



Campaign Ruby

Jessica Rudd

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When she gets the email announcing her redundancy, Ruby Stanhope hopes to maintain the composure expected of your average London investment banker.

Instead, the next day's hangover brings two unfortunate discoveries. First, her impromptu reply to the bosses has gone viral, published everywhere from Facebook to the Financial Times. Second, she has a non-refundable, same-day ticket to Melbourne thanks to a dangerous cocktail of Victorian pinot noir, broadband internet and a dash of melancholy.

Landing in Australia, Ruby plans a quiet stay with her aunt in the Yarra Valley—but a party at the local winery results in an unexpected job offer: financial policy adviser to the Federal Leader of the Opposition.

Intrigued, Ruby heads to Melbourne for morning coffee with the Chief of Staff—and finds herself in the middle of the Treasurer's overthrow of the Prime Minister and the announcement of an early election.

Rookie Ruby, dubbed 'Roo' by her Aussie colleagues, is thrown into the campaign and spends four weeks circumnavigating Australia while trying to stay afloat in the deep end of politics. Through trial and plenty of error (including wardrobe malfunctions, media mishaps and a palate for unsavoury men) she finds passion, not just a flair, for her new career.

With its light touch and deft comic instincts, Campaign Ruby is a delightful combination of fashion, faux pas and the unexpected fun of federal politics.

Campaign Ruby Details

Date : Published August 4th 2010 by The Text Publishing Company

ISBN : 9781921656576

Author : Jessica Rudd

Format : Paperback 336 pages

Genre : Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Fiction, Cultural, Australia, Politics, Humor

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From Reader Review Campaign Ruby for online ebook

Melanie says

I wasn't expecting to like this (figured it just got published because of who the author's father is) but found myself smiling as I was reading.

Clare B says

3.5 stars; a funny, light holiday read. Some of the secondary characters were the highlight (especially Clementine!). The overall premise was a bit far-fetched, but nonetheless it was a fun and interesting insight into the thrills and spills of a campaign trail!

C J says

I didn't really have much of an idea of what this book was about when I started reading it, and it completely surprised and delighted me with how enchanting it is. I normally stay away from anything regarding politics, so when I found out that the main character, on a whim, joins an Australian political campaign, I was tempted to stop reading; I'm so glad I continued. This book is exceptionally witty, funny, interesting, and sweet. While the politics pervade every moment after the character lands in Australia, the author easily balances the strong politics with the equally strong charm, personality, and adventure brought in by Ruby and the other characters. And, admittedly, it was pretty cool to learn more about what goes on behind the scenes during a campaign, as well as the Australian government and all the different areas of the country (since all I pretty much know about Australia is from watching Finding Nemo and Crocodile Dundee). Plus, Ruby is just fantastic -- she's a bit of the strong, capable, female protagonist from any late-90s/early 2000s Jane Green novel mixed with just the right amount of mishap-prone Becky Bloomwood from the Shopaholic series. Her wry sense of humor keeps the book moving. Sure, there are obvious disconnects (how does a financial banker just walk into a major political campaign? how does she get a job on vacation in another country?). But, unlike other similarly-told stories, the author actually addresses the absurdity of such scenarios and pokes fun at the more contrived elements of the plotline. Overall, if you'll pardon the pun, Campaign Ruby is the dark horse for one of my favorite books this year -- and it definitely wins the election for most delightful surprise in the "Let's Randomly Pick Up A Book To Read" category!

Fiona Caldarevic says

I've been wanting to read this for a couple of years and *finally* got hold of a copy, only to devour it in all of two days.

Ruby lost her banking job in London, drunkenly booked herself on a flight to Australia, found herself at a cocktail do which turned out to be a political party fundraiser, and she impressed all the right people to land herself a role in the party's election campaign.

