



Rurally Screwed: My Life Off the Grid with the Cowboy I Love

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Jessie Knadler was a New York City girl, through and through. An editor for a splashy women's magazine, she splurged on Miu Miu, partied hard, lived for Kundalini yoga, and dated a man-boy whose complexion was creamier than her own. Circling the drain both personally and professionally, Jessie definitely wouldn't have described herself as "happy"; more like caustically content. Then one day, she was assigned a story about an annual rodeo in the badlands of Eastern Montana.

There, she met a twenty-five-year-old bull rider named Jake. He voted Republican and read *Truck Trader*. He listened to Garth Brooks. He owned guns. And Jessie suddenly found herself blindsided by something with which she was painfully unfamiliar: a genuinely lovable disposition. In fact, Jake radiated such optimism and old-school gentlemanliness that Jessie impulsively ditched Manhattan for an authentic existence, and an authentic man. Almost overnight, she was canning and sewing, making jerky, chopping firewood, and raising chickens. And all the while one question was ringing in the back of her head: "What the !#*\$ have I done with my life?"

A hilarious true-life love story, *Rurally Screwed* reveals what happens to a woman who gives up everything she's ever known and wanted-job security, money, her professional network, access to decent Thai food-to live off the grid with her one true love (and dogs and horses and chickens), and asks, is it worth it? The answer comes amid war, Bible clubs, and moonshine.

Rurally Screwed: My Life Off the Grid with the Cowboy I Love Details

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Lauree says

Ms. Knadler put so much interesting detail into this story! Knowing it was true and that she lives just south of me made me appreciate her honesty and frankness so much. I wish everyone could be so blunt about how their life is really going, and I hope she is making a handsome profit from all her hard work getting the book completed. This is a keeper! It sure was fun hearing Ms. Knadler read from the book and talk about it at the WMRA "Books and Brews" night in Harrisonburg, Virginia back in December.

Ellyn says

I'm almost finished reading this and I'm glad I stuck with it, because it does get better -- which is why I amended my two star rating to a three star rating.

I seriously disliked the author when I began this memoir. I found her cynical and lazy, and yet hyper-critical of others. But it gets better as she gets out of her fast-paced and superficial NY environment and marries her "cowboy." She shows a willingness to try new things and really dives in to a much different and more authentic lifestyle.

However; a few quibbles here. I find the whole premise of the memoir to be a little misleading. For one thing, he is not a cowboy. He's a sometime farm/ranch hand from Baltimore who is also an Army Reservist. For another, no one lives off the grid. My husband bought me this book because we've been reading a lot of back to the land memoirs lately and he thought I would enjoy it. And while the author does go country -- raising chickens, growing gardens and canning -- they are decidedly not off the grid. So I was a little bothered by the intentional misleading.

Also, someone else mentioned this in a review -- it's very strange that the author moves from taking a break and distance from one another after he returns from a deployment....to getting married in less than five months! With no explanation of what happened to provoke that turnabout.

Overall, I'm enjoying this book much more now that Jessie and her husband have moved to the country. She is a good writer, with equal parts humor and humility in this phase. It's just weird to me that that charm didn't come through in the first few chapters.

Betsy says

Jessie Knadler has an entertaining writing style and a fun story to tell. Her real-life experience of leaving a fast-paced life in New York to marry a cowboy and move to rural Virginia. While some of her experiences of the early days of marriage and adjusting to a new place to live were interesting and relatable, I felt Knadler was holding the reader at arm's length for much of the book. While her anecdotes were amusing, I never understood what truly drew her to her husband or why she committed herself so fully to this rural

lifestyle. I also found myself looking in vain for an epilogue when the book ended, hoping for a satisfying round-up of how things had worked out. In the end, it's an easy read but left me wanting more.

Tina says

The author of this memoir is whiny and unlikable. She lives in NYC, and the first half of the book details her job struggles, a trip during which she decides she needs to hook up with a cowboy on a trip, doing so, and then long-distance dating him. One sentence describes their decision to marry, immediately after the cowboy says he wants to take a break, so it comes completely out of nowhere. Way to gloss over the only interesting part of the story. And the second half of the book talks about their starting their life in rural VA, and her difficulty in assimilating, mostly because she's not really trying and again, she's whiny and annoying and condescending to others. Ugh.

Jennifer says

The first 300 pages are pretty much the same thing - Jessie Knadler complaining how the world hasn't stopped to make her happy. The dogs are the most enjoyable part of the book.

One star for the important message that people ought to find out who they are before resigning themselves to a life of being a sofa cushion and accepting the imprint of whomever has last sat on you.

