



Famous Baby

Karen Rizzo

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“*Famous Baby* is inventive, hysterical, and touching. Karen Rizzo wraps a timeless drama about the love between mothers and daughters in a fresh, snappy package for the social media age.” —**CHRISTINA SCHWARZ**, author of *The Edge of the Earth* and *Drowning Ruth*, an Oprah’s Book Club Selection

Before there were Real Housewives and Tiger Moms, there was Ruth Sternberg, the hugely popular First Mother of Mommy Blogging—or, as Ruth’s daughter, Abbie prefers to call her, the First Lady of Cyber Exploitation.

Eighteen year-old Abbie has finally found her way out of the limelight, by moving a solid five hundred miles away from Ruth and her “maternal instincts.” But when she hears that her ailing, beloved grandmother is moving in with Ruth, she suspects that her mother has found a new blog subject to exploit. Abbie kidnaps Grandma to save her from the same fate, and thus begins an uproarious battle of wills. *Famous Baby* wisely and hilariously explores mother love, identity, and the hazards of parental over-sharing in the social media age.

Karen Rizzo, who lives with her actor husband and two children in Los Angeles, California, is the author of *Things to Bring, S#!T to Do... and Other Inventories of Anxiety*, a memoir centered around her penchant for lists. Her writing has appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Salon*, *Fit Pregnancy*, and women’s humor anthologies, and her plays have been staged at several theatres. *Famous Baby* is her first novel.

Famous Baby Details

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Author : Karen Rizzo

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From Reader Review Famous Baby for online ebook

Margaret says

Great, fun read. A well-known mommy blogger is forced to confront her past when her adult daughter kidnaps her own grandmother in a desperate bid to protect the older woman's privacy. I love books that make me laugh, but only when they also have substance and give me something to think about. This book is thoughtful and funny. For me, that makes it perfect.

Sue says

Funny, touching, often poignant novel of a famous mommy blogger and her complicated relationships with her 18-yr-old daughter and her dying mother. End-of-life choices and inter generational communication are explored and makes this a great book group read! Lots of great topics to talk about!

Portsmouth Public Library (NH) says

A fun, fast read with a good measure family drama. Narrated by mommy blogger Ruth, fed-up daughter Abbie and declining grandmother Esther, this book has humor and poignancy. It starts out a bit trite but give it a chance - once they get to Arizona it really gets interesting.

Maria says

Meh. I wanted to like this book a lot since I often wonder about the implications of the way that bloggers and other parents overshare on social media. Instead, this was just kind of average. It wasn't bad, just not what I was expecting.

Betsy Kipnis says

Good audiences for this book are stay-at-home-blogger-to-be-moms, high-schoolers entrenched in TMI (Too Much Information) activities, and of course victims of TMI needing ideas for contending with an absence of control over their own stories.

The premise for "Famous Baby" is timely and clever. A profitable blogger mommy crafts a blog about her child and family and bleeds them for material so badly that they become estranged and like New Age zombies.

Set in LA and Arizona, the story is told through two contrasting points of view belonging to Mother, Ruth, and daughter Abbie. The story is narrated by Abbie, disenfranchised from her mother's blog and narcissistic betrayal of her privacy, and Ruth who hungers after her mother Esther's final days of life for her blog.

Abbie, a knowing victim, kidnaps her grandma and schemes to protect her last days and escort Esther to the

afterlife. Minor male characters fill in the blanks which explain the character's conflicts while moving the plot forward, but "Famous Baby" really covers mother/daughter torch-passing the good, bad, unmentioned and ugly.

Overall entertaining, the ending was trite and predictable. While the characters were quirky and interesting almost David Lynch-like, they were fairly shallow and underdeveloped. Lastly, I didn't care for the random side-bars and nods to Jim Carey's, "Alrighty then!" It was distracting, disjunct and way too corny. Not sure if I'll shelve this one or leave it on the table at the Spa...

Lian Dolan says

Loved the premise of this book. In this day and age of full-disclosure at all times in all mediums, Famous baby explores the consequences of being the unwanted object of attention. The title character is the only child of one of the first widely-read mom bloggers who's mother has mined every every twist and turn for material. Now, it's revenge of the 18 year old daughter and she's saving grandma! Rizzo's writing is sharp and funny and unexpectedly sweet in places. I found this book both entertaining and moving. Even if you haven't blogged about every moment of your child's life, it will get you thinking about the consequences of everything your disclose from Facebook status reports and texts to friends.

Jimmy says

Let's make something clear. This book has very very little to do with a blog, or with blog culture, or social media, or anything really to do with the internet. My gut tells me this book initially wasn't going to have anything at all to do with the internet, because holy Jesus do the 'blog' sections reek of being tacked on. This was, I believe, initially supposed to be a book about a woman who mines her family life for the publishing world, not the internet. The character of Ruth, the so-called "famous first mommy blogger" is also a famous published writer, with no less than three best sellers under her belt (one fiction, two parenting how-tos) and has designs on a fourth book. The internet blog stuff? That's just tacked on and it is NOT what this book is about. It's a stupid, obvious ploy to get readers, and it's garbage because if this actually were a good book, it wouldn't need false, garbage ploys to snag readers.

