



(a study of habits and behaviors, plus techniques for taming them)

The Boy Book: A Study of Habits and Behaviors, Plus Techniques for Taming Them

E. Lockhart

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Here is how things stand at the beginning of newly-licensed driver Ruby Oliver's junior year at Tate Prep:

Kim: Not speaking. Far away in Tokyo.

Cricket: Not speaking.

Nora: Speaking--sort of. Chatted a couple times this summer when they bumped into each other outside of school--once shopping in the U District, and once in the Elliot Bay Bookstore. But she hadn't called Ruby, or anything.

Noel: Didn't care what anyone thinks.

Meghan: Didn't have any other friends.

Dr. Z: Speaking.

And Jackson. The big one. Not speaking.

But, by Winter Break, a new job, an unlikely but satisfying friend combo, additional entries to *The Boy Book* and many difficult decisions help Ruby to see that there is, indeed, life outside the Tate Universe.

The Boy Book: A Study of Habits and Behaviors, Plus Techniques for Taming Them Details

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From Reader Review The Boy Book: A Study of Habits and Behaviors, Plus Techniques for Taming Them for online ebook

Kayla Rayne says

What I liked:

- break down of the girl hate trope
- teenage angst
- great character growth
- feminist discourse

What I didn't like:

- the romance plot line (it just wasn't for me)

This sequel was excellent and did a great job following up with Ruby Oliver's life after the events of the first book. I appreciated the character development in this book and how it shows Ruby really growing and learning from the first book. I really enjoyed that this book explored girl hate and played around with that trope in a way that didn't show women as catty and dramatic. I hate when female characters are boiled down to only those two things and this book does not do that. I'm really looking forward to the third installment to this series.

Catie says

This series continues to impress me so, so much. While reading this one I just kept thinking that I've seen this girl so many times before: the quirky, talkative, somewhat eccentric girl(1)*. The girl who soldiers on even when everyone's against her. This girl is a major fixture in young adult novels. Ruby Oliver has all of these attributes, yes, but they're just a fraction of her whole self. She's neurotic and jealous, thoughtful and earnest, petty and generous. She feels lust and remorse and pride and self-hatred. She's a character that you want to get up and cheer for, shake your head at, give a consoling hug to, and hang out with after school. And she's so fully dimensional that reading these books feels like doing all of those things. Here's the thing about her that gets under my skin the most: she tries so damn hard. She's not perfect but she keeps trying.

Things are even more complicated in this book, after the scandal that left Ruby a roly-poly(2) and a famous slut(3) in the first book is finally starting to die down. Her former best friend Kim – who was chiefly responsible for spreading those horrible rumors about her - is on exchange in Tokyo for the school year, and now her ex-boyfriend Jackson and her ex-friend Nora seem to want to be in her life again.

It would be easy for Ruby to let them back in without making a fuss, to passively accept whatever they have to offer and try to make herself forget everything that's happened. It would also be easy for her to cut them ruthlessly out of her life and never look back. Well, relatively easy anyway. What's hard is finding a balance, between being a good friend and a good person, and maintaining her self-respect. Ruby must find a way to establish boundaries, but accept the friendship that she wants.

I know that all of these titles will lead readers to believe that these books are all about THE BOYS. And yes, there are a number of sweet love interests in these books(4)...but to say that they're all about boys would be selling them very short. These books are about Ruby's personal growth, toward being a better friend and

toward being a stronger person. There are triumphant moments (like when she gives Kim the boy book – I practically cheered(5)) but they are a quieter brand of triumph. There's no exaggerated comeuppance for the villains and there's no sudden and complete awakenings for Ruby. There are no villains for that matter, and Ruby is no reformed girl. And I love her all the more for it.

**I can't figure out out to do superscript in here. Boo.*

(1) Young adult books featuring quirky, talkative, somewhat eccentric girls who soldier on: Heidi, Anne of Green Gables, A Little Princess, Lola And The Boy Next Door, The Princess Diaries, Flat-Out Love, Crown Duel, Hex Hall, Saving Francesca, Anna And The French Kiss, The Sisterhood Of The Traveling Pants. (Note that many of these are favorites of mine.)