Forgetting that this was written by the daughter of the prime minister, who managed to write about the female treasurer ousting the prime minister in a leadership spill, thus becoming the first female prime minister of Australia.... all this she might have written BEFORE it actually happened in reality (happened in June 2010, book got published August 2010..)... ok so forgetting this book is written by Ms Rudd daughter of Kevin, it really was a quite up-to-standard chick-lit and thoroughly enjoyable. I've read much much worse.

The only thing that grated on me was Ruby's clumsiness, which too many chick-lit protagonists seem to have as a "quirky" character trait (Bridget Jones being the most famous). But her love of shoes, good wine and to-do lists were endearing nonetheless.

I really loved the whole scene of the election campaign. I loved the madness of it all, of hopping on planes going from one random location to another every day, of combatting bad-news stories and thinking of election-spin for anything that goes wrong, of those 4am tele-conferences and grabbing meals on the go (burgers and nuggets at Macca's, hilarious!), all with a massive election-day deadline and trying to win the country's vote, much less trying to keep up with personal dilemmas (mostly not being in the same place as her clothes) and family issues. How Ruby managed to recover from her rhinosinusitis with hardly any sleep I'll never know. And on top of that Ruby's a Pom in Australia and in need of translation most of the time (the Australian-isms were probably a little *too* strong I think).

(Does the Leader of the Opposition really get called the "LOO"??)

My favourite secondary character was little Clem, Ruby's niece, though I've never met a five-year-old so interested in other people. The dialogue where Ruby was explaining to Clem that she "tripped and fell over a journalist" was bloody funny.

Oh yeah, speaking of which, there IS romance, kinda the whole point in chick-lit novels. How she fit it into her hectic hectic life I don't know. But it works.

So.. I loved the book, not sure I want to read the next one as this one's enough. Thank you Ms Rudd.

Karyn says

could not put this book down. very different view of a spill and what it means to the global stage. lots of smiles and laughter.

Annelise says

Interesting take, putting the behind the scenes stuff of a political campaign into chick-lit but the book was so full of cliches and stereotypes. An accident-prone heroine, the designer label name-dropping, the manic/insane obsession with shoes, the good guy and the bad boy, etc. As for impressing the difference between British English and Australian English, enough already, stop trying so hard.

Also, I find it incredibly hard to swallow that an English investment banker could swan into a role as an

advisor for an Australian political party, despite stating several times she had no idea about any of it.

Jet says

This was an enjoyable romp of a read. I've been a political junkie in a past life, so I got a lot of giggles out of Ruby's campaign trail shenanigans.

Ruby Stanhope is likable, sympathetic and horrifying in the same vein as Bridget Jones - a walking disaster whose competence and courage carry her through her frequent bouts of impulse and embarrassment.

The cast of characters were great fun; from Ruby's aunts the foul-mouthed lawyer and the elegant baker to Oscar the morally bankrupt but hot journalist.

I enjoyed the book a great deal, though it was predictable and contrived in places.

SusanC says

A light fluffy read for when you are too busy to read anything more in-depth but want something to take your mind off work or whatever else is taking up your brain power.

I mostly enjoyed the side characters. Not that I am saying I did not like the heroine of the story but they added colour.

Nicola says

Nice romp....

Jill says

'Campaign Ruby' by Jessica Rudd is okay if you suspend disbelief. A young girl is made redundant from her London job of investment banker and in a drunken stupor books a flight to Australia. A day or so later and she is asked to join the Leader of the Opposition's campaign to be elected as the next Prime Minister of Australia (after the current PM has been knifed in the back and Australia has a new woman PM). As I said, suspend disbelief, although the plot has some very scary similarities with real life!!!! . It's written by the daughter of a former prime minister so I guess there's a bit of inside information here. The writing seemed to be a bit too forced for me. I am not a fan of situations that are supposed to be 'screwball comedy', and there were many such instances in this book as Ruby muddles through.

Claire says

This was disappointing. I am a big fan of chick lit, and there was a lot of hype around this. The story line was OK, but I thought I was re-reading a Sophie Kinsella with Australian overtones. I found much of the prose grating, too many "Australianisms" which were out dated or highly unlikely to have been used. Apart from the fact the the main character didn't really do or say anything spectacular to justify getting the job, or getting high praise. Sorry, won't be rushing out for the second.

