



Party Lines

Emma Barry

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It's not personal—it's politics.

Michael Picetti: a cynical Democrat who has seen too many failed campaigns. It's not his first primary, and it's been a while since he's truly believed policy and public good trump all.

Lydia Reales: young, hard-working, optimistic...Republican. Getting her candidate in office means everything to her, and leaves zero time for a love life.

Both are determined that opposites don't attract—at least when it comes to crossing party lines. As aides for opposing presidential candidates, Michael and Lydia are competing in an industry that requires total loyalty to their side. It doesn't matter that with each teasing encounter they're more and more attracted to each other. It doesn't matter that casual flirting escalates to a powerful physical connection. It doesn't matter that they might not be able to step away from each other without consequences.

As the campaign rages on and a reckless affair becomes a relationship, the inevitable reality sets in. In the end, loyalty to the campaign has to win. It doesn't matter at what cost.

Party Lines Details

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From Reader Review Party Lines for online ebook

Keertana says

Rating: 3.5 Stars

I really did enjoy this one. It was wildly entertaining with intelligent banter and sparks that definitely flew off the page. Yet, I felt as if this was dragged on just a little too long. It followed the very typical romance novel set-up with a "big break" towards the end and for this couple, it just felt a little too forced and inorganic, sadly. But, I'd still recommend this, especially for fans of the show *Scandal* because this is a lite, fun edition of the television drama. ;)

Claudia says

Who says politics is boring?

Party Lines is a smart, very sexy contemporary romance with two absolutely likable and true-to-life main characters.

Angie says

I have thoroughly enjoyed Emma Barry's Easy Part series. But this one is, hands down, my favorite. Lydia and Michael are unrelentingly awesome throughout, and their charisma and hilarity, their fears and their weariness made me fall in love with them immediately. Their exchanges are incredibly intelligent, filled with genuine respect, care, and humor. I loved all of their encounters. But when it came to Michael's closing pitch—that one was my favorite.

Jen says

Michael and Lydia

Really great book. Loved the political part, it managed to be intriguing without bogging the book down. My one tiny complaint is I would have liked Lydia to be more all in. Michael was and I felt like he was the main driver behind them being together. WTRW coming up on FV.

Katie says

This one was soooo good. By far, my favorite of the series.

Okay, but first I'm going to nitpick the description. This is pitched as cynical Democratic male vs young

optimistic Republican female which made me weary because ohhhh, OF COURSE the female is the optimistic one. But Lydia has plenty of cynicism herself. Plus, she and Michael seem to be the same age.

ANYWAY. Yeah, I love campaign trail stories and that being the plotty bit of the story worked SO WELL for me. And Lydia's desire to be more appreciated at work resonated with me A LOT.

Also, I think it did a good job of showing politics in general. Like, that it's not always about believing in a specific candidate, but just choosing the most likely winner. And figuring out how to work with your beliefs, even as you lose your idealism.

And I still really appreciate these books for being about people my age who don't have it all figured out.

PS: Also, this book covers a lot of time. I wish more romance books did that. It makes me believe in the relationship so much more.

Elisabeth Lane says

Emma Barry is one of my favorite romance writers. And I'm not just saying that because she's a friend. She's one of those writers who could write cereal box copy and I'd read it and love it. But add in the romance and politics and Washington, DC settings of the Easy Part series and this West Wing loving election junkie was basically in wonktastic heaven. Party Lines is the third book in the series and while it could be read as a stand-alone, it will be richer having read the previous two books as the other two couples make appearances here and take a final curtain call at the end of this book.

Party Lines tells the story of two opposing campaign staffers working political campaigns in the run-up to the American Presidential election. Lydia Reales is an ambitious, idealistic Latina who also happens to be a Republican Presidential campaign staffer, a development that plays with both the hero's and the reader's expectations. Lydia is just starting out on the national stage and while she has all the makings of a top staffer, she runs into obstacles to being taken seriously as a professional along the way, largely because some of her superiors seem to see her as a token minority brought on board to appeal to the Latino portion of the electorate. She experiences microaggressions throughout the novel, mainly in a professional context, some of which she shrugs off, some of which irritate her. I cringed for her over and over again. It was Lydia, ambitious, competent, aggressive Lydia who really made this book for me. I might not agree with her politics, but I was rooting for her the whole way through.