(2) Roly-Poly: just one of the many fun words coined by Ruby and essentially meaning "social outcast." A replacement of the term "leper" due to the facts that a) leprosy is actually not all that contagious and b) doesn't actually result in blue/green discoloration of the skin. Read the books to actually make sense of that reasoning. Also, read the books for more fun terms like "chunder," "Ag," "mocha latte," and "Reginald."

(3) Famous slut: this is how Ruby feels labeled after the events of the first book. It's incredible how much subtext there is in these books about girls not being ashamed to be sexual and not being afraid to stand up for themselves.

(4) Okay, I know these books AREN'T really about the boys, but there are some wonderful, realistic, awkward love interests in these books! Which I will now shallowly rate in order of my preference: Hutch (yes, seriously...he snuck up on me), Noel, Gideon, Finn, Shiv, that one guy that asked for Ruby's number at a party but never called, and finally...I guess...Jackson (bastard).

(5) That scene got to me so much! It would have been satisfying to see Ruby lay the smack down on Kim...but it was even better to see her treat Kim with respect. Oh Ruby.

Perfect Musical Pairing

Cyndi Lauper – Insecurious

I love it when I can use the excuse of finding a PMP (aka, PiMPing my review with awesome music) to go through the whole catalogue of one of my favorite artists. If this isn't a Ruby Oliver song, then I don't know what is. Firstly, the title is a made up word. And secondly, there's this:

*"How can I trust my intuition
I don't hear what you need to say
I got to know is this feeling fact or fiction
Take these doubts away*

*You say I'm insecure
I say I'm just curious."*

I think this song perfectly captures what it's like to be in a relationship with that person who is so non-communicative and and falsely happy (hello, Jackson) that it just turns you into a paranoid, insecure mess. And now I have the perfect retort for that person: I'm not insecure; I'm insecurious. *Take that Jackson!*

Also seen on The Readventurer.

Jasprit says

The Boy Book was another surprising read for me, like I mentioned before, I've struggled with YA lately, but with the Ruby Oliver series, I'm just able to connect on so many levels with Ruby and what she's going through, that it's making this series such a fun read for me. In The Boy Book, Ruby is trying to make it through junior year, with everything that went on last year, I was hoping that things would have settled down a bit more for her. It was fun following Ruby on this journey through high school, of finding her place and making sense of herself. There were some characters once again who proper annoyed me, it was like they hadn't learnt from things since last time and I couldn't stand how others could just brush things aside and act like things were okay. This aside, I liked how Ruby was able to make friends in the most unexpected of places such as with Meghan and Noel, Meghan just because the way she acted, everyone had made assumptions of her, but once Ruby got to know her, you realised she wasn't the airhead everyone thought her to be. Despite me only giving this book three stars, that's not to say I didn't enjoy it, a three star rating for me is a decent read and of course Lockhart was once again able to bring so much laugh out loud moments to this story, Ruby herself is such a funny person, I never had so much fun reading someone's internal monologue. It's just that I feel as if I didn't enjoy this book as much as I did the first book, but that hasn't put me off reading the rest of the series and being back with Ruby's life once more!

Rose says

Initial reaction: This. Was. Awesome. I loved it, and I adore Ruby. I'm glad to see some of the resolutions to relationships in this book, as well as openings for potential new threads in the upcoming series. I decided not to factor the audiobook in my rating because I ended up ditching it and checking out an e-copy they had available at the library because I loved the story so much (I completely and utterly HATED the audiobook, and I don't say that lightly). More on this to come in my full review.

Full review:

Oh Ruby Oliver, how I adore you - and it seems like there aren't enough strong young ladies like you taking the reins of YA literature and riding off into the sunset. You might not be in your happy place yet, but certainly it's a pleasure to watch you grow and work your way towards it.

I think this is one of the best series I've come across in a while, because not only is the heroine genuinely humorous and easy to follow, she faces quite a bit of challenges. Relationships with boys being a significant part of that.