Susan says

Not my kind of thing. I should have known, when any politician starts talking my brain shuts off. Didn't like the British/Australian cross over... I felt the character Ruby was written like she was trying way too hard to be British and the Australian characters were way too Aussie. Don't want to be offensive to anyone and this is meant to be a light hearted jab but I think Jessica is very much like her father... His australianisms are out dated and over the top and don't suit him. "Fair shake of the sauce bottle" I gave up fairly early on cause I have a big pile of books I want to read. Don't take too much notice of my review if you liked this book. Each to their own.. I'm sure some of the books I've liked you world find appaling!

Project says

One has to wonder if this "novel" (it's more an autobiography) would have been published had it been written by someone other than the daughter of the then Prime Minister of Australia.[return]It's not a badly written book. It's just not glimmering with the sort of talent that you seem to need these days to get published. You or i could probably have written something as clever, given the time and the background.[return]And it is the background that makes this novel stand out. You get the occasional glimpses of her observations of her own father, and the processes that brought him to power. Jessica Rudd was, after all, operating in some capacity similar to Ruby in her father's campaign.[return]The text is notable for the knockabout plot structure, the way that Ruby gets all dolled up in the right shoes, the right dress, the right handbag, and then ends up covered in food, or head down in a toilet. It's these moments of lowgrade cringe that seem to be the powerhouse of the narrative: how will Roo mess this up?[return]The fashion fetishes and embarrassments aside, Rudd also tries (and fails, in the eyes of this reader) to inspire us with the powerful rhetoric of her political characters. You can see the place where the powerful rhetoric is supposed to be, could even underline the sentences if you had to, but it just never works.[return]Call me cynical, but politicians who are too good to be true are just, well, too good to be true. If she was trying to apotheosise her father in this novel, it didn't work out for her, or him.[return]There are, however, some well realised characters in here, Clem being foremost among these. And there's a villain to boo, a hero or two to cheer, a moral crisis or three, and plenty of shoe porn.[return]Will Rudd write the follow-up novel, where Roo helps the new government to overcome the hurdles of changing Australia into a place run by people of vision and principle? I'm not sure she has any background to base such an excursion on, so maybe not.

Bree T says

Ruby is an investment banker in London. When she gets an email from HR during the latest round of

‘corporate restructuring’ that advises her that her position has been made redundant and can she please return all work items on her way out thank you, she doesn’t take the news lying down. She types out a return email that goes viral in hours, goes home and gets tanked on a couple of bottles of the finest Australian pinot noir.

When she wakes up the next morning, Ruby discovers that she’s managed to book herself a trip to Australia that’s going to cost her an arm and a leg to get out of. Luckily her aunt happens to live in Victoria, Australia so that’s some accommodation sorted. Her aunt Daphne and her aunt’s live in partner Debs beg off a local event at a nearby winery and send Ruby in their place. There she meets Luke, terrible taste in suits and ties and Chief of Staff to the Leader of the Opposition. Despite assuming that Luke and the Leader were at first, gay lovers, Ruby manages to score herself a job working for the LOO (Leader of the Opposition) as a spill topples the current Prime Minister and an election is called. Ruby finds herself travelling the length and breadth of Australia in mere days on a publicity trail, working her butt off to get the public to vote for the LOO.

Despite knowing nothing about politics, particularly the Australian variety, Ruby is thrust in at the deep end, fulfilling a number of roles. It’s all about votes and candidates and making their party seem like the strongest option available in a myriad of airports, hotels, publicity events, interviews and scandals. And then there’s that ridiculously good-looking political journalist who’s appearing everywhere with his charisma....

Despite falling into this job with no experience whatsoever and decidedly not looking for work, Ruby discovers that she loves the frantic pace and variety of challenges that working in high level politics brings. She never knows what she will be doing from one day to the next it could be meeting with ill kids or visiting a local member with a blog about alien sightings.

