



Emma Sterner-Radley

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The unchallenging and dull life of an assistant in a small London bookshop is where Zoe Achidi feels safe. Bored, but safe.

Frequent customer, Rebecca Clare, makes Zoe's days a little brighter. But the beautiful, and impressive businesswoman in her forties seems unobtainable.

Zoe's brother and her best friend are convinced that she is stuck in a rut. When they decide to meddle in Zoe's life, they manage to bring Zoe and Rebecca together. It soon becomes obvious that Rebecca is bored with her own uneventful life as well.

Unfortunately, their meetings seem to remain all business. As they find the bravery and resolve to allow life to push them along, the question soon becomes - will it push them together or apart?

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Life Pushes You Along Details

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From Reader Review Life Pushes You Along for online ebook

Versi says

It was good until the end, very fast. It does not seem natural for them to love each other the second time they kiss.

Tiff says

Life is funny sometimes. One day you're totally fine and then the next you have that overwhelming blah feeling. You take a look around and start to wonder why am I stuck in this rut? Do you take a much-needed vacation, take up a new hobby or do you flip a switch and make a much-needed career change? That's exactly what our main character, Zoe does. She takes a leap of faith and starts to change her life's current trajectory. Will her gamble be worth it?

Zoe Achidi has not had an easy life. When she came out to her parents they abandoned her. Cast out of her childhood home as a teen, she has literally had to make it the hard way. Begging for a job, and working tirelessly to keep a roof over her head and food on the table. Her boss and owner of the neighborhood bookstore, is the ultimate slacker, using Zoe as his workhorse so he can phone it in but keep the benefits of her hard work. Most of us wouldn't put up with what Zoe does, but how do you leave a job that saved you from the streets, even though you know you are capable of so much more. Rock meet hard place, right! The one highlight of her existence is an amazing brother, bestie and the super-hot client that visits her workplace.

Rebecca Clare is a said hottie. Rebecca is a successful businesswoman. Over the course of time, Rebecca has taken notice of Zoe, but she's the younger woman as out of her league. Funny, because Zoe thinks the exact same thing about Rebecca. Upon an unexpected meeting with Zoe's brother, Rebecca agrees to help Zoe break out of her rut. She begins to assist Zoe, on improving her resume and searching for jobs with a better career path.

Rebecca and Zoe have a fantastic dynamic. These two have a magnetic pull to each other. Their heads war with the hearts, neither seeing how amazing they are but the other totally seeing it. Rebecca, at the age of 40, doesn't see why a 26-year-old beauty would want anything to do with her other than a mentor. Zoe, cannot for the life of her, see why a successful professional would see anything in a lowly bookstore clerk. They click, they bring out the best in each other, and finally, the heart wins the battle and their heads get out of the way of love. A little help from the bestie and the brother help as well.

Overall this novella is well written, with excellent dialogues. Zoe and Rebecca are interesting and dynamic characters that jump right off the page. I can't wait to see what Emma Sterner-Radley writes next. 4.25 stars

Rach (Les Rêveur) says

What a fantastic short story, I was hooked from the minute our main protagonists Zoe and Rebecca spoke to one another. I thought this was going to be a nice easy Lesbian short story and it was - but it also had a massive dollop of sexy in some of the scenes between Zoe and Rebecca.

What's really interesting about this story is that it's written from three different points of view. Firstly from Zoe and Rebecca's point of view as per usual but Zoe's best friend, Helen also gets her air-time and her time on the page is spent tying everything together nicely. I really enjoyed this concept because it gave an outsiders opinion on the romance but also added an extra pinch of levity in the novel.

First time I've read the word Pansexual in a book and it made me really happy to see authors bringing other sexualities to the table in Lesbian fiction. Well done Emma!

Great short and I can't wait to read more from Emma Sterner-Radley. 5 stars.

Agirlcandream says

Sweet Novella

This was a sweet and quick read. Zoe is a loveable bookshop employee stuck in a rut in her work and personal life. Thanks to her well meaning brother and her best friend, she gets the opportunity to connect with her secret crush, an older woman named Rebecca. Lovely romance with two well developed mains. Nicely done.

Book Worm says

Really enjoyable read about two people with low self-esteem and a deep crush on each other. Can they make it in spite of their own misgivings? They each hope that they are reading the situation as attraction, but then they talk themselves into reading it as the most innocent possible.

Luce says

4 Stars!

A very pleasant well written read. A romance between an unlikely couple.

There is Zoe is a 26 yr old bookstore clerk is in a rut that she doesn't know how to get out of. She is not happy at the store but feels she is unqualified for anything else. Rebecca, a regular customer, she is a successful 40yr old businesswoman. Zoe described her as beautiful, confident, calm, direct and a sense of power. In other words, out of her league. Rebecca maybe all those things, but in social situations- such as her attraction to Zoe she is just as anxious and insecure as Zoe.