When we last left off with Ruby in "The Boyfriend List," she'd managed to find a way to come to terms with some hard times in her social circles - losing friends, losing two close relationships on different levels, dealing with panic attacks, among other things. "The Boy Book" picks up the pace as Ruby still has to deal with the fallout of events. Her best friend is no longer her best friend, but yet Ruby faces building bonds with others again, and actually coming to terms with some fragmented relationships that didn't have the meaning that Ruby thought they had in retrospect. It's very much a story of where Ruby's trying to get back to sorts, yet she has a fresh voice and humor to things that make it well worth following her through those hills.

Ultimately, this book centers itself around the existence of "The Boy Book" - sort of a guide to how to approach relationships with guys based on experiences and rules. Ruby's matter of point delivery makes it both humorous and illustrates some of the conflict that can come with those relationships. It was touched upon in the last, but more of a focus in this one. I enjoyed it, and couldn't help but think I wish I had this book to read in my teen years. It's a story with a lot of heart and ultimately has Ruby growing in so many ways by the end of the work, with some threads left open to lead into the series more.

I thought Ruby's budding relationships with Noel and Angelo were cute here. And I did appreciate an eye to Ruby trying to not only mend her relationships with her former friends, though the results of that certainly varied on the scales, and left Ruby biting off a bit more than she could handle in some turns. Luckily Dr. Z isn't too far along to help Ruby through those turns, and Ruby's parents remain in the scene, sometimes supporting Ruby and other times maybe proving a little too much help. I laughed at some of their interactions and attempts though.

I did have one bone to pick with the story, but that was not a fault of the series at all, so it didn't factor into my rating, but I actually read two formats of this book in my reading experience. I started with the audiobook because for "The Boyfriend List", I really enjoyed Mandy Siegfried's narration of it. To me, her voice captured Ruby perfectly. I didn't realize that they changed narrators for the series starting with this book. Normally I would be fine with that as long as the narrator can carry the story.

I have to be blunt about it, though - the audiobook for this was TERRIBLE. I don't understand why the narrator was changed to someone who couldn't capture Ruby's voice and humor, being so out of place that it often missed on opportunities and did more to throw me out of the book than anything else. The delivery felt so dry, unemotional, and quite awkward. I was very disappointed in it and had to stop a good way in because I couldn't stand it. I didn't want to put the book down, though, so I checked out an e-copy at my library and finished out the work from there. It's not that I think Kirsten Potter is a lacking narrator - she was just a wrong fit for this series in my opinion. I have heard her narrate other works, and granted she was fine on those, but it seriously made me wonder how the narration could've been so awkward for such a fun series.

Nonetheless, having read "The Boy Book" - I'm eagerly reading on. I can't wait to see more of Ruby and how her relationships unfold from here on out. This is shaping up to be one of my favorite chick-lit/humor/romantic reads in YA.

Overall score: 4.5/5

Tatiana says

As seen on The Readventurer

"The Boy Book" is the second book about Ruby Oliver. While I thought the first book was great by itself and didn't actually require a sequel, I enjoyed this installment just as much as the first one. In this book Ruby continues learning about relationships with boys and her friends and figuring out how to balance both, although very often she remains her own worst enemy. Once again, plenty of lessons about love, friendships, female empowerment, written in a very clever and engaging way. Needless to say, loved it.

I won't linger on raving about this novel and will finish this review with this Public Service type bit of seemingly common dating knowledge that sometimes gets forgotten, quoted directly from Ruby's Boy Book

and applicable to men of all ages:

Boy-Speak: Introduction to a Foreign Language

What he says: I never felt this way before.

What is understood: He loves me!

What he means: Can we get to the nether regions now?

What he says: I'll call you.

What is understood: He'll call me.

What he means: I don't want to see you again.

What he says: It's not you, it's me.

What is understood: He's got some meaningful problem going on in his life that's blocking him from being anyone's boyfriend, even mine, though he likes me so much.

What he means: I like someone else.

What he says: We're just really good friends.

What is understood: Nothing is going on between him and that other girl.

What he means: We have a flirtation, but I don't want you to bug me.

What he says: I am so messed up.

What is understood: He needs my support and help.

What he means: I want you to leave me alone.

Delores says

This was a funny and fun book. I enjoyed it. Boys should come with a user manual. It might be easier to understand them. Ruby is struggling with that. . .but who am I to complain. So do I. BOYS HELP!!