While Michael Picetti is the more seasoned staffer, he has also become jaded in orchestrating run after Presidential run for various sub-par Democratic candidates. Michael assumes that Lydia is naive, in need of a friend and a Democrat like him, all because of her age and her ethnicity. But it's clear to the reader that there's some mansplaining going on during their first conversation on an airplane on the way to Iowa. And...well...after that too. He's an interesting illustration of privilege because he is aware of the issues surrounding sexism, racism and economic inequality. But he's also an educated white male, which blinds him to certain things. I liked how Barry treated this because it's both realistic and sensitively handled. I didn't dislike Michael for it, while still being able to acknowledge that some of his attitudes and utterances are insensitive.

When Lydia and Michael clash, which they do, repeatedly, both in and out of the bedroom, it's pretty explosive. Not only do they disagree on a lot of policy questions, they are at different points in their political

careers. Lydia is just reaching the last camp before attempting the summit of American electioneering. Michael has been sitting at the summit for a while and is ready to start back--maybe get out of a position where he has to keep traveling all the time and settle down a bit. So these two have a lot of challenges to work through. We're kept guessing throughout, not finding out until the very end whether these two are going to be able to make it work long-term.

Unlike the first two books (and especially the second book, *Private Politics*), *Party Lines* really does explore ins and outs of American politics. There is a substantial amount of discussion about policy and elections, both between Lydia and Michael and among the various campaign staffers. Despite the fact that some readers may not enjoy the side of politics with their romance, I'm glad Barry didn't shy away from it. No matter what side of the aisle readers fall on, they will find their views fairly and equitably represented. Barry seems to be reminding us that whether or not we can agree on policy, we are all complicit in the state of our political system.

I'm desolate that this is the last book in this tremendous series. I very much enjoyed everything about it--from the focus on work and family and balancing priorities to the measured development of the romances between the characters. While these books have used romance tropes, conventions and language at every step, there's a realism to them that I don't commonly see, even in contemporaries. Lydia and Michael and the other heroes and heroines have read like me, like my friends, like the people and situations I've come to know living in DC for the last almost 20 years. I'm eager to see what Barry comes up with next.

For a recipe inspired by *Party Lines*, visit *Cooking Up Romance*:
<http://www.cooking-up-romance.com/201...>

Jess says

[the heroine ends the married-with-babies epilogue as committed to not having kids as she was the entire book. (hide spoiler)]

Ana says

Party Lines opens with a world-weary Michael Picetti sitting at a gate in O'Hare airport waiting for a flight to Iowa in December. He is heading back to work on a presidential primary campaign, after seeing one of his best-friends get married & realizing the other will be marrying sometime soon too. He feels acutely the distance and difference between the lives of his friends and his own. He finds himself scanning the crowd for a likely hook-up, some other jaded campaign veteran with no hope of a social life. It is mostly a mental exercise, to entertain himself while waiting when he isn't scrolling through twitter to take the pulse of the voters or taking calls from other campaign staff.

When Lydia Reales sits next to him on the plane, he turns his scrutiny on her, trying to figure out what is bringing her to Iowa. They eventually start talking about the candidates with best chances of prevailing, about life on the campaign trail & he starts thinking about how he would love to keep talking to her & share his tips for surviving campaigns with her when she suddenly gives him the brush-off & firmly settles in to

read instead. He is very confused, not sure what went wrong and stews about it for the rest of the flight. He thought they were clicking, that she was maybe even flirting, and he felt so secure on the assumptions he made based on her reading material, the fact she is young and Latina & that he doesn't even consider the actual reason she was less than impressed with him. When after some awkwardness Lydia accepts his card & bemusedly offers her in return, it is embarrassingly clear to Michael what Lydia realized from the start. Turns out Michael & Lydia are on opposite sides of a lot of issues and the rest of the novel is peppered the best conversations about why they believe what they believe and why they have ended up where they have ended up. Barry does a great job presenting how campaign folk are wired differently than other political operatives.

I really liked Lydia even if I strongly disagree with her politics. Lydia is just starting her political career and is driven, ambitious, competitive and combative in ways we rarely see heroines get to be. I love that she takes advantage of every opportunity and works her ass off. I just loved how much she wanted to be amazing at her job, to be seen and recognized for it and how she is trying to figure out how to best fit in & while standing-out on the campaign team. I Liked that Barry also doesn't shy away from portraying some of the micro-aggressions Lydia experiences as WOC on the campaign trail, and how Lydia sometimes chafes and sometimes dismisses them. Michael is at completely different place in his career than Lydia. He is getting ready to transition out of campaigning. He is questioning his life choices and his passion for being on the road.

