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Twenty-six-year-old Nicci Bradford doesn't exactly love her job fixing the grammar in company brochures, or living in Boston, or going on awkward fix-ups with men she barely knows. What she does love is Kung Fu movies...especially the ones starring Jackie Chan. Their timeless and inspired wisdom offers her a philosophy of life. The problem is she doesn't have much of a life to philosophize about. But Jackie Chan is also a pretty good action hero. And when opportunity-and risk-present themselves in unexpected ways, it's up to Nicci to follow her hero's example, focus on her goal, and strike...

Coffee And Kung Fu Details

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From Reader Review Coffee And Kung Fu for online ebook

Bernice says

I randomly borrowed this book from the library on a whim, and thought that it was going to be a boring read. Without reading the summary and basing it on the cover alone (I didn't read the title), I originally perceived that the main character was going to be another annoying, girly-girl, gushy romantic.

Boy. I was wrong.

So very wrong.

Although at times the story seemed a little slow. I enjoyed this book a lot. I love the main character and her cynicism. I can relate to her love of drinking jasmine tea from a Yi-Xing teapot. I can sense her frustration of being trapped and lonely in her relationship with Rob as I had once gone that road. There is also her desire for adventure and returning to Asia and her boredom with her current desk job. It reminded me once again to keep dreaming.

Gail Berna-Dompke says

I wasn't really looking for a romance. I was looking more for farce by the title and a whole lot more of Jackie Chan. It would be easily adaptable into a movie, something Drew Barrymore would be good in. The descriptions of the Phillipines and Hong Kong were excellent.

Chelsea Ferguson says

I started this book out knowing not to expect much. This was going to be what I call a book clense. something easy and light to read after finishing a heavy book! I found the main character to be boring. that is until the very end when she, finally, took charge of her life! I pretty much spent the book going, what a stupid girl! clearly I was having a hard time relating to her!

Brittany says

Yes it's a girly book BUT it is a nice quick read and for once I don't hate the author. Plus there are a ton of Kung fu references...always a bonus.

Ginger K says

Coffee and Kung Fu is the chick lit book to which I compare all other chick lit. Funny, engaging, light reading - but featuring a protagonist I didn't cringe about identifying with. As Nicci navigates work and

romance, she turns for guidance, not to martinis with the girls, but to the wisdom of the kung fu masters in the movies she loves. That's right: she's quietly a geek. The supporting characters are also delightfully quirky; her grandfather in particular stands out, with his ability to tell everything he needs to know by the shoes a man wears.

But what I most appreciate is that the protagonist ultimately must decide between accepting those things young women are *expected* to want or taking a risk on something better suited for her own happiness. It's a refreshing dilemma compared the cookie cutter desires of many chick lit heroines.

Sara Laughs says

Cute story. Didn't hate it. It's not my genre so I didn't love it, but I'd recommend it to people who do like chick lit.

Katherine Rowland says

There were pieces of this book that were marvelous, paragraphs that I read a couple of times because I wanted to savor them. Unfortunately, they were spread too thinly among other paragraphs that were hackneyed and trite.

I loved the framework of starting each chapter with a Kung Fu tidbit. THE main character, Nicci, resonated with me from the beginning, though some of that resonance faded as the story progressed. I can understand being both brash and timid, so I didn't find that terribly off-putting. There was a lot of potential in the character, and I really hoped that Brichoux would delve deep and really explore her world. Instead, I felt that Nicci spent all of her time in the other world that she had left behind: the exotic, crowded cities of her youth.

And, really, that last bit points up one of the big downfalls of the book for me: Nicci seems like she walks through the story, but doesn't really engage with it. She does things. Other people do things. The events of others' lives bump up against the events in Nicci's life, but she never seems to be particularly engaged. She judges other people (and yes, there is some growth in this area), but then is upset when others judge her. Nicci comes across as though the author thinks she's a hero just for *being*; other characters are contrasted unfavorably with her throughout. The shallowness of Nicci's involvement is reflected in the lack of detail in most of the narrative; most of the book is somewhat featureless, with the exception of the unnecessary and overly-graphic sex scenes and descriptions of the foreign lands Nicci longs for.

The other main downfall of the book was that it was so very formulaic. And yes, chick lit is notoriously so, and I'm prepared to allow it; but this was all of the formulas in one. Of *course* all the married people are secretly not-totally-content; of *course* the solution to one's discontent is to fly to another country; of *course* there are wise gurus who pop up just when the main character needs them; of *course* the world of work is horrible, et cetera. The tired parts of the book, combined with too much sex for this prudish girl and the isolated feel of the main character, made this tough to slog through once I got past the opening few chapters.

Yodamom says

This was a thinker, a reflection pool into our why some of us do the things we do. I was not expecting that.

Honestly, I don't know what I expected I bought this for the cover and back cover, it mentioned Jackie Chan and Kung Fu movies. I guess I expected a slap stick movie kind of feel to it. I really enjoyed it, I was glued to the pages, I wanted to see her wake up and live. It was very therapeutic There were many moments where I wanted to teak her ear and tell her to smell the coffee more. Dang it was better than Dr Phil or Oprah.