Steph Su says

Ruby Oliver is back and more beloved than ever! At the start of junior year, Roo's ex-best friend Kim is in Japan, and she's still not speaking with her ex-boyfriend Jackson, whom Kim "stole" because she believed they were meant for each other. The only two people she's sort of friends with are Noel, a guy who can be in any social group or none at all anytime he wants, and Nora, the only one out of her original group of four friends who will still speak with her. Roo continues her therapy sessions with Dr. Z and starts an internship at the zoo.

Here are the boys in her life: Angelo, a hot family friend whom she's scamming with, meaning that they make out but aren't technically "together"; Jackson, the dreaded ex who's been sending her notes although he's Kim's boyfriend; and Noel. Roo can't figure out her feelings for Noel. Sure, there have been moments when she thought he was going to kiss her. But Roo's not in therapy for no reason; she has to work out her feelings. With her reputation and social life only beginning to recover from her leper-like end of sophomore

year, she has to do the right thing so that she won't end up alone again. And sometimes the right thing isn't always the thing she wants.

I enjoyed THE BOY BOOK so much more than its prequel. In this book, Roo and her friends come up as more rounded and human characters. Anyone can relate to someone in the book, and I can understand each character's actions, though they may not be the best ones. E. Lockhart is a master of teen dialogue, and there is something in this book for every reader.

Cory says

This wasn't bad. Sure, it's full of cliches, and Ruby doesn't get with the guy I wanted her to get with, but honestly, I didn't expect this to be amazing. It's teen chick-lit, and it delivers as teen chick-lit.

I haven't read the first book in the series, and I don't want to read the first book. But if I ever come across the sequels, I might read them if I'm bored.

Ruby reminds me of Junie B. Jones. Weird, but true. And Noel reminds me of the Colonel from Looking for Alaska. You think such a combination would make a four star book. Sadly, no.

The exact nature of this genre is what brings the The Boy Book down. If E Lockhart had deviated from those ever so comfortable, well worn cliches, this would have been truly awesome. It might have been Printz material.

The Bad

1. Kim has no personality outside of the catty, petty, boyfriend stealing, best friend. Now, I haven't read The Boyfriend List, but this seems to stand pretty well on its own. I didn't realize this was the second book until I looked it up on Goodreads.

If Kim had been fleshed out, she had the potential to be a wonderful character. The same goes for Megan and Nora, who were both barely functional as characters. They make the Dessen/Scott friends look like brilliant 3d creations.

2. The cliches. The outright abundance of cliches.
3. The pacing. At times, I started to skim because Ruby was rambling.
4. The dependence these girls have on boys. They bring new meaning to boy crazy.
5. The ending.
6. The Meg Cabotism.
7. The fact that Ruby had to play the martyr.

The Good

1. Ruby was a good narrator. I actually enjoyed being in her head. She didn't annoy me and I actually rooted for her. At times, she was pretty funny.

2. Noel. Hands down, Noel is my favorite character. He's funny and he's a faux bad boy. Meaning, he isn't a brooding jerk with a tragic past.

3. The fact that Ruby gets rid of her Boy Book. I think that's a real sign of maturity. And we're defeating misandry.

4. Ruby learned from her mistakes and moved on. Finally, a protagonist actually grows up and learns from the past.

2.5 stars because I think this showed great potential. Unfortunately, those looking for something other than teen chick-lit won't find it here.

Keertana says

This series just continues to amaze me. Ruby Oliver is back at Tate for another year: a year where she is wiser from her continual appointments with Doctor Z, more independent (although she would tell you this is a result of her being a "leper" the previous year), and armed with The Boy Book. In The Boy Book, Ruby has to deal with the consequences of her sophomore year debacle. Yes, this means dealing with her no-good ex-boyfriend whose radar frequency she's still on. Yes, this also means dealing with Nora, who may or may not be her friend; Cricket, who most certainly does not seem to be her friend; and Kim, who is definitely not her friend but thankfully in Tokyo. The only two true friends Ruby seems to have as of now are Meghan and Noel (and she isn't quite sure if he's a Friend-Boy or a potential crush or what), but Ruby's life has hit rock bottom and it can only get better from here...right?