Helen (Zoe's BFF) to Zoe

"If you do nothing, if you settle and then just stay dormant, stay still... then life pushes you along. It might not be a nice push. It might be a shove or a kick up the arse, but life pushes you along."

Margaret says

Detailed score: 3.5 rounded up because first time author

Nice enough story although the main character is a bit annoying.

Hope this isn't the last we hear from this author

T.B. Markinson says

Life Pushes You Along by Emma Sterner-Radley is the kind of touching story that will have readers reexamining their own lives.

Gaby LezReviewBooks says

This is the debut novella by Emma Sterner-Radley. The premise of the book is that if people are stuck in their personal situations, "life pushes you along" in many different ways: it can be by chance, by self determination or by someone else's help. The latter is what happens to Zoe, a 26 year old bookstore employee who feels dissatisfied with her job and lack of love life. With a little help from her best friend, her brother and Rebecca, a sexy job hunter she's secretly attracted to, Zoe tries to change her life.

While it is positive that the book departs from the ubiquitous lesfic romance by presenting a mixed race relationship between two women with an age gap of 14 years, it falls short in delivering realistic situations and there is a good amount of telling but not showing.

The book is written mostly from Zoe's point of view with a few chapters of her best friend's and a couple of Rebecca's. The author clarifies the pov in each chapter title which I don't think it's necessary. Some parts of the dialogues (specially Rebecca's lines) seem to belong more to written speech and sound a bit unnatural or too long. Additionally, the relationship seems to evolve too fast in the last few chapters (with some degree of "insta love") compared to the slow pace at the beginning of the book.

Overall, an ok summer read. 2.5 stars rounded to 3.

ARC provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Ted says

Loved it. Not sure their story is done though. Just a feelin. Kind of an unconventional ending if I'm honest. Mmm. Age gap, bi, WoC, all well done. Hope to see more of them soon :) They're super sweet.

Loek Krancher says

Two thumbs up!

Zoe's job was not her dream job. No, this job bored her the entire time. A big consolation in her job was one regular customer, an elegant beautiful woman with stunning eyes. Unfortunately, she was also way out her league. Zoe's job, being single, being who she is, makes her life boring and she is sick of all this. Her friends think it's time for a change. A library was Zoe's chance of a change in her life but she knows that she will be too scared to grab this chance. It's obvious she needs help. Without Zoe knowing it, her friends do something about it and that is when life pushes Zoe along. This is my first book by this author and I liked it a lot. It was fun, has a good pace, a little or no drama and the characters are very likeable. I loved the struggle that comes with being secretly in love with someone and how the main characters get along together. It has all the elements of a good read and I thoroughly enjoyed it and I highly recommend this book.

Lexxi Kitty says

I need to make one quick point at the outset before moving on to a review: I've had some 'issues' with most of the works I've read recently, the last, oh, 12 or 20 books/short stories, so I might have been overly impressed with this book and therefore overrated it – though not purposefully, but maybe nudged that way subconsciously. Or – I do not believe I've overrated this book, but there is a possibility that I might have.

Right, book.

This book alternates between three characters, though starts off mostly seeing things through the eyes of a young 26 year old named Zoe Achidi. After getting tossed out of her home when she was 17, by her very religious (Catholic) parents for 'choosing' to be a lesbian and therefore choosing to spite them and automatically going to hell, Zoe showed greater ability than many in her situation by getting a job and an apartment. Unfortunately she then fell into a rut – 7 or so years after getting that job at an independent bookstore, she still has that same job. And relationship-wise, she's not had a girlfriend in years.

Somewhat shocking me, after a long large number of chapters that followed Zoe's thoughts, ideas, and actions, suddenly the book turned to a new point of view. No no, that wasn't the shocking part – I've seen that type of thing before (long periods with one character before switching). No it was *who* the book switched to when it finally switched point of views. Most romance books, and this is a romance book, tends to stick to solo pov, or couple point of view (as in, the two people who will become a couple get a point of view – one of the reasons I really disliked a recent Tessa Dare book was because a man suddenly got control of the POV and I groaned, for then I knew that the asshole was going to be *the man* in that book) – with, depending on genre, occasional snippets from others (like if mystery can have snippets from murderer/murder victim, etc.; or romantic suspense could have POV from the 'evil fucker'). So when this book next turned to Helen to take control of the POV I was, as noted, shocked. For Helen, you see, had previously been introduced as Zoe's best friend *and* Zoe's brother's long-term girlfriend. And nothing leading up to the POV change indicated any chance that Helen might be romantically interested in Zoe. So, as noted, shocked I was.

