faked his own death to steal the money? The painting's whereabouts are unknown. Laurel enlists the help of private detective Helen McCorkendale, and together they follow the threads that lead from Florence, Italy, to New York. On the way, the women tangle with Israeli Mossad agent Lior Stern and several stop-at-nothing collectors. All are determined to have the painting for themselves. Ignoring Aaron's advice, Laurel puts their volatile relationship in jeopardy. As Helen and Laurel search for Sargasso, the painting and the money, they find themselves enmeshed in a sinister skein of lies that could end in death.

## **Telling Lies Details**

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Author : Cathi Stoler

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## From Reader Review Telling Lies for online ebook

### Ruth Hill says

I have to admit that the introduction portion of this book truly captured my interest. Any time a book uses 9/11 as a springboard for a story, I think I become intrigued. Could someone truly have survived 9/11 and faked his own death? I just had to keep reading to find out!

I enjoyed the way that the author wrote the chapters because when I got to the end of one chapter, she often left me hanging. I wanted to read on. And sometimes she would write something about a certain character's predicament, and it would be several chapters later before that character's issue was resolved. It was a fast-paced book, and it kept my interest all the way to the end. I just had to know how it ended!

My disappointment with the book was two-fold. I found Laurel a little too "dumb" to be in the position she was. Although she was investigating the situation, and it was clear that she was right, she made some costly mistakes that I don't think most women would have made. I actually wished that her part of the story had ended a little differently than it did. I became quite annoyed with her, and I didn't always find her believable.

My other disappointment was the abundance of profanity. This is a constant problem with contemporary fiction, and generally I don't complain unless the words are used too much. In the beginning, I was hoping that the author would only use these words once in a while, but it seemed like the amount of these words increased. It is a pet peeve of mine, so for me, it detracted from the story.

In spite of these disappointments, I would certainly be willing to read something else by this author because she is definitely an author that writes a well-crafted story.

I received a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for my review. All opinions are 100 percent mine.

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### Kristin (Kritters Ramblings) says

Are you a fan of mystery, art dealing with a 9/11 twist? I was intrigued, so I signed up for this one. The story centers around a magazine editor who gets tangled up in the middle of an art dealing that involves a man who was presumed to perish when the Towers fell in New York City. Getting from a magazine editor to the end was a ride worth taking.

The intermingling story lines were easy to navigate. Part of the mystery was trying to find out what piece of art was being coveted and why each party wanted it in their possession. Not only were there many parties who wanted the piece of art, there were three different detectives trying to find the answer, a jumble of characters that each had a distinct personality and plotline.

A great mystery to grab while we are in the midst of honoring the anniversary of 9/11. Through the rest of the year, this art dealing heist is thrilling from beginning to end.

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### **Julie Baker says**

The story line itself was interesting but I just felt it wasn't executed the way it could have been. It COULD have been much more interesting. It COULD have had me on the edge of my seat. It COULD have been good... it wasn't. No where in the book description did it say this was a follow up book. No where in the book description did it even ALLUDE to that. But almost every single page screams "I'm a sequel!!" If it is a sequel it would've been nice to know ahead of time so I could've started with the initial introduction to these characters. If it's not the author needs her head examined for making it out to be so often. I found the characters to be lackluster and bordering on lifeless. Laurel was a complete MORON!! No one is that stupid, especially not some no holds barred journalist. Helen was an idiot. No PI would put herself in the situations she concocted. At least no PI that interests me. Aaron was the only one with any hope of being interesting and he was BARELY in the story. The only good parts were the ones where he was "working the case". The ending was a jumbled up, mish-mash of NOTHINGNESS!! It was a total waste. Nothing freaking happened. It all ended too neatly and yet with ZERO resolution except for Lior. And speaking of Lior, his whole presence was unnecessary. There was more than enough drama surrounding the painting without throwing in his long standing family drama over the painting. Just dumb. Dumb. Dumb. Dumb.

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### **Chanouel says**

This could have been a very good story if it had been given the correct attention. Great story line but very poor development of the story. A lot of things are left unexplained. One of the more important is how Jeff managed to survive 9/11. This book feels like it's part of a series and this is the 2nd or 3rd book. The characters know each other from previous adventures that leaves the reader feeling like we're supposed to know the connections between them already. The characters feel like they've hastily put together. All in all, this book was full of promise but just didn't deliver.

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### **Cathi says**

In her first book, *Telling Lies*, Cathi Stoler has written a complex plot filled with lots of lies and intrigue. The action begins immediately when Laurel Imperiole runs into a man in a museum in Florence, Italy. Not exactly stunning until Laurel recognizes the man as someone who shouldn't even be alive. The action starts here and carries readers through the world of glamorous high-end art from Italy to the United States mingling in the dark world of art stolen by the Nazis in World War II.