The Boy Book, despite its name, is not really about boys all that much. Scratch that. It's totally about boys: their inability to speak on the phone, the confusing mixed signals they give out, and whether or not they're just your friend or a crush. I guess what I was trying to say is that The Boy Book is also about other things. It's about friendship, loyalty, growing-up, and more importantly, it's about Ruby and her journey to self-discovery.

Ruby Oliver is like my fictional best friend. She's funny, witty, sarcastic, moody, and constantly makes mistakes. Yet, she manages to pick herself up every time and charge forward - even when panic attacks, her crazy parents, and her nonexistent social life get in the way. The Boy Book is about what Ruby wants, what she has to do to get it and finding the right balance between being a good friend and a good person. Yet, by no means does Ruby completely change over-night. Yes, she has her small victories and triumphant moments, but personal growth can't be rushed and Ruby's character development is well-paced and realistic.

The Boy Book picks up right where The Boyfriend List left off and is a thoroughly enjoyable sequel. I found myself cheering for Ruby the whole way through (except maybe when she over-analyzed Jackson's notes...what a jerk) and learning with her and from her during her journey. I can't wait to see where Ruby's adventures (or should I say mishaps? debacles?) take her next!

Emily May says

Another hilarious installment in the life of Ruby Oliver, this time documenting everything you could possibly need to know about boys. This includes: **The Care and Ownership of Boobs, Levels of Boyfriends, Clever Comebacks to Catcalls and Why Girls are Better than Boys** as well as a number of other need-to-know pieces of boy wisdom.

In case you weren't aware by now, girls are better than boys because we smell better, always carry tampons and are more likely to survive if we fall off an ocean liner. Basically, this book is non-stop fun with a few actually important life lessons and issues thrown in there as well. There's a great deal of tackling sexism in it's many forms - subtle and otherwise - and also expressing feminist values without overdoing it. Most of it I agree with and I love how the author uses humour to prove her point rather than the traditional block-my-ears-now rant about seeing girls as sexual objects. I have one issue that I can't resist to point out, it's nothing original and it's been talked about and dissected a million times over... catcalling. Or wolf-whistling. Or car horn-honking. I honestly don't think this is sexist, if I saw a hot guy walking down the road I might attempt (pitifully) to wolf-whistle (and then possibly duck behind something like a 12 year old). My point is - and feel free to disagree - people go perving on each other all the time regardless of gender. I've never saw this as an issue, just something I wanted to comment on even though I know very few people will actually care :)

On the subject of boys, as that's kinda what this book is about, I really like that E. Lockhart doesn't give us a romanticised set of unrealistic and angelic male characters. Like I found with Melina Marchetta, we get the honest version of teenage boys (and it ain't so pretty) rather than some sparkling, "love you forever and always" Edward Cullen. This is obviously what I've been missing while I was wasting my time trying to find something worthwhile in the fantasy and paranormal romance side of young adult literature. Long live realistic fiction, it seems like that's where it's at lately.

Regina says

E. Lockhart makes me want to go back to high school so that I can do it again and do it right this time. I am convinced that with the tools I learned in this book, that I will be a master. Oh and I really want to meet a boy like Angelo. Somehow I missed knowing anyone like him in high school

The Boy Book is the second book in a four book series that focuses on Ruby Oliver. Ruby is a student at a private high school in Seattle, she has two off beat parents who mean oh so well (but are pretty funny in their attempts), and at the start of The Boy Book, Ruby believes that she doesn't have any friends. The Ruby Oliver series is a message series. It is about the true meaning of friendship and what it takes to be a true friend. It is about the conflict between the positive feeling having a boyfriend gives to a girl v. the struggle with what if he is actually a jerk. It is about the meaning and effect of labeling other people. And it is about the crazies and confusions that dating and liking love interests in high school brings to a high school teenagers life. But even though the Ruby Oliver series is a message series and The Boy Book teaches so many great things it never comes off as a after school special. These messages are delivered through

experiences and character growth. But really super important, these books are hilarious, they are fun and the main character (Ruby) feels like my best friend or maybe even me. E. Lockhart is brilliant.

