



A Policy of Lies

Astrid Amara

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Twenty years ago, Levi Kaszeri survived a brutal rebellion on the mining colony of Tarus 9. Now as an aspiring reporter, Levi has a mission: to expose the massacre to the public, and bring the men responsible to justice. But after a violent attack, he is rescued—then seduced—by Tiergan Seoras, a young doctor with a dangerous past and a slave tattoo. Soon Levi finds all of his investigations leading him back to Tiergan. And he begins to fear that the best lover he's ever had may also be his worst enemy.

Publisher's Note: This book contains explicit sexual content, graphic language, and situations that some readers may find objectionable: Anal play/intercourse, male/male sexual practices, violence.

A Policy of Lies Details

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Kathleen says

One of Astrid Amara's earlier stories. Really good. Even though some of the mystery elements were rather obvious, the heart of the matter was the collision of Levi's and Tiergan's tragic individual backstories. I liked their developing attraction and relationship. More world building would have been nice, but it was still darkly atmospheric and gritty. Supporting characters Imogen (Levi's roommate) and Kera (Tiergan's office manager) were welcome additions to the tale. It probably wrapped up a bit too conveniently but I couldn't put the book down once I got into it. Recommended!

Tina says

This one was an excellent read. The plot, the world-building, the romance, the character development, the powerful writing... everything was really well done.

Wonderful, great written sci-fi story, loved it. Highly recommended!

John The Cosmic Wanderer says

Well written, great world building and the plot was interesting. A solid scifi story from Astrid.

Karel says

Quite hard to rate this one. 4 stars for the world: Well-built, very interesting, very well thought out. The conspiracy of million-dollar corporations, journalism, the Tarus 9 strike and insurance companies lent a very realistic feeling to the world. Writing was brilliant too - the descriptions of Washoe and Ishan were so real you can almost see the place. The story flowed smoothly and even when there are paragraphs filled with description, you don't get bored.

Now the plot and the characters on the other hand, merit 3 stars at best. Plot was alright, but carried out with subpar characters. Levi was much too naive and trusting for a journalist who supposedly had years and years of experience under his belt. Tiergan was stu-ish in that he seems completely flawless: kind, tortured past, brooding present, selflessness, and uber-doctor abilities? He may not be perfect, but he's running a close second.

Consequently, both main characters made a story that would otherwise be exciting and interesting felt bland and stale. The romance especially, was completely unconvincing. There doesn't seem to be anything between them except good sex, distrust, and a lot of secret-induced hostility. Not really a platform upon to base a thousand years of relationship.

The secondary characters felt little better. Imogen and that hacker love interest of hers were clearly just there to provide information for Levi. The only one even slightly interesting was Kera, and her mystery is dampen by the fact that you can pretty much guess she's not a big player in the picture.

As to the actual plot itself, it was creative, but executed with all the suspense of a B-grade, low-budget movie. You could guess who the informer and agent 75 was from ten million miles away. The moment the plot devices appeared, you could guess how it was going to go down. Even the villain's subterfuge was so transparent, he might as well have his supervillain symbol tattooed on his forehead.

Ending was much too brief and easily wrapped up. Maybe I'm a sadist who just want my characters to suffer, but the ending felt too slick. It fell into the common romance author's trap of making EVERYTHING perfect in the ending. HEAs are pretty much a requirement in romance novels, but the MCs can have a HEA without everything be nigh perfect.

Overall, a very solid read that will keep you interested from start to end. Don't read this if you want a grand, sizzling romance. Read this if you like sci-fi and wouldn't mind MM thrown in for the mix.

Tully Vincent says

4.5 stars

Let me start by saying the title is VERY apt. This author came on my radar when I read and adored Song of the Navigator earlier in the year. That book impressed me so much that I had to read more.

Nice world-building (some of the details were great, like the domed biospheres), sucked me in pretty quickly and kept me hooked with its fast pace, enjoyable female character, seriously sick-ass bad guy(s), and some serious twists. Plenty of action.

The POV character, Levi, is nuanced and well-drawn. We see the whole story through his eyes, and it was amazing to watch all the details coming together for him. Levi seemed stupidly trusting and a mite unobservant in some cases given his status as a investigative reporter and all he'd survived in his past. His single-minded quest for revenge perhaps put blinders on him at times.

Despite (or maybe because of) his mystery, Tiergan fascinated me from the start and that just kept growing as I learned more about him, his strength and sensitivity, his need to help others, his delighted love of birds, and all that we learn about him in the end just about broke my heart.