Cathi's carefully crafted story keeps you turning pages as Laurel, a Manhattan magazine editor, and her friend, private investigator Helen McCordale, unravel a hideous plan that keeps the reader guessing to the end. Helen works undercover while Laurel strives to discover why she ran into someone who's supposed to be dead. The lies and subterfuge get bolder and more desperate as Laurel finds herself in the middle of an international mess as a well-known Massod agent enters the picture with his own agenda.

While Laurel and Helen work under the surface, Laurel's boyfriend Aaron, an NYPD cop, pursues the criminal elements from the law's perspective with an FBI pal who specializes in art fraud and left. Things really heat up as Laurel's efforts to learn more about what's going on back the bad guys into a bleak corner.

They come out with murderous intent that leaves a lot of collateral damage along the way.

The story moves smoothly thanks to the author giving the location of events at every chapter's opening. She has skillfully crafted an intricate story that is provoking and satisfying to the end.

By Leigh Neely

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### **Grace Krispy says**

this international thriller follows Laurel as she tracks down the elusive Jeff. She gets more than she bargains for as other players come forth, and she begins to realize just how big this story is. The book is very readable and engaging, which made for a quick and fun read. It seemed that a high level of care went into crafting each sentence and plot detail, but that same care seemed to lead to a somewhat "sanitized" book. Perhaps the best way to describe it is that it felt like the book was lacking in "voice." The character's words didn't fully differentiate them from one another, leading me to sometimes have to look back and see who was speaking. Add to that the careful detailing of backstory and explanation that accompanied every major action, and it felt like too much was said and not enough left for the reader to infer. The word choices were precise, and that felt a touch unnatural. In short, although the read was fairly effortless, the phrasing and writing felt a little more forced.

The storyline was engaging and I found myself really interested in what would happen next. I found some aspects really predictable, however. I really wanted to like the main character, Laurel, but she did some really strange things for someone who seemed like she should know what she was doing. Laurel, Helen, and Aaron reminded me of characters I've seen (and enjoyed) in "cozy" type mystery books, but the storyline, the other characters, and the general storyline in this book screamed full-fledged "thriller." The result felt a bit incongruous to me. The ending seemed slightly abrupt, but it did offer me some closure. It certainly left the door open for a potential second in a series.

Overall, this was a story I really enjoyed reading, all things considered. I was entertained throughout, and I wanted to continue reading to find out how it all ended. I'm interested in reading more from this author.

3.5 /5 stars @ GraceKrispy's MotherLode blog

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### **Patty Labozzo says**

From the first chapter, this well-told, fast-paced, complex novel brought me into a world of adventure, intrigue and suspense--and kept my complete interest until the very end. I truly enjoyed Cathi Stoler's first mystery. In fact, I don't want to part with my copy! I'm purchasing a second for a friend who asked to read it. My only complaint is that I couldn't put this book down, read it in just 3 days on a beach vacation and now I need another book by this author! I hope she'll be published again--very soon!

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### **Elizabeth says**

This was actually a really good book. I won this on goodreads and I was thinking I would probably give it 3

stars, but I actually really enjoyed reading this.

The book is about a girl named Laurel who goes to Florence with her boyfriend Aaron, when she bumps into a stranger at an art museum. A moment passes and after he walks by, she believes that it is her friend's ex husband, Jeff, who was supposedly dead from the 9/11 attack. The book continues about them trying to figure out if it's him and why did he lie.

Every chapter was from someone else's view, and although that sounds confusing, it's not. At the top of the page, it tells you where that part of the story is taking place and if you pay attention enough, you'll know who's story it is before you start to read. Although it's not that hard to follow.

The only thing I didn't like, was that in the middle it was kind of getting boring, but I didn't think it was boring for long. A little bit after when Laurel got home to the point where Moto came to the city is what I found a little bit boring, but other than that, it was a really great book and I'm glad I won it!

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### **ILoveBooks says**

Lies have a tendency to grow bigger and bigger and to cause untold damage. This novel centers around the concept of lies. Laurel is the main character, she has told some whoppers in her life. She needs to get down to the bottom of a huge lie, however; one that could have international consequences. These lies are sometimes spread by "dead men". The man that starts the action of the novel was supposed to be dead, although he is marked as missing, after the twin towers fell-September 11. Yes, some characters who were presumed dead come back to haunt Laurel-making the plot even more complicated. The action really takes off from here.

Laurel was a fun character to read about. She has her flaws, but she isn't a bad character. She's curious, cautious, and determined to a fault. The other secondary characters are no less intriguing. The events are fairly fast-paced and this novel was shockingly good for being the author's first novel. This book is recommended for adult readers.