So Ruby is like many high school girls. There are some good things about her, she is okay at some things, bad at others, she isn't drop dead gorgeous but some of her friends are and she has some positive physical attributes. This is a quote from the first book in this series and it gives you an idea how Ruby is *not* described,

"I hate those endless descriptions of a heroine's physical attributes . . . it really bothers me how in books it seems like the only two choices are perfection or self-hatred. As if readers will only like a character who's ideal--or completely shattered."

Ruby is still discovering who she is, learning to appreciate her great legs and learning to appreciate that guys like her legs

So, it is really hard to tap into why this book is so fun, I will just summarize some of the plot lines: Hooter Rescue Squad, Penguins, Llamas, the stockpiling of fruit rollups, a discussion on reclaiming the label of "slut" (along with learning why that label gets thrown around), the realization that the kid with acne *may not actually like* having acne, an appreciation for guys who know how to properly grope boobs (this is carried over from the first book -- very important), public embarrassment from parents, confrontations with a former best friend turned arch enemy, and lots of fun and yummy boy crushes.

Ruby is fun, makes mistakes and never ends up with the guy she thinks she wants. Kinda like real life but better (maybe because she lives on a houseboat with a greenhouse). I highly recommend this book for anyone in high school or who has ever gone to high school.

Nataliya says

In a slight daze of fascinatingly-horrified recollection of what it was like to be a sixteen-year-old girl and in a sudden unexpected surge of previously dormant maternal instinct I just want to reach into this book and reassuringly pat Ruby Oliver on her shoulder. *Nice job growing up, Roo. I'm actually really proud of you.*

It's pretty rare for me to like the sequel more than its predecessor. But how can I not in this case? **I am so proud of Ruby's honest attempts to straighten out that whole mess of adolescence that we have all lived suffered through** and, most importantly, to actually figure herself out and DEAL with her problems in a more or less mature way. She did come a *looooong way* from the seemingly shallow, passive, and really obsessed with boys and arbitrary private school social conventions girl to a still very flawed and insecure young woman who is nevertheless finding her own voice and is growing up to appreciate all the other important stuff in life. And boy, is it complicated for Ruby or what?

"Think about what you want from a situation," Doctor Z is always saying, "and then try to get it." She says that to get me to stop being so passive. Because I talk too much and think too much and don't take action to get what I want. Because I blurt stuff out that might be how I feel, but that isn't remotely conducive to decent human relations."

Despite the title *The Boy Book*, this story is not as much about boys. The titular book (with all the hilarious excerpts from it involving 'practical' advice on phone conversations with boys, making out, dating rules and other vitally important information) is really a reminder left for Ruby from simpler days before the

mess with her now ex-boyfriend Jackson, before her best friend became her mortal enemy, before she achieved a dreaded 'leper' status at her high school. It is her link to happier times with her former friends Kim, Nora and Crickets, all of whom she misses terribly now, and simple solutions for every possible boy-related situations that seem to not work as well in real life anymore.

"I can't tell if we're friends or not," I said finally. "You and me." "I can't tell, either," she almost whispered."

No, this is a story about finding yourself and learning to stand up for yourself a bit, about making right choices even when you don't want to, about learning to appreciate true friendship and kindness, about consequences that come with all your choices, and about the need to bounce back and recover no matter how badly you think you've been brought down.

Ruby's voice is decidedly more mature, more grown-up - but still every bit as recognizably funny, quirky, and snarky as the one that won us over in the previous book. E.Lockhart is excellent at making Ruby sound like a real teenage girl, likeable and adorable and often clueless and slightly annoying at the same time. Reading her smartass comments (*) makes me giggle and nod in recognition of the emotions that I had when I was that age. And her footnotes and lists - I absolutely adore them!

