

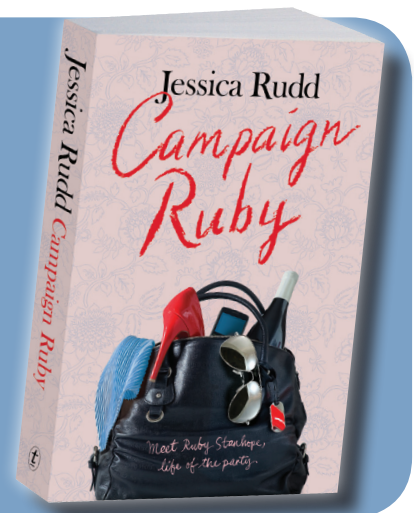
Campaign Ruby

Jessica Rudd

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Fiction, Trade Paperback



About Jessica Rudd

Jessica Rudd, 26, is a Canberra-born, Brisbane-raised ex-lawyer, ex-campaign worker, ex-PR consultant who lives with her husband in Beijing. She has written the occasional column, a host of legal letters, countless press releases and one novel. She hopes this won't be her last.

A reader's introduction to *Campaign Ruby*

Ruby Stanhope, an English investment banker, receives news of her redundancy via an email from the HR Department.

She has given the bank years of her life. She's missed her sister's wedding reception, countless yoga classes and dental appointments, 'comforted by the knowledge that while I might die fat, friendless and alone of a tooth infection I would die a valued employee of this bank'. (p.8) And now they're sacking her.

Lucky Ruby's Louboutin boots arrive about the same time as she's shown the door. 'It's amazing what four inches of height can give you.' (p.7) She sends an angry email to everyone in the London office and the global board before heading home to get absolutely rolling drunk. The outcome: a non-refundable ticket booked to Australia.

Within days Ruby touches down in the middle of a scorching hot Melbourne summer. The plan is to make the most of things and lie low at her aunt's place in the Yarra Valley. What happens is entirely different.

Ruby meets Luke Harley, Chief of Staff to the Leader of the Opposition, Max Masters. Luke is a great guy with bad ties, and with his help she lands a job in the federal election campaign. Her title is financial policy advisor but she becomes the woman who travels everywhere and does a bit of everything. Sometimes she succeeds in a spectacular fashion. Sometimes she fails in the same way.

Ruby's adventures on the campaign trail are hilarious and romantic. Will she fall for Oscar Franklin or Luke

Harley? Will she be deported before the election? How will she overcome her wardrobe malfunctions?

The beauty of Ruby Stanhope is that she is both ordinary and amazing. She's an incredibly smart, sometimes clumsy, always hilarious character. She is up there with Bridget Jones and Stephanie Plum.

It's a great read because in addition to the humour and romance, Jessica Rudd takes the reader behind the scenes of an election campaign. The book raises interesting questions about the integrity of politicians and the role of women.

It's even more than a romantic, political romp, though. It's a book that raises questions about family and career, about love and betrayal, about Australia's view of same sex relationships. In gentle ways, it explores the nature of family.

The West Wing collides with Bridget Jones in *Campaign Ruby*. It's funny. It's sometimes sad. And it's impossible to put down.

Questions for discussion

1. *Campaign Ruby* is a beautiful blend of humour and sadness. What scene do you think is the funniest? What scenes or sentences are the saddest?
2. 'Before I lost my job, got pickled on peanut noise, switched hemispheres and joined this travelling circus, my life was a relatively straightforward one. Sure, I was a sexless workaholic hermit but I had a routine, and when my routine let me down I had coping mechanisms that worked.' (p.243) Ruby resonates because of her struggles to balance work and love. Or does she resonate with readers for other reasons? Why is she so likeable?
3. Ruby is appalled that she did not check out her party's policies before she signed on for the campaign. She changes in other ways through the novel too. Discuss the changes she undergoes.

4. Luke's ties are bad but he's a great romantic lead. Do you agree? Discuss his good qualities and his imperfections.
5. What's your favourite Luke and Ruby moment?
6. Oscar is too smooth to be likeable, even from the start. Or is there a reason why romantic leads in fiction often fall for the bad guys first?
7. *Pride and Prejudice*, the Bridget Jones diaries and *Campaign Ruby* are all great reads. They're incredibly popular and they all share some similarities in plot and character. Why does the romance genre resonate?
8. Discuss Daphne and Deb's relationship. What makes them engaging and endearing characters? Family is shown to take many forms in *Campaign Ruby*. Discuss the different forms it takes.
9. There are strong female characters in this book. Discuss your favourite one.
10. *Campaign Ruby* is a work of fiction but there are some interesting parallels with real life. Discuss.
11. Jessica Rudd comments in *Good Weekend* (August 14, 2010) that she '...created a sequence of events that could have applied to any period of Australian politics'. In what ways does *Campaign Ruby* reinforce your impression of politicians?
12. Discuss how the media is portrayed in *Campaign Ruby*. Do you agree with Rudd's representation?
13. What does the novel say about equality of the sexes? What difficulties do women still have to face?
14. Max Masters is, in some ways, the ideal politician. Do you agree? Describe your perfect Prime Minister of Australia.
15. *Campaign Ruby* is about love, in all its forms. That's why it is such a satisfying read. Discuss.
16. Given the circumstances surrounding the publication of *Campaign Ruby* (a federal election, the deposing of the author's father as Prime Minister), can a book ever be read in isolation or is it inevitable that the reader will be influenced by factors outside the book?