Politics aside Michael and Lydia are simply on two different trajectories, so this is not simply at enemies to lovers story with super-hot secret affair but story about bad timing. I love that Lydia really doesn't want or have time for a relationship with Michael. It is not in her master plan and she has bigger things on her agenda. Michael on the other hand can afford to want more from their relationship than she does. He is secure in his career in a way she isn't. That unbalance in place of life, goals and expectations creates real conflicts for them to overcome during the novel, over and above the really engrossing political drama they are engaged in.

I just loved how Michael & Lydia's relationship develops and deepens over the course of the election cycle progressing from tense encounters, confusing stolen moments, to secret nights, texts & phone calls. The rhythm of their relationship feels right and I found their climactic conflict to be utterly believable. I think Ms. Barry took some great risks in the second-half of the novel in particular, with the way Lydia reacts and responds to that conflict. The way she responded took my breath away but it was completely consistent with her established personality, character & priorities. That trueness to her character allowed me to believe in her choices and thus believe in their HEA.

If you haven't picked up the first two books in the Easy Part series, Special Interests and Private Politics, run out and get them, all three are really great reading. Each of the romances and couples have very different trajectories to true love and I believed in all of them.

A review copy of this novel was provided by Carina Press via NetGalley.

On-Sale Date: January 12, 2015

Tasha says

I loved the role reversal and the chemistry between Michael and Lydia. The ending dragged on a bit, though.

Amy says

Really enjoyed, especially the political aspect/plot of the book. It had a steady pace and was not mind-boggling or boring at all. Enjoyed the characters as well but I was never really convinced that Lydia was invested all the way with the relationship. I was not satisfied when her "I love you" surfaced. It almost felt like she couldn't grasp the meaning and therefore it was only a needed response. Really loved Michael. He was the star of the show.

Kay (aka) Miss Bates says

Barry's PARTY LINES is original, fresh, witty, sexy, and imbued with "party politics." Which, for me, made it even more fun. Heroine Lydia Reales, Republican, and hero, Michael Picetti, Democrat, members of the campaign managers' teams of their respective parties, meet-cute in an airport ... and again, in a coffee shop, hotels, lobbies, and restaurants, as they go across America ensuring their candidates make it to the presidency. Their bed-mates-only relationship evolves to friendship, to love, to a dawning realization that affiliation can include the personal in the public. Lydia takes longer than Michael to reach this place ... and rightly so, she's a woman trying to launch a powerful and influential career. What is she willing to give up? What is Michael? There is so much to love about this novel: the wit, the atmosphere of sordid and idealistic, but most of all, the understanding that there's nothing that Lydia needs to give up, there's just making room for a friend, a lover, a beloved partner. If you'd like to read a more extensive review, please follow the link:

<http://missbatesreadsromance.com/2015...>

I received an e-ARC from the author.

Mandi Schreiner says

My first "A" read of 2015 comes early and strong. This is the third book in Emma Barry's political series (all stand alones) and I enjoyed the first two. I fully expected to enjoy this book as well, but was surprised by how much I loved this one. I didn't want to put it down or miss a detail of the both the romance and the campaign. Emma Barry writes romances centered around Washington, DC politics. What could be dry and boring is rich and engaging. From union organizers, to political bloggers to presidential campaign workers, these professions don't scream sexy fun romance, but she makes it work.

In Party Lines, Lydia and Michael have a random meeting on an airplane, but little do they know how intermingled their lives will become. Lydia is a republican who is the Assistant Deputy Campaign Manager for Voter Outreach for the republican presidential candidate. . Lydia wants to make a difference and is outspoken, stubborn and confident. She wants to be more than just a republican Latina who her boss rolls out when they need her face for issues. While she doesn't always feel appreciated by her boss, she believes in the republican message and her candidate.

Michael is a democrat and the deputy campaign manager. He works much more close to his presidential

candidate and has more cynicism. He may not totally believe in his affair-having candidate, but he still wants to win this election. Michael and Lydia realize they are both headed to Iowa for the caucuses and start to warm each other's bed at night, even though they are on competing sides.

There are many things I love about this book. First, Lydia and Michael's banter. Being from opposite parties, and both very smart, they could throw insults at each other all day. But even better, their political talked turned them on. Made them have dirty thoughts.

In the next few weeks, as he had pinballed around the country, they'd exchanged a series of emails and texts about federalism, reserved vs. enumerated vs. concurrent powers and the legislative legacy of the American Civil War. It was sort of hot.

Scratch that – it was incredibly hot.

When they appear in the same city, they have sex, when they were long-distance, they share emails or texts venting about their jobs or ribbing each other with semi-friendly insults on their candidates' performance.