Of course Helen, which was rapidly confirmed, hadn't taken over POV because she was romantically interested in Zoe. Helen took over because there were some scenes that needed to be seen that would be

easier to be seen through either Helen or Jamie's point of view (Jamie being Zoe's brother). Why them? Because, as noted, Zoe has been in a long term rut, and the brother and best friend were determined to try to push her out of that rut. By personally introducing themselves to a stranger and asking for help from her – doing so to judge that strangers interest in Zoe. Unmentioned yet is the part wherein the stranger has already been seen by the reader in the book. As a reoccurring patron of the book store that Zoe works in – and the same patron who is lusted over by both Zoe and Darren (Zoe's boss). That patron being Rebecca Clare.

Right, so, as far as Zoe, Jamie, and Helen know – Rebecca has something to do with recruitment (based on email address and other hints) so that was Helen and Jamie's 'in' to visit Rebecca. By asking her if Rebecca could help Zoe find a better job.

Interesting dynamic in this book. Zoe and Rebecca seem, both on the surface and internally, like they'd make a quite good couple. Perfect? Eh, maybe maybe not. But possibly quite good. But neither would have gotten there without the help of this outside party – for Zoe has the self-confidence of a timid mouse, and Rebecca has the social skills of a . . . um . . . cantaloupe. So neither could really tell the other was interested in them romantically.

So, right, sorry, Rebecca Clare is the third point of view in the book. She's 40 and works in upper management at a recruitment firm, though not specifically directly with recruitment. *taps fingers* hmm, I've got nothing to add to this paragraph.

Going back to Jaime and Helen's first visit with Rebecca – they did it by going directly to Rebecca's work and asking to speak to Rebecca, dropping Zoe's name as reference. I mention this, and go back to it, because this is the first time that I learned that: 1) Jaime is black; 2) presumably, as Jaime's sister, Zoe is also black; 3) later Zoe's skin color was confirmed. It came up here because Jaime was quite self-conscious about being in such a fancy place dressed like he was and being black (only to have Helen point out that one of the receptionists was also black).

So I only learned deep into the book that I was reading a person of color book. Oh, I later learned that the parents are: mother from Scotland, father from Cameroon (or the other way around). Presumably the parent from Scotland is white, while the one from Cameroon is black. Though that reminds me of when Charlize Theron won that Oscar in 2003 and an announcer loudly stated that she was an African American being that she is from South Africa – overlooking the part wherein she wasn't American (though she's a citizen of the USA now, since 2007). Point being that the parent from Cameroon could be among the 1% of the population who is 'non-African' (as that is worded on Wikipedia). Though being Catholic corresponds to the 40% of the population that is Catholic.

The demographics chart on Wikipedia is weird, but I think it is telling me that something around 0.7% of Scotland is black – so maybe the parent from Scotland is as well. Religious wise, 19% of the population is Catholic – which is a statistic that I had not known.

I got distracted by demographics and confused as to where I wished to go next. Mmehs.

Right, so, very enjoyable book – I rather liked the characters in this book, and while the book ended the way it did, I was satisfied with the somewhat casual ending (though not the part where it ended at something like 71% of the Kindle file; or before learning if (view spoiler)).

Sex: I, um . . . quite frankly cannot recall if there was graphic sex in this book or not. I suspect that there wasn't, though I know that sex occurred, just . . . not graphically.

Rating: 4.79

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Corrie says

I am a tad conservative with my rating because I thought the story wasn't all that. See, I know the author from her fanfic and I know she can write imaginative, passionate and flowing stories. This is just not one of them. "Life Pushes You Along" was bloodless and uneventful due to a plot that had any wrinkles easily smoothed out by the brother and his gf (her best friend). I hope Emma Sterner-Radley finds her groove back with her next publication.

lov2laf says

This was an entertaining read that I read in one sitting and I really enjoyed it. It has the essence of being a cute novella.

Zoe is a low self-esteem but likable character stuck in a rut while Rebecca is the older sophisticated woman she has a crush on. The chemistry built between the two was fun to watch and I found it to be believable. I also liked how the author pulled back the curtain on Rebecca to see some of her vulnerability.

All of the characters are well-drawn, the interactions are interesting, and the story has refreshing plot points I haven't read elsewhere.

This is an age gap romance (14 years) that gets the unique distinction of having the leads communicate. I love when that happens! And the diversity present is that Zoe is mixed race (black/white) and Rebecca is bisexual.

The only problem I really had with the book is that it felt a little rushed in the end. It definitely could've been a little longer but it's a minor gripe.

The setting is in a location on the outskirts of London (I think).

Fun read. 4.3 stars

CLo says

3.5

This is the first story I have read from this author and I liked enough. It was sweet and the writing was well done enough to keep me interested and engaged in the story. I did find it odd that POV was announced for each chapter when it was technically done in third person...even if the majority was from Zoe. I mean...it was easy enough to figure it out without any confusion. Regardless, the characters were good and though I was hoping for just a little more angst it was a good read. I do wish for more more depth...I don't know to get that

but I would have liked it. I do agree with some reviews that things worked out just a little to perfectly but hey that's a romantic fiction for ya.

Overall, a decent read. I will give this author reads in the future...so an easy 3.5* for me.