Further, this author couldn't be more obvious about her efforts to be old skool Jennifer Weiner --you know...before Jennifer Weinter got rich and turned into a ouroboros--if she had instead titled this book "Good in Her Shoes"

In brief, this book tells the story of three generations of women, told from the perspectives of Abbie, the daughter, and Ruth, the mother. Abbie is 18 years old, and has spent her life under her mother's overshare microscope, every embarrassing moment digested and shared on a global scale in her narcissistic mother's books and blog. The disenfranchised young adult manages to distance herself from her mother's antics, only to discover the focus has shifted to Ruth's own mother, who is suffering from dementia. Ruth plans to shift the focus of her blog from Abbie's life, over to her dying mother...complete with hidden cameras documenting what should be private moments at the end of a woman's life.

This book is crap, and it's boring crap, it's unoriginal crap. I could forgive this, but what I can't forgive is that it's crap which sold itself as something it totally is not. This book is "In Her Shoes", right down to running away with grandma in sunny Florida Arizona. Except here the sister interactions are now strictly mother to daughter.

I've no more thoughts on this book, it's already wasted too much of my time.

Paula Lyle says

This started out bright and funny with an interesting premise. In these days the question of who can write about your life is an interesting one. Unfortunately, it turned out that everyone has secrets and can be explained by learning their history. That is just an old cliché.

Beth says

In this day of "mommy-blogging" does anyone think about how the children written about feel and what happens when they grow up?

A novel that explores just that question with some crazy characters and a mother/daughter relationship that is slightly askew due to "mommy-blogging".

Alli says

Kind of a bummer. So excited for the premise of this book but it just never got going. Things picked up a bit once Eric was introduced, but the ending was so haphazard and Ruth was such an asshole that I just didn't care.

Kristie says

FAMOUS BABY by Karen Rizzo is a cautionary tale of mothers and daughters in the social media age. Ruth Sternberg is the "First Mother of Mommy Blogging," and Ruth's daughter, Abbie, feels victimized by her mother's candor with strangers. When given the opportunity, Abbie goes off the grid to reclaim her privacy, but reappears to rescue/kidnap her dying grandmother, Esther, when Ruth blogs about her plans to document Ruth's final days on her blog.

Abbie and her grandmother have a wonderful relationship that is not diminished at all by Esther's health and memory issues. With the help of an interesting collection of neighbors, Abbie cares for her grandmother with love--and in privacy--while Ruth frantically searches for them.

The story is told with alternating voices, primarily Abbie's and Ruth's. Abbie is an interesting and likeable eighteen-year-old, and Ruth is self-centered and terrified of being irrelevant. Both viewpoints are important to telling the full story (although Ruth is pretty awful). However, my favorite chapter is the one in which we're privy to Esther's thoughts. This wise soul shares her take on the meaning of life, and she reveals some of her amazing secrets too.

I really enjoyed FAMOUS BABY. It was a timely story told with humor, and it contained some good life lessons. Many thanks to the publisher and LibraryThing for a copy of the book in exchange for my unbiased review.

Charity says

I got an advance copy of this book through Library Thing, although I didn't get to it until more than a year after I first received it. I finally read it because I was looking for some quick fiction to cleanse my palate from all of the nonfiction I've been reading (despite my better judgment, I've been on a self-help kick, although you won't see that looking at my Goodreads lists because I'm keeping all of those titles under the radar. If I don't log them, they never happened).

At any rate, this book. This book was okay. The premise was intriguing, especially for me as a blogger who writes about her kids (although I am NOT a mommy-blogger), but the execution was just not there. This felt like an early draft of a book, like if Rizzo had done a couple more re-writes with a great editor, this could have built into something meaningful.

Instead, it just feels shallow. The characters are underdeveloped (why the heck is Eric there and what does Abbie see in him?), inconsistent (Harry and his quiet calm that morphs into combative freak-outs by the end of the book), and they merge into one another (those elderly people were essentially all the same person. Claire stands out a little, and maybe Miguel, but everyone else is pretty interchangeable. A list of facts does not an individual character make).

And then there's the conflict between mothers and daughters. This is really what I think could have been deepened with a re-write or three. I buy Abbie's reaction to her mother's blog and tell-all way of living, but I do not buy the resolution. I know that Esther and Missy are supposed to be part of some kind of breaking point for Ruth forcing her to finally see how her actions affect those around her, but I just don't see it, and those two characters seemed tacked on rather than integrated into the story.

That said, I did finish the book, which I considered not doing, so that's evidence that there's something going for it. Like I said, there's so much promise in the premise, but in the end, I just felt disappointed.

(Oh, and it's buds, not leaves that you smoke. But perhaps this ended up getting corrected before publication.)

Cara says

my favorite lines from the book:

"why is it that after you're forced to say goodbye to someone you love, you have to spend the rest of your life being reminded of how much that person meant to you? ... they have to die or leave, and then you're reminded of how much you loved them. which makes them more a part of your life, in some weird way, than if they were still there."

this book was okay, the characters were fairly interesting and the plot took unexpected turns, which I appreciated. I am not a huge fan of the writing style, and it's always irritating to me when I find typos in a published book! I am not sure what I was hoping for with this book, but it didn't quite meet my expectations.

Petrea Burchard says

With social media such a force in our lives, it's hard to know where to draw the line between public and personal information. A mommy blogger and her daughter differ wildly on this topic, forcing them apart. But love and grandma bring them together, and grandma is totally cool.

I like the writing, the language itself. And Rizzo's plot has surprises. It's a little bit wild and woolly and that's what makes it wonderful.

Christina says

I was interested in the concept of a famous mommy blogger/author dealing with her now adult daughter who hates that everyone knows everything about her. But it wasn't really even about that and it was pretty boring.