Emma Barry makes this campaign so interesting. We get a peek at behind the scenes and what it takes to wrangle your candidate into a media savvy, warm loving human. When the candidate doesn't follow the laid out path, the frustration the people behind the scene have to go through is portrayed well. We see how exhausting it is to have these jobs and sometimes how thankless. These two can have opposing views and not act petty or defensive when the other doesn't agree. How refreshing! All the while, the author never forgets the romance. It actually takes center stage throughout the book. Michael falls hard for Lydia. He is the one more tired of being on the road and daydreams about a house and picket fence. Lydia is still eager and has energy to spare. She falls for Michael, but she loves her career. She wants to continue to work on campaigns and doesn't know how that dream would fit with a more static boyfriend. They are mature in their dreams and face their uncertainty in their future well.

"The election will be over in a few months. Then..."

"There will be another one. The problem isn't our ideological differences, and you know it. I don't care you're a Democrat. You don't care I'm a Republican. The problem is that we're not other people. You might want to be a guy who goes to the market and cooks—"

"And makes love to you." He went ahead and called it that because it was.

"Yeah, but we're on vacation from our real lives here. This isn't what you want every day of the year for decades on end. Don't tell me that it is." She offered the words as a challenge.

She was right, but it also wasn't that simple. "I've done that, the travel and the road, for more than ten years. Maybe I'm ready to transition into consulting. To spending more time in D.C."

She sat and hovered over him. "But I'm not."

And in three little words, she'd expressed the problem.

He kissed her and, for the moment at least, let the subject go. The pain didn't follow it.

They kind of put all the big decisions off until after the November election and then when that time comes,

their emotions are raw and sometimes unfair but genuine and real.

Besides all of the political and relationship drama, this is a hot book. Michael is so, so sexy. I can't think of the right words to describe him – but he always felt more vulnerable and scared of losing Lydia. Scared of showing her his true feelings for fear she would run away. Yet, being in the moment and when his raw emotions come out – damn Michael. Just damn. Lydia is so confident and sexy herself, yet unsure of letting herself get too close because she doesn't know where their relationship is headed. I loved her. She was never fake or whiney or made excuses.

A smart, well done romance with fast-paced campaign action. Highly recommend.

Grade: A

Brandy Painter says

Love!!!!

Do you know how difficult it is to write two protagonists who are in direct opposition to each other and still make them both relatable and work as a romantic pairing? It's so hard that there aren't a whole lot of people who even attempt it. Emma Barry pulls it off and does it incredibly well. There is banter. There is lust. There is a crazy affair that's impractical for so many reasons. Because this takes place over the course of an entire election season from the Iowa caucus to the Presidential election, it spans a lot more time than most romances do. I loved that this gave Michael and Lydia more time for their relationship to develop even though they weren't face to face for much of it. There were emails, texts, and phone calls. I felt like they really truly knew each other by the end of the book, which made the struggle for both of them to decide what they wanted and what they were willing to compromise on that more real.

I really like Michael. I like that he knows what he wants and is willing to try for it, but he also knows how and when to back off. How to respect a woman's responses. His cynicism about politics and the system is tinged with enough humor that he doesn't seem like a typical jaded hero. His final confrontation with his candidate is one of the funniest scenes I've read in quite some time.

And then there is Lydia who I LOVE. I love her ambition, ruthlessness, drive, vulnerability, and prickliness. I love how hard she tries and how she keeps pushing. She is not nearly as cynical as Michael, but neither is she a wide-eyed idealist. She sees the realities of her candidate and the system, but is still willing to work within that system and push hard to achieve what she desires. My one small small quibble with the book is that I wanted more time in Lydia's head, more time with her in general, just because I loved her so much.

Sexy, smart, with great dialogue, and plenty of humor, this is the perfect end to a wonderful series in every way.

(I want more.)

Mireille Duval says

I know, I know, it said "US campaign trail" when I bought it, but sometimes romances say "bake shop" and there's very little talk of which flour is the best for getting your cake to rise. I did like the romance, the characters and their cynicism/passion, their hatred that turned into sexual attraction that turned into looo-ooove, but it was just toooo much US politics. Being a person on the Internet, I already hear so much about what happens in this neighbor country of ours, I just couldn't take it. Plus, I had trouble liking a convinced Republican :\

Now if someone wants to set a romance on the Trudeau campaign trail, call me.

Jordan says

First 5 star rating of the year.

I've adored the first two novels out of this series, so I was so thrilled at the description and idea of this one. I loved these two and how they didn't compromise their core parts of themselves. I loved that the ending she chose not to have children and that was her want. And he didn't change her mind, and then the epilogue stuck to that premise. That's so rare and to have that in here made the book all the more amazing to me.

I highly recommend this series.