The characters had chemistry and heat, and would have enjoyed more interaction between them outside of the sex. What was there, I liked a lot, but more would have built up the emotional connection a bit more for me. And the way they jumped right into sex the same night together after Levi had been mugged and beaten pretty badly enough that Tiergan had to do some surgery on him seemed a bit rushed. Despite that, I couldn't put this down. Highly recommended.

Ami says

4.5 stars

This is the second story of Astrid Amara that I read and I am really impressed. "A Policy of Lies" give me everything I want in a good story. A sympathetic likeable characters, intriguing plot, hot sexy sex scenes, and a great description of fantasy world. I'm not really into sci-fi world, but when it is well-written like this, I'm all for it. I truly enjoy how the story is being built up -- and the chemistry between Levi and Tiergan is strong, I can feel it (an everytime they have the hot sex *sigh*). Yes, the sex is there but not overwhelming. I love Levi and his naivete (which is not very strong virtue for a reporter *g*). Tiergan intrigues me too, and I feel bad for what he has been through.

The story has enough angst and emotion to make me deeply connected to the story. I think, this is one of my favorite M/M sci-fi stories to date (aside from J.M. Snyder's "Persistence of Memory")

Elena says

[learning about Trust resuscitating policy's holders to use them as slave labor and that Tiergan wasn't working for them by his own choice (hide spoiler)]

Nancy says

Posted at Hearts on Fire Reviews

I bought this title because I so thoroughly enjoyed Astrid Amara's fun, sweet, humorous and romantic stories in Tangle.

The fun begins when investigative reporter Levi Kaszeri is walking through the worst district in the city to collect a piece of evidence, a memory implant he needs to complete his story of a massacre that took place on Tarus 9, a mining colony where Levi spent his childhood and where his family was brutally murdered. He is attacked by a mugger and promptly rescued by Tiergen Seoras, a gorgeous doctor with many secrets, who runs a free clinic nearby. Their attraction is instant, and Levi finds his growing relationship with the doctor is complicated by what his investigations reveal.

There is much to like about this story. I loved the future setting and independent space colonies with domed biospheres and simulated seasons. I loved the exploration of corporate crime and abuse. I loved the fast pace and suspenseful scenes and the well-drawn secondary characters.

What frustrated me most was the character of Levi. I expected a bit more "street sense" from someone who managed to survive a brutal massacre as a child and is now working as a reporter which requires a certain amount of discretion and common sense. I was able to figure out who the bad guys were long before Levi did and I really wanted to strangle him for his stupidity. He was so obsessed with revenge for his family's murder and his sex life that he failed to see there was another side to the story at Tiergan's peril.

Despite its flaws, I found this story difficult to put down and look forward to more of Astrid Amara's work.

Jennifer says

[A Policy of Lies, was fairly short comprised of large font making the 170 something pages, seem like a whole lot less. That is not to say that the content is bad. It's alright, I was n

Alyosha says

Excellent! Engaging characters, great world-building, interesting sci-fi setting, exciting plot, steamy and compelling romance. The writing was tight and smooth and the story engrossing.

5+ stars

Katerina says

A great book. Insane exciting. And the love story was just perfect.
Can't wait to read the second part.
Highly Recommended!

The rather average rating of 3.67 stars for this book remains unclear to me. Anyone who knows Astrid Amara's writing style will certainly not be disappointed. Enjoy!

Erica says

Although I did like this, too many of the mystery elements were entirely obvious, which made Levi seem like an idiot and Tiergan like a horrible person for misleading him. It's a little low on world-building, but some of the tech is pretty cool. I'm excited to read the next one.

Jenre says

I'd seen this book months ago when it was first released by Loose Id and considered buying it. It sounded a bit different from the m/m contemporary romances and mysteries I'd been reading up to that point. I didn't buy it in the end for two reasons: Firstly, it is a sci-fi, a genre I've not really read very much and I wasn't sure whether I would like it and secondly, I'd not read anything previously by this author and was unable to find a review of the book. With so many books around by authors I did know that I liked, it was safer to spend my money on a book I knew I would like for definite. However, since last October, when the book was released, I've read and enjoyed the *Hell Cop* anthology which contains a story by this author. I've also seen other bloggers recommend this book as worth reading, so I finally decided it was time to give it a go. I'm very glad that I did.