* *"Jackson was there in my mind, all the time. Like a tumor."*

I love that this book continues to tackle the question of friendship between girls. We are often led to believe that, unlike for boys, there is little chance for true friendship between girls because they are jealous and competitive and often backstabbing and will inevitably squabble over a boy and view each others as little else but potential rivals. So many YA books have evil female characters that seem to have been introduced for little else but showcasing how the protagonist is (a) better than the clearly true female stereotype, and (b) to be a bitch to the awesome protagonist. Well, this is not the message of *The Boy Book*. Yes, there is Kim and the destruction of her friendship with Ruby. But there are also Meghan and Nora who are there for Ruby when her world seems to collapse. (*And none of them is the 'designated ugly friend', the type that many non-evil friends in YA fiction seem to belong to, reinforcing the stereotype that girls can only be friends with other girls if they are non-threatening from a boyfriend-stealing approach. Ughhh.*) In fact, the thing that got Ruby in trouble to begin with is not as much 'boy issues' as the perceived breaking of trust between friends.

*"I left it in her mail cubby, though I had to squash it in order to get it in. It was easier than giving it to her in person. And I felt relieved. Like that whole era of my life was over. Like *The Boy Book* and everything it stood for--me, Nora and Cricket and Kim--was done with. And the thoughts inside it too. Some of them were worth remembering. The front-close bra and not sunbathing topless and the clever comebacks to catcalls. But most of it was in the past. It was a document of how I used to think. When I was, sort of, someone else."*

I love that this book does not portray any kind of idealized love that many YA books are prone to do nowadays. I'm glad that it shows friendship between girls that does not hinge on boys or is threatened by boys (in addition to the friendship that does). I love that girls in this book feel free and secure to explore their sexuality without strict moralistic lessons coming out of it. **I love that slut-shaming itself gets shamed**, since I think that it is a despicable concept that continues to be perpetuated in our culture as an ugly relic of 'simpler times' of not so long ago. I love that there are no Mary Sue characters that as of lately seem to fill the majority of YA books. I love the adorable email exchanges between Ruby and Noel that made me happily giggle. Basically, I adore this book!

I loved this book and could not put it down. **4.5 stars and I'm rounding up without much hesitation.** It was such a fun read, and it made me feel so relieved that I will never ever be a teenager again!

"Hooter Rescue Squad, Official Memo

Dear SHAR,

It has come to our attention that despite your supposed abandonment of Mission Van Deusen, and also despite your neglect of your role as Mission Director, you have nevertheless acted heroically on behalf of the hooters. In recognition of your efforts, we hereby grant you the official Rescue Squad medal of honor, which comes in the form of a large slice of pizza with the topping of your choice, to be consumed after swim practice today--or on the day of your choosing. It's true, once you eat the pizza, you will have nothing to display on your mantelpiece, but hey--we are a low-rent organization. It's the best we can do. Vehicular transport will await you outside the pool at 4:30 p.m. (Pacific time), unless you inform us otherwise.

Sincerely, and with my utmost congratulations, SHAN."

jv poore says

This is the second Ruby Oliver novel. So far, I've found the Ruby books to be quick, fun reads. Social issues very typical in middle and high schools everywhere are addressed in humorous, yet helpful ways.

Ruby is genuine and shares her honest, unfiltered thoughts. I think this is important, because these are really the things we tend to talk about and that can make us feel isolated....all alone with our wacky thoughts. The Ruby books serve as perfect reminders that there are plenty of like-minded souls---we may just have to look a bit harder.

Monique says

"I made the right decision. But that doesn't mean I don't have any regrets."

For some reason, this line from the last chapter of ***The Boy Book*** left a sad, empty feeling inside. It made me want to wish that Ruby "Roo" Oliver were right in front of me so I could, right at that moment, just give her a *biig* hug. You know. Like girlfriends do. :P

Since ***The Boyfriend List***, I have grown quite fond of Roo and her various teenage *debacles*, panic attacks, and constant angsting about, well, stuff and people. There are her former friends, especially Kim, her *bestest* friend; the only love of her sophomore life (or so it seems) and official boyfriend for 6 months, Jackson; Noel and Angelo, her almost-more-than-friends-boyfriends-but-not-quite; her performing artist mother Elaine (of the infamous *Elaine Oliver: Twist and Shout!*) and backyard/dock horticulturist father Kevin, and;

her shrink, poncho-wearing African-American Dr. Z.