David Ward says

Rurally Screwed: My Life Off the Grid With the Cowboy I Love by Jessie Knadler (Berkley Books 2012)(Biography) was a book that I wanted to be charmed by. Would it happen? The answer was contained in the first few pages although I didn't recognize it. The telltale clue came early when the author described pitching a plagiarized story idea in her job as an editor. It was a warning that I should have taken as a sign of things to come. But I failed to heed it, and I have only myself to blame. The problem with Rurally Screwed is simply that it has been done very publicly before. This book tells the story of a woman from New York who thrives on sophisticated city life before bowing to her mate's wish to move to a rural country farm. She, of course, inevitably has trouble fitting in, and hilarity ensues. I'm not sure how the author's publishing house failed to notice this, but everyone who has watched TV since 1965 has seen this story originally as a prime time series and ever since as ad nauseum reruns of the television series (you've already guessed it) "Green Acres." "Green Acres" told the story of (you guessed it) a woman from New York who thrives on sophisticated city life before bowing to her mate's wishes to move to a rural country farm. She, of course, inevitably has trouble fitting in, and hilarity ensues. Yessirree bobtail, the only difference between the TV show and this book is that the book stars Jessie and her cowboy while the original TV series starred Eddie Albert and Eva Gabor. Remember Eva? ("New York is where I'd rather stay; I get alergic smelling hay..."). Once I recognized that this book was a recasting of "Green Acres", the little text narrator in my head read the rest of Jessie Knadler's book in a Hungarian accent. Choose wisely, dear reader: spend a few hours with this book or tune in one single thirty-minute episode online or on your favorite retro-TV channel. My rating for the book: 3/10; finished 10/15/12.

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

The beginning of this book almost made me move on from it. I just did not connect with the author. After she moved from New York something changed. She spoke to my heart, hell I think she was speaking a lot of my thoughts for me. I live a similar life as she was and don't get me wrong-i love it but there are those times. Anyways I loved this book! Go run and get it and enjoy! This woman is real and she honestly could be someone I like

Brianna says

This book made me cranky. I read it because I thought I might connect with Knadler's story given my own recent Phoenix-to-rural Wisconsin transplantation this spring. I found the book very readable, but I was surprised at how the author presented herself. She wrote herself in a way that made her seem very...I don't know...stupid. I hate saying that, but she did not present herself in a flattering light. I was constantly frustrated with her choices and complaints about rural living. And she wrote her husband as if he was some stoic, never faltering angel of a man. I know that this book is a slightly fictionalized version of her real life, but it made me uncomfortable to read because it was clear that there were deeply rooted problems in her relationship.

Denise Spicer says

This 2012 memoir/love story is about a New York City girl who meets a Christian cowboy, falls in love, marries him, and moves to a rural chicken farm. Although fairly amusing in parts, the author is somewhat patronizing about country folk and Christians. (She is determinedly NOT one). Gives a few too many of the more sordid details of big city life. Not really recommended for Christian reading.

Courtney Milford says

I sort of lied about it being "read" since I didn't finish this book. I decided that if I dread picking up a book to read it, it's time to dump it. I was surprised I didn't like it more because I had to wait a long time to get it from the library due to all of the holds. Also, it says the author sometimes writes for the Wall Street Journal, which I enjoy reading every day.

Ryan says

So much better than that stupid Pioneer Woman book I suffered through. Knadler's writing is head and shoulders above Drummond's.

Admittedly, I have a hard time being objective about this one as the author lives in my general part of the

world, and I have gladly followed her blog for some time now. I feel emotionally invested.

I was very glad to see that it wasn't just a rehashing of her blog - it has real narrative structure, though it occasionally veers off into telling and not showing. And why do these kinds of memoirs always have to have some sort of silly subtitle?

Amanda Collins says

A lot of reviews I've read are very critical of the author (and main character in the story). However, I found her to be extremely honest. She was honest about the thought processes she went through and judgments she made about the country bumpkins she encountered in her new home and life (and eventually became friends with and found admirable qualities in). I think people mistake the process for the conclusion, which came toward the end of the book and was actually very beautiful. We lie to ourselves when we don't admit we, ourselves, go through these very same routines in the process of finding something beautiful about something we are unfamiliar with. I enjoyed her transformation from city girl to self-sufficient girl, and her struggle to balance the dichotomy of both sides of herself. I probably felt so fond of this book because I relate to those conflicting ideas. Also, her husband reminded me so much of my own. Although it's a story about, well, her "life off the grid with the cowboy [she] loves," I think any woman who has makes big sacrifices or changes in her own life for love could relate to the story she tells.

Meghan says

I purchased the Kindle version of this book on a whim. I knew that the author was a blogger, so I checked out her site. She seemed funny, quick, sarcastic and smart. I thought the book would provide for some light plane reading as I readied for a long trip. While the book is indeed witty, it is so much more. It really speaks to any woman who has made big changes in her life for a man and keeps looking back over her shoulder questioning herself, her decisions, her partner, her "new" life. The depths and insights in this book begin to unveil themselves in the final 50 pages. The book made me laugh for 100 pages, made me think (really hard) for 50 pages and made me cry for 20 pages or so. In the end, I felt that I could really relate to the author even though I reside in suburbia, have not ridden a horse since I was 10 and my gardening is limited to herbs on the patio. Mostly, this is a funny insightful book about life's big decisions, our changing identities as the years march on and how we can learn to accept ourselves at each stage.

Shay Peters says

Loved this book mainly because I live in Rockbridge County and it was great hearing what a New York City gal thinks of us. The book is more about a woman finding her place and she is funny, honest and entertaining.

Joanie says

I hope some of this book is fictional, because I don't know why any man would coexist with anyone who

whines this much about a life she chose! Although the beginning of the book was somewhat amusing, the second half was just plain annoying! Knadler clearly thinks she's better than the "redneck" populace around her, and it's just a little sad that she proclaims to be an atheist (I guess that makes her more chill than the believers), but then carries on her husband's before dinner prayer tradition when he stops. Was this because she felt sorry that she was responsible for its end, or because there was a molecule of belief in her after all? I also can't get past the two places where she wrote "Jake and I" and "he and I" where they should have been written in the objective case! Better editing needed!