This story takes place on a fictional planet, Ishan, where a colony of people from Earth live in biospheres. The book begins as our hero, Levi, arrives in Washoe, one of the less salubrious districts of Ishan to retrieve

a valuable piece of evidence for his story for the Ishan Report, a newstation where Levi is an investigative journalist. His story is about a conspiracy to cover up genocide on a mining colony, Taurus 9. Levi's family were all killed during that genocide and he only managed to escape their fate by hiding until the killing was over. Levi has been working on this story for ten years and plans to expose the mining company and take his revenge for the deaths of his family. After retrieving this evidence, a brain implant, he is heading back to the station when he is attacked and almost killed. He is rescued by Tiergan, a doctor who works at a local free clinic in Washoe, who promptly seduces him before sending him on his way. A few days later Levi returns to Washoe, determined to find out who has been sending him information about the genocide. All his sources are leading him back to Teirgan's clinic and a woman who works there.

I have to admit I spent quite a lot of time whilst reading this book completely amazed at Levi's naivety. He is researching a story which could topple one of the largest, most influential companies in the universe and yet he quite happily shares this information with all and sundry. There were a number of points in the book where I wanted to shout: 'No! don't tell him that. Can't you see he's dodgy?' but to no avail. As a result this was one of those books which you read whilst hiding behind your hands, knowing what is to come and unable to prevent it. This wasn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact, I liked knowing what an idiot Levi was being and it was rather gratifying to have all my suspicions about the other characters proven correct by the end. Despite being a naive fool, Levi is a genuinely nice guy. He honestly believes that through hard work and diligent research he is going to right the wrongs inflicted on hundreds of miners and their families. It was a noble pursuit and I was cheering for him all the way. I love a good conspiracy theory, and this one didn't disappoint, with its shady mega-companies, characters who are never quite what they seem and in the thick of it the honest man who believes he can topple mountains with his righteous justification. Is that the theme to the X-Files I hear?

Much of sci-fi depends on the world building. This story didn't disappoint in this area either. We are treated to coherent descriptions of the setting and I particularly liked the simulated weather, especially in that it 'rained' for two hours at 2am each night. The explanations of the different colonies and the corporations which ran them were, thankfully, not overly complex. This has to be my biggest bugbear with sci-fi - when you can't keep track of who is in charge and the different societal structures. Luckily for me this was all kept reasonably simple. Another good thing was that the sci-fi setting is integral to the plot and not just 'wallpaper' in which to decorate a romance.

If I have any disappointments, it was with the character of Tiergan. In some ways it was difficult to understand him, mainly because we only get Levi's thoughts and Levi doesn't understand him either, but also because he is so saintly and self-sacrificing that he borders on the unrealistic. Even when he is wrongly condemned he doesn't fight back or justify himself, which was rather irritating. I suppose this saintliness did serve to show Levi for the rash young fool he is, but by the end I wished that there had been at least something in his character which showed anything other than kindness, compassion and understanding.

Overall, I really enjoyed this book, despite my misgivings about Tiergan. The plot zipped along at a fair pace and the conspiracy plot drew me in and kept me interested. I would recommend this book to those who enjoy sci-fi and those who are looking to try the genre. I certainly found it accessible as well as being an entertaining read. I would give this book a grade of 'Very Good' and I'll definitely be reading more books by this author very soon.

Katharina says

3.75

I'm a bit torn about this one (I had quite a bit of this lately, seems like quite a trend ;-D). I really loved the science-fiction aspects, and I especially loved that the main characters had pretty "mundane" jobs for such a setting - a journalist and a doctor. That isn't something you see very often in science-fiction. The mystery component, the intricacies and unexpected elements of the plot were great - I really loved those! To be honest, the beginning was fairly slow, but once the suspense part really got going, it got me going with it. And I found myself, once again, glued to my chair.

The part I didn't get into that much was the romance plot. I liked the characters per se - I found their background interesting and it all fit very well to the general story line and theme. So far so good. But the romance just didn't engage me. I didn't feel their connection, didn't really see the attraction or the emotional development. It was all there, but it just felt flat to me, slightly detached. Even the sex parts didn't work for me - probably because I didn't think much of the relationship in the first place. I think, this is one of the books that I'd have liked better if the romance part had been reduced to a bare minimum or only had been hinted at (not skipped entirely though, a little bit of romance is always good after all :-D), and the plot had focused almost completely on the suspense part and the general setting.

There were a few general things also not on my personal hit list: the writing felt a bit awkward sometimes and a few scenes didn't really seem believable to me ((view spoiler)).

I still want to round my rating up to four stars, simply because I think that the great suspense part of the plot deserves it. But it clearly isn't without flaws - and if I had to separately rate the romance it'd be somewhere between two and three stars unfortunately.

Galia says

2.5 stars
