



I'm Not Julia Roberts

Laura Ruby

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Does every second wife look like Julia Roberts? Lu Klein certainly doesn't, and her life is anything but glamorous. When she married a man with children, Lu had no idea that she was also marrying his shrewish ex-wife, Beatrix. And Beatrix had no idea that making a new home with her second husband would mean welcoming her wicked teenage stepdaughter, Liv. And Liv's mother Roxie had no idea that so many new and exciting boyfriends could make her long for the stable life she and her ex had too eagerly left behind.

In this tightly interconnected collection of ten short stories, author Laura Ruby chronicles the progress of Lu, Beatrix, Roxie and their various steps and exes as they take the perilous plunge into the maelstrom of the so-called "blended family." Both ruefully funny and wickedly insightful, I AM NOT JULIA ROBERTS offers finely-observed, honest and affecting takes on kids, step-kids, divorce, remarriage...and the movie Stepmom.

I'm Not Julia Roberts Details

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Author : Laura Ruby

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Candice says

Im sorry, what was the point to the book? there are like 20 characters (that you have to flash to the front of the book and read the actual TREE to fig out who the hell is who and married to, and...) I loved Lu, her character was very likable and could have been a great book if it was more about her and that family.

Amy says

This is a funny book about stepmothers, divorce, and second marriages. While I did enjoy it, I thought it was a bit difficult to follow all of the characters and relationships and how they were all interconnected, not exactly a page-turner. I could not read it in one sitting. Having stated that, I did thoroughly enjoy Laura Ruby's cynical outtake on the movie Stepmom, so true!

Jenna says

This book had potential; it had a good start. But it failed in so many ways.

For one, it had too many characters. It was almost like the author was wanting the reader to connect with her characters, so she threw a load of them out there, like the adage, there's someone for everyone. I couldn't keep the players straight, and too many of them were entirely unnecessary.

I also found that there was too much negativity. As a mother who has dealt with a stepmother in my children's lives, and as a stepmother who has had to work with a biological mother for years, I found that this book was almost unrealistic in so many ways. You don't always get along with you step children, or even like them, and certainly there can be friction between the other adults involved, but every. single. ex. in this book disliked their ex's new wife/husband, with the exception of Moira. It was like the author has some vague idea of the complicated dynamic between exes and new spouses without ever having experienced it or even researched it.

I also found the parenting in this book ridiculous, without a single thread based in reality. Is this author even a parent? Ever even been around children?

The teenagers were one dimensional, and extremely predictable. I have run the gauntlet of two teens (so far) with three more to go, and one in the throes of teenage-hood right now, and while I agree that there can be a certain amount of surliness and rebellion, ALL these teenagers were just so unbelievable. Like someones idea of a teenager, without having spent much time around them. Just... unreal.

Overall, I really disliked this book. I tried to like it, but no. I wish I hadn't bothered.

A.J. says

This book is like a photograph album: a series of views on a group of people who are connected (or disconnected) by marriage. It's a reflection on the role of parents and step-parents in blended families.

It's a subject I find fascinating and Laura Ruby's insights into the lives of her characters are deep and sympathetic. Her writing is engaging, humorous and intelligent. Enjoyed it.

Jane says

Very funny... complicated relationships ...there's a "cast" list and a family/divorce tree to keep the characters straight. You don't need to...these linked stories stand on their own fallible feet, but knowing a character's previous story...her exes and presents...her kids, parents, siblings...made the book more enjoyable for me. Perfect vacation reading...funny and snide and generous at heart.

Jennifer says

I'll probably donate it to the library.

Very convoluted connection of MANY characters, their exes, their new spouses and their kids and extended families. I like the humor, but it's mostly about divorce and reconstructed families, not necessarily applicable to my life or reflective of people I know. An easy read. Good if you are getting on an airplane, and don't have a great reading selection at your disposal.

Kelly says

I thought it was slightly amusing, but overall I didn't like it. The character development was terrible, making it too hard to keep all the characters straight (despite the "family tree" at the front). She should've just stuck to the main 3 women and developed their stories more deeply. As a step-mom, I could only relate to a few of the sentiments. Who really acts that like with their ex?? I could relate the most to Lu and some of her feelings towards her step-sons, but that was the extent of it. Also, I didn't like the section in the middle with the letters/emails/postings, etc. It was too jarring; maybe should've been dispersed throughout. Not really worth the read in my opinion, especially if you aren't a step-mom.

Shinelle says

Somehow, despite the title, this book circumvented my expectations. It was odd--and interesting--to read a narrative in which there are no wicked stepmothers and the perceptibly wicked stepchildren are either tortured artists or struggling with OCD. The collection of stories almost feels like a novel, because of the tight, interweaving thread, but because they are short stories, there isn't room for a resolution of any of the conflict. That might well be the point, that there is no resolution, that you just keep living and trying for the

best, but there are definitely some plots that feel unfinished. It speaks well of the writing that I want more.