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### **Wendy Hines says**

Laurel Imperiole, an editor for Women Now magazine, is vacationing in Italy with Detective Aaron Gerard, of the NYPD Identity Theft Squad. They've left work behind and are concentrating on getting to know one another better. In an art gallery, Laurel bumps into a well-dressed man but she thinks nothing of it until she and Aaron have left. She knows that man, Jeff Sargasso, but he allegedly died in on 9/11 at the World Trade Center.

Laurel is filled with rage that he would walk away from his family and make a new life. She remembers that he had an appointment that morning with a billionaire Japanese art dealer and that fifteen million dollars

disappeared - all over a painting. At first, Aaron disbelieves Laurel, thinking she thought she saw Jeff, but it was someone else. But the more she talks, the more he begins to believe her.

He goes back to New York and she stays in Florence. They call Helen McCordenale, a friend and private investigator, to help them uncover what really occurred. Laurel tries to find Jeff in the art world in Florence, but she hasn't many clues. One clue, though, really stands out and may aid her - a stick pin Jeff was wearing. But when a woman ends up murdered, Laurel realizes that she must tread carefully, especially if he goes back to New York to see his wife, Monica.

Aaron and Helen gradually begin to unravel the intricacies of the investigation and realize that Jeff, going under a presumed name, is on a flight to New York. Also, billionaire Miyamu Moto is coming to New York too. Coincidence? Probably not, so they begin to stake out the area, but when Laurel returns to the states, she acts before she thinks and is soon in a struggle for her life.

Telling Lies has many subplots that support the main story that I can easily see in more installments. I really didn't care for the character of Laurel, I found her shallow and pigheaded. I came to love Helen though, she is a remarkable character with guts and heart. The conspiracy, the murders, the authenticity of Italy and its language, as well as the cunning plot turn Telling Lies into a well-done, though-provoking novel of not only entertainment, but what could have really happened. I read it cover-to-cover! I couldn't put it down - pure excellence!

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### **Lenore Webb says**

You know we all teach our children not to lie. Never! Yet we find that we tell lies ourselves. Oh sure we cover it up as saying Lil White Lie as if color makes a difference. That in justifying a lie makes it right. Or that of course we would never intentionally hurt someone so we had to tell them a lie. But in turn that makes one lie become two and then three and more. It just continues to grow.

But what do you do? You know it is wrong but sometimes it seems that it is the only way to go. Cathi Stoler has her new mystery out "Telling Lies". For a first time novelist this is a good tell of intrigue. Finding that a lie has been exposed then wanting to get to the bottom of what happened creates a mystery to be followed. International travel and woven webs of lies upon lies begin to catch our main character Laurel in a story that is compounding on its self. Can she unravel the mystery and undo the damage done in her own relationship from her own lies? Will she want to when she finds out the truth?

September 11, 2001 attacks in New York City: V...Image via Wikipedia I loved the mix of an investigation of missing persons and stolen Nazi art. Having a man who perished in the World Trade Center on 9/11 to show up out of no where was a good catch right off the bat. The same "dead man" that disappeared the same day he had a meeting regarding the sale of a 150 million dollar painting between a Japanese billionaire and a Wall Street tycoon.

I enjoyed this book. It was a good plot that quickly made me wonder just what was the core to the mystery. And wanting to find out I laid in bed reading well past my bedtime. (Yes, mommies have bedtimes too!) But I do have to say whether it be from lack of sleep or a story that was more than my addled brain could handle at the time, I did finally put the book down. Of course I picked it right back up the next night! Cathi Stoler an award-winning advertising copywriter shares Telling Lies, her first mystery/suspense novel. She has other novels in this series, including Keeping Secrets and The Hard Way. Both international intrigue stories.

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### **David Bishop says**

I recently finished a delightful read: Cathi Stoler's *Telling Lies*. A masterfully crafted story of greed and the unquenchable thirst some have for more, even after they already have too much of too much. *Telling Lies* is a story chockfull of colorful characters, including Laurel, the heroine whose quest for the truth puts her in a position from which she might not escape. She digs. She cajoles. And, when necessary, she pushes until she has the good guys and the bad guys all circling around the same prize, yet only one will end up with it. I recommend you get this one today and tag along with Laurel. You'll be glad you did. David Bishop

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### **Bea Charmed says**

I enjoy mystery books, as any regular reader knows so I was intrigued by this one. I was, however, hesitant about the connection to the events of September 11, 2001 in the US. Like many people I find it difficult to think and I had concerns about whether the events would be handled tactfully in the story. Happily, the events, while crucial to the initial mystery, are not the central theme of the book and they are handled tactfully. The story centers around Laurel Imperiole, a magazine editor who gets caught in the middle of an art deal that involves a man, married to a friend of hers, who was believed to have died when the Towers fell in New York City. Is he really dead? What happened to the artwork and the money? Is there a scam going on?

