



The Art of Keeping Secrets

Rachael Johns

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Little secrets grow up to be big lies...

They've been best friends since their sons started high school together, and Felicity, Emma and Neve share everything ... or so they thought.

But Flick's seemingly perfect marriage hides a shocking secret which, with one word, threatens to destroy her and her family's happiness. Emma is in denial about a potential custody battle, her financial constraints, the exhaustion she can't seem to shake off and the inappropriate feelings she has for her boss. And single mum Neve is harbouring a secret of her own; a secret that might forever damage her close-knit relationship with her son.

When the tight hold they have each kept on their secrets for years begins to slip, they must face the truth. Even if that truth has the power to hurt the ones they love, and each other.

Perhaps some secrets weren't made to be kept.

The Art of Keeping Secrets Details

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Author : Rachael Johns

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From Reader Review *The Art of Keeping Secrets* for online ebook

Deborah says

Johns' latest release, *The Art of Keeping Secrets*, has been receiving praise from a lot of readers and book bloggers; and, as it sounded like it focused less on the happily-ever-after I decided to dive in. And thank god I did.

I knew I'd love Johns' writing. There was no question of that. I tend to assume most people's writing is a reflection of who they are and from stuff I've read (interviews and social media updates) I knew Johns' style was warm and funny. Which came across in the novel. Her writing is very relatable and accessible. And by that I don't mean ordinary, as not many writers can manage that easy conversational tone without it sounding forced or if they're trying to be informal.

Neve, Emma and Felicity met five years earlier and - via their sons - have become best friends. In many ways their boys are all they have in common, but they've bonded and 'think' they've shared their secrets and know each other well. But of course that's never the case.

All three lead characters are complex and interesting - with very different personalities and very different problems. They're independent and strong characters but - like so many women and mothers - struggling to believe they're doing as well as others and worrying about failing their children. They'll be very relatable for readers, as even this childless, single reader could relate to some of the dating and confidence issues experienced. And then there's that sense of regret.... which I could metaphorically taste.

This is an enjoyable novel, it's not always cheery and my own tears were a surprise; but ultimately it's empowering and uplifting. Readers shouldn't necessarily expect their happily-ever-afters however, because Johns gives us something a bit more real than that.

Read the full review on my blog: <http://www.debbish.com/books-literatu...>

4.5 stars

Karen ?* says

This book follows the lives of three friends as they share some huge secrets that have made an impact on their lives.

I really enjoyed the characterisations and I thought they were all likeable and believable. It was also a story with a few surprises, tears and laughs.

On the flip side, I found the prose and the dialogue a little superfluous and a proper edit would have taken this from a good book to a great one that could sit along side other fabulous contemporary Australian authors such as Liane Moriarty.

For example, a character drives to a church and we are told "when they arrived...(she) slipped the car keys into her clutch bag and walked over to join Zoe, Seb...." The keys going into her bag and her walking over to these characters adds nothing to the story. I probably wouldn't notice this once or twice, but it was continual through the book that we are given step-by-step and it just isn't needed. Also, some of the dialogue "your

daughters will be happy to have you closer to come again too, especially Hannah who will also be here". or "Would you like me to run you a bath and pour you a glass of wine" That just isn't how someone would actually speak in a casual setting. This may seem like I'm being picky, but it did bug me through the book as I think there is so much potential here.

Having said all of that, I did enjoy it and would like to thank NetGalley and the publisher for providing me with a free copy in exchange for an honest review.

Kathryn says

Rachael Johns has written an engaging and thought provoking book about three friends and the secrets they have unshared. They are really very involved in each others lives, yet they don't know everything that is going on for each of them - yet.

Three women - Felicity married to Seb, with two children, Zoe about to be married and a seventeen year old son. Seb is a loving attentive husband, the other two women Emma and Neve somewhat envy the happy married life. But what they don't know is that something is going down to change the relationship Felicity and Seb have. In spite of the love between them, it may not be enough.

Emma is a divorced women coping with three teenage children and an ex husband and his young wife that has replaced her. Max gives the children everything, and Emma struggles to work and pay the way of herself and the children with little support from the ex. And what is worse the stress is getting to her and headaches are plaguing every step she takes.

Neve, has one son - Will. She has brought Will up alone, and now he wants to know who is father is. The trouble is she has told Will his father did not want him, however now she is faced with having to face up to the man she has never told that he has a son. She is at risk of losing her son when he discovers the truth.

In turn the story focuses on each woman and the struggles she faces. However they are all very much there for each other, in spite of some differences of opinions. And eventually secrets will out. And when it is tough going they are there for each other. The theme of friendship is strong.