Krystal says

I just cannot get into this book...and its not for lack of effort. I don't really know the why's of its lack of appeal. When I found it in the bookstore I thought it sounded like a great read, but it just hasn't lived up to the expectations for me. I may give it a try at a later date, who knows.

Doofenshmirtz says

I liked Laura Ruby's Lily Ghosts, which is a book for children, and Good Girls, which is for young adult. This book stars a middle-aged mother (or at least someone old enough to have school-aged children), and perhaps it's because I haven't been-there-done-that yet that I wasn't able to appreciate this novel. I'll definitely give it a try again in another ten years or so, though, only because Laura Ruby is one of the best fiction writers I've encountered.

Jean Marie says

with all the ex husbands/wives and kids/stepkids to keep u with, i lost track and lost intrest in this book a little less than half way through. there were some funny moments, but not enough to make me want to finish this book. sorry!

Tammy says

It was a quick decent read. I didn't love it, but didn't hate it either. As the book went on, there were too many connections and it was a bit hard to keep the minor characters straight-on how they connected to the story. It could have been better executed, but I would read something else written by this author.

Sedona says

I picked this book up at a book exchange, and I admit that it was mostly due to the intriguing title. I will preface this review with the comment that I don't normally read 'chick lit', so this may color my opinion of this novel.

"I'm not Julia Roberts" was awash with too many points of view and too many characters. There were so many characters, in fact, that the author found it necessary to provide a 'Family Tree' and 'List of Characters' at the beginning of the novel and it was certainly needed to keep track of everyone. This probably should have been a clue to the writer that something may have been amiss with the story. Even with this 'cheat sheet', it was still a chore to remember which character was married, divorced, related, a child, or a friend of whomever else. When I was about a third of the way into the book I thought I had it all sorted out and felt

that if I started reading again from the beginning, things would make more sense. However, the story wasn't interesting enough to make that kind of effort. And I found as I continued to read that I still had to refer to the 'Family Tree'. Too many times the flow of reading was interrupted just to try and figure out who was related whom.

Each chapter focused on a different family or character, with a different POV. However, the author sometimes mixed POV within the chapter and even within individual paragraphs. One minute I was reading something written in first person and then it would abruptly change to third person and then back again. This only added to the confusion. There seemed to be a main character (Lu) and family (again, Lu's) that the author meant to make the focus of the novel, but this was only truly evident by making the first and last chapter from Lu's POV. In between, we got vignettes (vignette being the key word here as so often these chapters were isolated 'slices of life' that didn't relate to the other chapters) about the other families' and characters' lives. If there had been some cohesiveness to all of this, it would have been fine, but there didn't seem to be any rhyme or reason, nor timeline for it all. In school one is taught that every story should have a beginning, middle, and end and that each story should develop, build to a crisis, and then resolve to a conclusion - a sort of 'bell curve' if you visualize it graphically. This story had none of that. There were a lot of conflicts, but no build, no peak, no real denouement, at least for all of the characters presented. For me, the novel was like a first draft with a lot of free-writing that could have been edited and pulled together into a cohesive novel with some extensive revision, but was just left 'as is' and printed for quick release.

One particular chapter that I found very lacking was called 'Dear Psycho' about a third of the way through the book. It was made up entirely of letters and emails sent between a few different characters that seemed random and out of place with the rest of the book. To top it off, they were in reverse order! One read the response to a particular letter or email before reading what prompted it. Very confusing. I still don't see the purpose in inserting a chapter of this style into an otherwise 'regularly written' novel. It can be done - another book, 'E', that I've read, and thoroughly enjoyed - was written as a novel entirely made up of inter-office emails. That author made it work. But he wrote the whole book in that style. He didn't throw it in in the middle of something else. In 'I'm not Julia Roberts' it was just a random anomaly that did not work - especially when presented in a backwards order.

Perhaps this writer was attempting to find her voice by breaking all the rules. It can be done - great writers do it all of the time - but it fell flat here. I haven't read any of Laura Ruby's other works to compare, but after this experience, I don't have any desire to. It was all that I could do to finish this novel. I kept thinking I'd find the reason for the style of writing and that I'd find the story eventually. Sadly, I never did.

Amberly Crawford says

It took me awhile to decide if I liked this book or not but I think I did. It made me realize I'm not the only one out there with a crazy family of step-something's and ex-something's, and that I'm not the only one who is not particularly fond of some of them.

Kristi says

I love Laura Ruby and this is the first adult novel by her that I've read, and am so far enjoying it greatly. It's

crafted to read like intertwined short stories but with the same cast of characters running through eachother's lives - all divorced and coping with blended families, exes, steps, challenging children. Funny and biting at the same time. The title of course is a play on the film Stepmom...