When she is sitting in an abortion clinic with someone she looks around at all the women i the room and wonders.

"How many of them are paying for being lonely?"

Sad moment of clarity, how much we alter our own needs just to not be alone.

"Even if it's illogical, I go through life as if the people I love were Planning on living forever. As if they had a choice. I skip along my merry way, confident that when I need them, they'll be there. Most people do this. Unless forced to by illness or necessity, the human being shies away from living with the constant reminder of death,....."

Nicci, is a young woman out in the world trying to find her place. She is following the rules set by society all the shoulds, but it's not quiet fitting. She is the piece that doesn't have the right bend to fit in just so. So she stumbles, but never falls. Go Nicci.

S.m. Torres says

I bought this book for \$4 when I was fourteen and it was perhaps one of the books that made me write my characters as honestly as I could make them. Second time around, six years later, and the magic isn't entirely destroyed, but it isn't entirely there either.

It's a RomCom, to put it simply. Follows the formula and everything, so it's not something to be all, "I will be reading the greatest novel of time!" It's Coffee & Kung Fu, a book where you follow the snarky life of a redhead raised in the Philippines, in love with kung fu movies starring Jackie Chan, and awkwardly trying to understand why every damn relationship in the novel is failing. No. Seriously. There's just barely a happy ending when it comes to love in this book, which is weird since it's a RomCom.

Yet, despite its formulaic ways, it's still a fun read. I liked it when I was 14 and I like it now. I take it lightheartedly. Something to say, "Yeah, you'll learn a kung fu lesson while the narrator describes some foreplay action going on." Not to say that kung fu themes are being exploited--the contrary. Pretty sure the author, Karen Brichoux, has plenty in common with the narrator, so descriptions are in detail about both the Philippines, Hong Kong, and every movie described--with consideration that it's a novel here, not a broadcast for educational learning. You'll learn whether you want to or not. (But you'll want to)

All in all, a nice summer read. Despite it being about winter holidays. Details...

Karen says

I work for a publishing company/book distributor type place in Boston. And I love Jackie Chan. Coffee too. That's why I put this book on my TBR several years ago. What took me so long to read it? Well, I've read good chick lit and bad chick lit. Either way, I find it almost impossible to relate to the women in these books. They are nothing like me so my reviews are often full of ranting about bubble-headed women who shop too

much. I only read chick lit or women's fiction when I've overdosed on other genres and need a break. Blah, blah, blah. I'll shut up now and say this is the best chick lit I've ever read. And not just because the chick likes Jackie Chan.

Nicci Bradford is lost and lonely and unfulfilled. She is at a job she doesn't love and is surrounded by people she has nothing in common with. I can relate.

She becomes involved with a man who she has nothing in common with other than great sex. Then there's the man the reader knows she's supposed to be with and you want to reach into the book and slap a big WTF sign on her forehead. Sure, the storyline is predictable enough. But the romance(s) are refreshingly lacking in sugar sweetness. That's left for the coffee (and tea).

Bethany says

Disappointing. Expected frothy chick lit, but got way too much whiny introspection and gratuitous trashy language and scenes with random Kung fu references here and there. Overall: So slow, kinda sad, too whiny and trashy.

Tanya Taimanglo says

Picked up by the end. Some likeable characters, namely Ethan and gramps.

Bark says

This was an all-around terrific book and I found it difficult to put down. Nicci wasn't your typical self-centered, poor me, cynical type chick lit gal and I was very much able to empathize with her various dilemma's (work, friendship, guys and life in general). Loved the way she was a true introvert and was comforted by Jackie Chan flicks and popcorn (for me it's B-horror flicks & ice cream). Was witty at times. "Wearing a thong is the same thing as deliberately giving yourself a wedgie." It was also beautifully poetic over such a simple thing as a smile and a laugh. "He laughs. I swear to God, a rainbow slides down that laugh and lands in my cubicle. I can feel the last drops of the tropical rain and hear the Maya birds fluttering in the dwarf palms. The wind sighs through the trees, and I can smell the earth sucking up the water . . . and a great, fat rainbow spreads itself all over my desk." This passage turned a typical mundane worker-bee day into a moment of heart-stopping beauty.

Debbie says

This is quite possibly the best chick lit book I've ever read. I don't know what made me pick up this book at B&N other than it was on the bargain rack and the main character was in love with kung fu movies... It was an impulse buy and a pretty good one at that. It's chick lit with a heart and a brain, believe it or not. Very good read. Starts off like typical chick-lit but about half way through, gains momentum and the ending is sad and happy all at the same time. Highly recommended.