Each woman must find her way forward for her, while friends are there for you, in the end each must take those brave steps on their own. While I don't want to give the plot away, other than to say its very on point, I'll just say that I was so delighted to see Felicity finally take the heartbreaking step that would ensure she stay true to herself.

Kudos to Rachael Johns for this book, exploring a topic that has only recently come to the fore a lot more. Not telling what though, that would be to spoil the finding out.

Michelle says

Wow! This is fast becoming my favourite Rachael Johns book.

Edgy and different this is brand new territory for Rach and I LOVE IT

AMAZING read, but I would like another chapter or two to see what happens next

Bobbie says

This is my first book that I've read by Johns, but I will definitely be reading more. It's about the relationship between three women who have been friends since high school. Their lives have changed over time. The years have improved some of their lives, but one of the friend's lives has not been so good. Still, she has had her friends there to support, and then there are other secrets. It's a great read. I recommend to the reading community.

Brenda says

For the past five years Flick, Emma and Neve had been best friends; meeting to chat about their reading once a month had been the beginning then gradually their friendship settled into a comfortable and well-oiled knowledge of each other. There was rarely a day go by when they didn't speak or text one another – they knew each other's families, dramas and foibles inside out.

Emma was a single mother after Max had left her for a younger woman; her son Caleb was friends with Neve's son Will and Flick's son Troy. Her twin daughters Sarah and Laura were almost fifteen, while Flick's daughter Zoe was twenty and preparing for her marriage to Beau. Neve had been a single mother since Will's birth; the two of them were extremely close. And Flick's friends were envious of her relationship with her husband Seb – he was always kind and attentive to them and idolised Flick.

So why was it that suddenly cracks began to appear in the relationships surrounding the three friends? Will's innocent request of his mother started a chain of events which could damage their closeness, while Emma's bitterness and financial distress were a constant strain. And Flick's surface calm was threatening to explode – what were the torturous, dark secrets that Flick, Emma and Neve held, which none of them were aware of?

Aussie author Rachael Johns has done it again with *The Art of Keeping Secrets*! A moving, emotional rendition of the lives of three families; their interactions, secrets and lies; as well as courage, hope, love and laughter – all tied together with a deep and enduring bond of friendship. I did feel the end was a little rushed; a little unresolved - but it wasn't enough to avoid a 5 star rating from me! I thoroughly enjoy this author's work, and *The Art of Keeping Secrets* was no exception. Highly recommended.

With thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for this copy to read in exchange for my honest review.

Amanda - Mrs B's Book Reviews says

Rachael Johns enthralls her readers yet again with her second foray into the contemporary life literature genre with the release of her newest book, *The Art Of Keeping Secrets*. I am so glad Rachael Johns has decided to take this direction in her writing, as I really do believe that she has the knack for conveying issues close to women's hearts.

At the core of *The Art Of Keeping Secrets* are three very close knit female friends, Emma, Flick and Neve.

Their friendship is rock solid, having developed when their children entered high school together. It is obvious as soon as the story opens, that the three women share a special bond. It seems from the outset that these women know each other's ins, outs and unique quirks. However, what they don't know is each of them is harbouring a pretty big secret, that will rock the very foundations of their current lives. Neve gets the ball rolling on the secret front when she drops a big bombshell regarding the identity to the father of her child. This leads the trio on a whirlwind trip from Australia to New York, where more secrets are confessed.

Rachael Johns never fails to wow me with her novels and *The Art Of Keeping Secrets* is certainly no exception. *The Art Of Keeping Secrets* is Johns second offering in the life literature genre and it clearly highlights Johns strength as a writer. Johns tackles some contemporary and very relatable subjects in this novel from love, marriage, affairs, separation, divorce and single parenting, to career choices. These are balanced with the overarching theme of the novel which is based on airing out long held secrets. The secrets, when they come, are pretty explosive. One secret in particular had me drawing my breath in from complete disbelief. I even re-read the passages, as it was a shock that I definitely didn't see coming. Johns manages to tantalise her readers this way for the majority of the novel, gradually revealing pieces to a bigger puzzle surrounding the secrets these women hold. It was a big drawcard for me, as it wiled me to turn the pages as fast as I could and also prevented me from putting the book down. Readers will find the combination of natural and relatable dialogue, along with characters that are realistically drawn, but with flaws any person can sympathise with, greatly appealing. Although *The Art Of Keeping Secrets* does not have a rural feel, I would have to say I enjoyed this novel just as much as the rural romances Johns is famous for. The movement in setting from Australia to the States was covered well by Johns. I loved the feel of being a sidekick on the trio's big trip to New York, it was most enjoyable reading experience. Fans new and old will also appreciate Johns flair for romance which was a captivating feature of the novel.