And then Ruby and the rest of their team have done all they can – it’s election day and out of their hands now.

There’s something really special about a book that can make you forget yourself and laugh out loud. Not just a little snort, but a full on proper laugh. And Campaign Ruby was that sort of book for me. Ruby is hilarious, from the time the novel opens and she’s reading the email that is basically telling her thanks very much, but you’re fired now. There are so many moments in this book that had me in hysterics on the couch.

Jessica Rudd clearly knows her politics (and she would, given she’s the daughter of Kevin Rudd – a former Opposition Leader, a former Australian Prime Minister and the current Minister for Foreign Affairs). And although the whole novel revolves around politics, given Ruby slots into her new role working for the Leader of the Opposition very early on in the book, Rudd somehow manages to make it both enjoyable and fascinating as well as humorous and warm. Politics is a subject often lauded as boring (I have a degree in political studies and international relations so I don’t always agree, but I can see why people think that) but by making politics merely the way in which Ruby gets a job and continues well, being Ruby, a lot of the tediousness is removed. We get to see mostly the interesting side, with exhaustive publicity tours, tricky interviews and awkward situations with local members of parliament and given Ruby is English she knows almost nothing about Australian politics herself, so we’re not treated to any long-winded internal dialogues on the rights and wrongs of the system or the intricacies of it. It’s the perfect use of less is more.

The characters are the really strong point in this novel – Ruby is funny and likable and despite a love of high fashion, very down to Earth and not afraid to jump in feet first and get dirty. The cast of supporting characters are just as well done, ranging from Ruby’s highly precocious niece (Clementine Genevieve Gardner-Stanhope) to the various colourful characters taking part in the campaign to the lovely Luke with the disastrous fashion sense. Even the LOO himself is more than just a cardboard cutout with a lovely wife

and typically bored and embarrassed-by-her-dad teenage daughter.

If I had to describe Campaign Ruby in one word it would be fun. One of those books that you snatch up, settle down somewhere and let a couple hours pass in a blur of laughter. I read this from my local library but it's pretty cheap for Kindle so I'm buying it in order to have my own copy. I love books that I can see myself re-reading in the future and I think this is definitely one of these.

Sam Still Reading says

Australians probably would have heard about this book recently as it's scarily prophetic. Shafted prime minister's daughter writes a book about an Australian prime minister being ousted from office by his female colleague who then calls a snap election- it all reflects our recent political climate. But is Jessica Rudd cashing in on her father's name and fate?

No! Even though I am an ardent Kevin Rudd fan (geeks and academics can be prime minister...hope for us all, but that's another story for another blog) Jessica Rudd has done a wonderful job in producing a truly funny chick lit where politics is anything but boring.

Campaign Ruby centres around Ruby Stanhope, an investment banker who is sacked as part of the credit crunch. She goes home, gets blind drunk and books herself a ticket to Melbourne. (Why Ruby has a Qantas Frequent Flyer number even though she's never been to Australia is never explained). It's too expensive to get out of the ticket, so luckily she flies in to a stinking hot summer where she is met by her aunt. By luck, she meets the Leader of the Opposition (leader of political party not in power) and is offered a job on the election campaign. Here Ruby makes the most of her Englishness and lack of knowledge regarding Australian slang, leading to some awkward (and funny) moments. Will the Leader of the Opposition win? Will Ruby realise which of the team has her best interests at heart in time?

Ruby is a very likeable character (even though she has a better knowledge of Australian fashion labels than most Australians) and the supporting cast (particularly the aunts and her niece Clementine) are skillfully written and unique.

Jessica doesn't have the literary verbosity of her father (phew, I hear most of you say) but she does have an incredible talent for humour- I don't think I've ever giggled my way through a chick lit as much.

It was interesting to read this in the wake of the recent Australian federal election, when we didn't know what was going to happen in regards to who would form government- I was hoping that Jessica would predict the result!