The Boy Book follows through where **The Boyfriend List** left off. After the *debacles* of sophomore year, this sequel opens another (school) year in Roo's life – her junior year at Tate Prep during which time she explores the possibilities of welcoming new friends (maybe even boyfriends), reconciliations, understanding and loyalty, making the right decisions notwithstanding the possibility of regret later on, and unselfishness. I'm afraid that if I delve too much into the plot of **The Boy Book**, I may inadvertently drop a spoiler or two, so I will exercise restraint and prudence and stop right here.

(Unlike my thoughts on **The Boyfriend List** which I enumerated as *5 Reasons Why I Liked It, 3 Reasons I Didn't, and A Recommendation*, I decided I really wasn't any good at lists and making them. Heck, I even hate listing stuff down for grocery-shopping, but I *have* to, so there.)

I liked and appreciated **The Boy Book** for the same reasons that I did its prequel: it tackled relevant teenage issues, it showed how kids actually deal with these angst-ridden problems, and it demonstrated how, shallow as these so-called problems may seem to the grown-ups, kids view them, from their inexperienced and limited perspectives, as mind-boggling and universe-shifting. I liked how, in the end (and through her helpful sessions with Dr. Z), Roo finally came around and acknowledged that, much as she would like to, there are things that she can never change, there are people with whom relationships are not meant to last, and the only action left to take is to accept them as they are. This may sound silly, I know, but as I was reading about Roo's journey to self-discovery, I had grown to love and sympathize with her. I felt like I wanted to be her friend, and I rooted for her every step of the way.

The Boy Book may no longer be exactly age-appropriate for me, I know, but that doesn't diminish its appeal because of the many lessons it imparted, regardless of age. Just imagining my baby daughter at Roo's age sometime in the distant future and her going through the same teenage issues is enough to make me realize how important a support system is, which Roo had in her parents and Dr. Z.

Thankfully, too, the footnotes were significantly lessened in this book, unlike its predecessor. Small footnotes I can handle, but not chunky ones where it takes up most of the page or continues on to the next. They tend to distract from the narrative. The comedic aspect, as well, is as prevalent in **The Boy Book** as it was in **The Boyfriend List**. The entries made by Roo and her old friends in the actual *Boy Book* were funny, I would chuckle out loud at some. My personal favorites? The clever comebacks to inappropriate catcalls: "*I can't be angry at you today. It's Be Kind To Animals Week.*"; "*Didn't I dissect you in Biology class today?*"; and "*Have you had your brain checked? I think the warranty has ran out.*" I wish I were that witty. ;)

In sum, I loved this book just as much as I did the first one. And it must be said: It's because of books like these that I appreciate YA, and find them worth the time spent reading. ;)

Original post here.

Isamlq says

I'd promised to hold off on reading this for one of my meh-reading days, but I just couldn't help myself and picked it up and...

... I loved it...

I'm done pretending to possess any self-control whatsoever when it comes to this series because I am most definitely starting the third one now. Why, you ask? Ruby Oliver is a little more aware of goings on in Tate. She's a little tougher, not so naive but still **funny as heck**. I think the first one was sufficient on its own, but if this sequel proves anything, it's that one can never have too much of a good thing. Because a good thing, is what this is. Only sometimes I really wanted to shake her. Mostly, though, I was laughing alongside her.

Here's what I'm thinking right now:

- a. I should probably get some sleep except... these characters are still running around in my head. Some, I want to hug (Noel,) while others (Kim, Jackson, Nora, Cricket, heck, even Ruby sometimes,) I want to clunk on the head with a very, very thick book.
- b. And... Noel, aaawh. (But if I've gotten anything from **Ruby**, Dr. Z, it's not supposed to be about the boy, but about knowing what you want and figuring out how to get it.)
- c. I do wish she'd heed Meghan's advice about keeping her nose out of things (things involving Kim and Jackson, and even things to do with Nora.) Said feeling coming from a purely spiteful "they deserve whatever was coming their way" stance. Except Ruby, after months of therapy, time with newfound friends, and even time with her parents, had turned into more evolved type of girl and thus grown up.

The best thing about this is how real she comes across: definitely insecure and **slightly** neurotic. Fortunately, like I said, there are new friends, a therapist, and unconventional parents who helped along the way.

:)