There is no doubt Johns can spin a fantastic yarn around the bonds of female friendship and the knocks life deals out for the everyday woman. *The Art Of Keeping Secrets* is another very successful and memorable addition to the Rachael Johns collection.

*Please note that a free copy of this book was provided to me for review purposes through Beauty and Lace. To read the original review on the Beauty and Lace website view it here:
<http://bookgirl.beautyandlace.net/boo...>

Renee says

The Art of Keeping Secrets has now overtaken *The Patterson Girls* as my new favourite Rachael Johns book. This fabulous contemporary fiction novel follows the lives of three women, who have been friends for years but are each keeping secrets.

I giggled, I teared up, I kept turning the pages. The only reason I didn't finish it sooner was that I put all my books down for a few days so that I could flit around the Romance Writer's of Australia conference, soaking up the love, and get to meet Rachael Johns in person (*waves* hi, Rach).

I received this book free from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Suzanne says

Interesting cross section of themes, builds on her range from The Patterson Girls. Love the characters and the dynamics of each relationship. Who wouldn't fall for Patrick? Seb/Sofia slightly harder to stomach as you really felt for Flick. A good read and author I will keep coming back to.

Bianca says

The Art of Keeping Secrets was my first Rachael Johns novel.

As the title and the blurb indicate, this novel is about three women friends, all in their early forties. They're all busy, working mums. Felicity, aka Flick, is a taxidermist, married to a lovely man, and has two kids. From the outside, their life is perfect. But there is one big secret that's been driving Felicity crazy. Emma is divorced and the mother of three teenagers. She's struggling and is constantly exhausted. Genevive, aka Neve, is a make-up and hair artist and a single mum to Will. She's been lying to her son and parents for a long time.

When Neve decides to go to New York to right the huge mistake she made eighteen years earlier, Flick and Emma accompany her. Lots of things happen while they're in New York. I can't say too much more because it will spoil it for you.

I will just say that the characters' struggles are relatable. The power of female friendship is at the centre of this novel. I enjoyed reading a novel set mostly in Perth. The writing is accessible, without many flourishes. Each friend is given relatively equal air time, so we get to become very familiar with their inner thoughts.

This has been an enjoyable novel, filled with emotional moments, without being melodramatic or saccharine-y.

I've received this novel via Netgalley, in exchange for an honest review. Many thanks to the publishers, Harlequin, for the opportunity to read and review this novel.

:Cover: 4.5 stars

Jenny says

The Art of Keeping Secrets is about three friends Felicity, Emma and Genevieve who were keeping secrets from their friends and family. However, the secrets were wearing the three friends down and affect everyone around them. Readers of The Art of Keeping Secrets will follow how Felicity, Emma and Genevieve's secrets were revealed and how they cope with the consequences.

For me, The Art of Keeping Secrets is not one of my favourite Rachael Johns books. I not sure why but I did not get involved with the plot of The Art Of Keeping Secrets. I did like the way Rachael Johns structured The Art of Keeping Secrets by dedicated a chapter to each of them. I enjoyed the way Rachael Johns

portrayed and entwine her characters in *The Art of Keeping Secrets*. Rachael Johns did a great job describing the problems that people go through when they go through gender transition.

Readers of *The Art of Keeping Secrets* will learn the consequences of keeping secrets for everyone involved. *The Art of Keeping Secrets* highlights the importance of friendships for everyone. Readers of *The Art of Keeping Secrets* will learn that not all brain tumours are cancerous.

I recommend this book.

Helen says

4.5 Stars - <http://greatreadsandtealeaves.blogspot...>

'Is it a secret?' He leant forward a little and whispered, 'I promise I'm good at keeping secrets.'

The Art of Keeping Secrets by Rachael Johns is my first book by her and I was eager to finally sample her writing, especially considering, many claim this to be one of her best books so far. I was not disappointed. In a nutshell, this is the story of three women who are the best of friends and the secrets that they have kept not only from each other but from their families as well. One of the best things about this book, is that you don't have to wait until the closing stages for any big reveals. As their secrets slowly start to unfurl, the absolute heartache is so real you will find it difficult to put down.

'Please, say something,' she pleaded, her whole body trembling from the knowledge she'd finally revealed her biggest, darkest secret.'

Each of the lives of these three very different women is told from their perspective in alternating chapters. There really is something here for everyone as not only do you find yourself immersed in a highly engaging story but, just below that surface, Johns is examining the fallout of kept secrets: What happens when the truth is hidden to all of those involved? United by friendship they may be, but is it a strong enough foundation to see them through some testing times and differences of opinion? What will be the eventual and heartbreaking consequences when all is revealed?