Motivated primarily by anger over her friend Monica's grief at her husband's supposed death, and angered that Jeff would pretend to be dead and just walk away, Laurel becomes determined to discover what happened. At first the authorities doubt Laurel's claim that she saw Jeff, but motivated by the missing money and artwork, they look into it. They aren't the only ones however. There are several story lines, all centered around the painting and the question of whether Jeff Sargasso is dead or alive and where is he, if he is alive. There were several groups of people trying to track down and retrieve both the missing artwork and the missing fifteen million dollar good faith fee. Stoler deftly mixed and wove the different strands together, creating distinct voices for each character.

I had a hard time warming up to Laurel; she was often abrasive, impulsive and rude. Her intentions were usually good but her follow through was rough and she had a tendency to do stupid things as the result of her impulsiveness. For instance, she goes to confront one of the people involved in the mystery and doesn't tell anyone: not her boyfriend the police detective, not her friend the private detective and not her worrywart father. Naturally, the consequences are unpleasant. Still, she's a loyal friend, courageous, persistent and caring.

At times, the story felt as if were a sequel or part of a series, with many references to prior events. It may have simply been Stoler trying to establish a back story and flesh out her characters as this is her debut book. Despite that, the flow was smooth and events moved quickly but not at a confusing pace. Overall, the story is engrossing, with an interesting premise, clever twists and skillful use of current affairs. It doesn't go in the direction that you think it will, and I liked that.

It's definitely worth reading and it will hold your attention.

I received an eARC from the publisher for review.

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### **Kira says**

The basic storyline of the book, see synopsis of the book, seemed really promising. But I feel like the author didn't really live up to it. I would have preferred to find out how Jeff had escaped the twin towers (there was a section or two that eluded to him actually having been there) and have the slow reveal as to why. I also feel like the murder was very "convenient" in terms of the overall storyline but added nothing to the story.

One of the main characters, Laurel, is irritating to the point that I really wanted to see something seriously bad happen to her. She made really stupid decisions that no smart person ever would. On top of that, she had anger management issues. She seemed to fly off the handle for no real reason and was quite irrational at times. Likewise, Helen seemed to think she was more of a hero than she really was. Aaron was no great character either. The demise of another certain character was very anti-climatic and also felt like an easy exit to me.

Not a story I will read again.

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### **edj says**

Telling Lies opens with magazine editor Laurel Imperiole, on vacation in Italy, bumping into a man as she's leaving the Botticelli gallery. It takes a few minutes, but she recognizes him as Jeffrey Sargasso, a man she thought had died 10 years earlier in the Twin Towers on 9-11, the husband of a good friend. Soon, she's convinced others, although that takes some doing. When he disappeared, Sargasso had been brokering a deal between two billionaires for a priceless piece of art—and as such, had the codes to access \$15 million. The money was only 10% of the actual price for the painting, which had been missing since WWII. Sargasso's body was never identified.

Laurel, her P-I friend Helen McCorkendale, and her boyfriend Aaron Gerrard (head of the NYPD identity-theft department) begin a desperate hunt to figure out what is going on. Unbeknownst to them, the family of one of the billionaires Sargasso was working with, not to mention a couple of undercover Mossad agents, are already involved in a twisted plot that stretches back to Nazi art theft, medieval Italian societies, schemes to get rich and disappear, and plots to catch a thief.

The action moves back and forth between Italy and New York, as it twists itself into ever tighter mazes. The shady side of the world of art collecting is in full view, as Laurel, Helen and Aaron search for Jeff, the painting, and the money.

Laurel is impulsive and stubborn, and gets herself into some situations that a more level-headed person would have seen coming. She harms her developing relationship with Aaron unnecessarily, accusing him of over-protectiveness when he really is only asking her for a little common sense. There is an underlying theme of untruth, small ones like between Laurel and Aaron, and the big ones surrounding Jeff and his new life, and the painting itself.

My only gripe with the book is the hinge on which the entire plot rests. If I saw someone who reminded me

strongly of a friend who had died 10 years earlier but whom I was sure was dead, I would be saddened, but I would not go to the police and involve everyone I knew to chase him down, especially if his hair and eyes were a different colour and he was dressed in a different style. Lots of people remind me of lots of other people, and even a certain mannerism (brushing hair out of eyes) would not convince me. Regardless, this did not spoil the book for me. I had a willing suspension of disbelief, and plunged into the twists and turns with enjoyment.

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