Each of the women bring their own unique thoughts and perspectives when faced with the cards life has dealt them and how they choose to then act upon that. Flick is solid and stoic and faced with a terrible decision; Neve has a hidden past that could really damage her future; and, Emma goes through a truly traumatic experience.

It's a little difficult to reveal more because I mean, after all, it is a book about secrets. So without giving any spoilers away, suffice to say it's a highly engaging read that kept me up past my bedtime and would I would recommend to readers across a range of genres.

'The time for secrets and lies was over.'

This review is based on a complimentary copy from the publisher and provided through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. The quoted material may have changed in the final release

Sally906 says

I have to say that I have never, ever, read a bad Rachael Johns book. Each time I finish reading one I think wow she can't get any better – but then I pick up the next one – and she does. **THE ART OF KEEPING SECRETS** is so fabulous that I read until the wee small hours to finish it, and my husband had to heat us up leftovers for dinner for two nights as I wanted to read rather than cook!!!

See more of my review [here](#)

MarciaB - Book Muster Down Under says

What price do we pay when we deceive those we love?

In this latest by Rachael Johns, she attempts to answer that question by delving into the lives of three very different women who, while united by friendship, are all keeping secrets.

Flick has a picture-perfect marriage and family envied by most but she harbours a shocking secret that has become her life because, if it ever comes out, her little family may just be shattered; Neve's been a single mother all of Toby's life and it's her own secret (and guilt) that's going to catch up with her when Toby becomes more persistent in his questioning; and Emma, a divorcee and mother of three finds herself with growing feelings towards her boss but is then suddenly faced with some life-changing health issues.

Told from the perspectives of all three women, there is something here for everyone in a story about the damage we suffer when we hide the truth and the consequences that secrets can have on the ones we love. Flick's story is the most compelling with its shock factor, while Neve's will keep the reader holding their breath and Emma's offers us hope.

Rachael Johns never disappoints and I'm really enjoying the deviation that her writing seems to have taken. In her previous novel, *The Patterson Girls*, Rachael explored sisterhood, sibling rivalry and the unbreakable bonds called family ties along with real-life issues such as bereavement, infidelity and fertility issues.

In this latest, she drills a little deeper, going into the lives of three friends and their families whose existence will be forever altered as they are forced to deal with not only their own secrets but those they have become privy to and all the crises they bring – and there are no holds barred here as she puts these characters through the wringer, adeptly advancing them to their breaking points!

With all the messiness of real life, the intricacies and limits of marriage and the depth of love and friendship, *The Art of Keeping Secrets* is a complex and tumultuous story with moments of tear-jerking catharsis, for both the reader and the characters, as emotions and years of hidden feelings bubble to the surface.

Touching on motherhood, friendship, relationships, secrets, lies, betrayal and the love that binds all of these together, Rachael's ability to capture the emotional realities of life is to be much-admired in this toast to the power of women's friendships. Highly recommended.

As an aside, this is one story that I believe would be FABULOUS on the big-screen so I thought I'd create my own little playlist. Who knows, should it make it, hopefully some of these songs would be featured:

Crash (Usher), Secrets (One Republic), Demons (Imagine Dragons), Sweet Disposition (The Temper Trap), Love the Way You Lie (Rihanna), New York, New York (Frank Sinatra), Fight Song (Rachel Platten), Skyscraper (Demi Lovato), Say Something (A Great Big World/Christina Aguilera), Fix You (Coldplay), Firework (Katy Perry), I Can See Clearly Now (Johnny Cash), I Will Always Love You (Whitney Houston), Use Somebody (Kings of Leon), Haven't Met You Yet (Michael Buble), Don't Speak (No Doubt), Carry on (Fun), Brave (Sara Bareilles), New York (Snow Patrol), True Colours (Cyndi Lauper) and Goodbye My Lover (James Blunt).

Phrynne says

This was my first book by Rachael Johns and it will certainly not be my last! It's a great story about three life long friends who think they know each other so well and then find they each have one huge secret they have not shared.

This was a book that was really hard to put down. The chapters rotated between the POVs of the three main characters, which had the effect of keeping things moving really fast. In the end it was Flick who had the most insoluble of the three issues. There could be no fairy tale ending for a situation like hers.

I enjoyed all of the characters, both the main ones and the lesser ones of some of the children and the ex partners. The author wrote them well and, although there was a lot of drama, held back from going over the top. Towards the end I reached for the tissues. There were happy tears and sad ones too and an honest ending.

I liked it very much and will be looking out for more of her books.