Alison Perry says

Brichoux's debut novel is a pithy literary waif silently waiting to claim its place among the cookie-cutter quirky romantic comedies at Blockbuster. It is the same offbeat tale of romance in the big city done a thousand times before, yet that for some reason when on the big screen rarely goes un-noticed (unfortunately for the historical sales of the book). Brichoux shuffles around the irrelevant details just a bit, but not enough to make an endearing or lasting impression. It wasn't my cup of tea, but if you're the sensitive type, looking for a quick, light-hearted read with too many unnecessarily graphic sex scenes, then this is the book for you.

Based on my own personal rating system, I give Coffee & Kung Fu:****

*-"Holy Piece of Crap, Batman!"

**-"ppphhhttt..."

***-"Ugh."

****-"Egh."

*****-"I don't necessarily regret paying \$.99 for this book at the local second hand store."

Amy says

I picked this up, and was reasonably sure I'd read it before, but couldn't remember it at all. So when I needed a break from a huge marathon book I am reading, I picked this one up. I've pasted my original review below. Interesting that everything held true for me from from the first read, except I really appreciated Nicci's relationship with her grandfather and her interactions with Jimmy, the homeless guy more. And this time through, Melanie struck a little truer, especially when her vulnerability came through.

Original review from May 2005:

Kind of chick lit gone to the Dark side.

Parts I liked very much- the author's analysis of life via Kung Fu movies (which are popular with a certain male crowd), grandpa's way of analyzing everyone by their shoes, the gentleness of Ethan (he reminds me of a friend of mine), and the way smells and sounds pour off the page with descriptions of life in places "far off".

Didn't like sex for sex's sake. I'm too much of a prude I guess- or old fashioned. Could never be in a relationship only for physical pleasure. It's just a piece of the pie, not the whole thing. Rob, Carol, Keyth, and the Barbie doll (was her name Melanie? I already forget) never struck a note of truth to me, but Nicci, with all her self doubt and loneliness did.

And...I'm a sucker for first books of authors.

LoLo says

I really wanted to love this one. I think half the problem is the cover and the other half is with odd things like tone and dialogue. I'll explain why I dare judge a book by it's cover. Because it's a freaking **book**. The cover is not something it's randomly born with. The cover should be created with thoughtful reflection on what the book is, not a blind stab in the dark. In this case, a stab in the dark that resulted in failed expectations of what lies within. With the electric pink cover and a title consisting of 2 high-octane things, I was expecting something akin to a Jackie Chan movie after the cast has had 4 cups of espresso. And maybe some explosions. What I got instead wasn't bad in it's own right, it just wasn't *that*. So what was it, then? It was a meditative reflection of a story. Which is fine and sometimes beautifully poetic, but felt like a limp noodle given what the cover and title tried to sell. I did like how interesting scenes and morals from classic Kung Fu movies were interspersed with the narrator's reflections on her life. The parts about growing up as a Missionary kid in the Philippines was cool too. But the dialogue felt weird. Like the dialogue from a play written by kids in junior high. Same with the humor- it provoked an "eh" at best.

Adam O'Brien says

I was lifeguarding as a teenager, and instead of buying a new book every other day, I would just browse the library for whatever looked interesting. The title of this book had two of my favorite things, but it was misleading. Jackie Chan references are cool, but the story itself is unimaginative and trashy.

Nessa Flax says

I'm always delighted to "discover" a new author. "Coffee ..." is a delightful read. The main character, Nicci, is wonderfully human (flaws and all). Her challenges to act according to her true self amid life's usual challenges (relationships, work, friends, family, social expectations) resonate with reality. Written with humor and insight to how most of our lives never move smoothly from Point A to Point B, you'll miss Nicci when you've reached the last page. I am happy to learn that Brichoux has written 3 other books!

Amanda Bynum says

Here's what the book jacket has to say about Coffee and Kung Fu by Karen Brichoux:

Twenty-six-year-old Nicci Bradford doesn't exactly love her job fixing the grammar in company brochures, or living in Boston, or going on awkward fix-ups with men she barely knows. What she does love is Kung Fu movies...especially the ones starring Jackie Chan. Their timeless and inspired wisdom offers her a philosophy of life. The problem is she doesn't have much of a life to philosophize about. But Jackie Chan is also a pretty good action hero. And when opportunity-and risk-present themselves in unexpected ways, it's up to Nicci to follow her hero's example, focus on her goal, and strike...

See, here's the problem with this description: it basically tells you nothing about the book! There are lots of characters, and little sub-plots, and quite a bit of romance (including a couple racy scenes - hubba, hubba). Nicci is a complex character - well, as complex as a character in what's basically chick-lit can be - with a solid backstory, but you hardly get any of that in the book description. Which is unfortunate, because this is a

pretty fun little book. It's got some poignant moments, and some grrrl power kick-ass moments, and overall it's a solid but quick read. I'm afraid that no one will know that, though, just based on this description.

So here's MY description: A sassy yet sad-sack heroine with a dead-end job and pathetic love life, Nicci seeks to discover her inner kung fu movie - enlightenment and fulfillment, not to mention a few ass-kicking moves. And when she meets Grinning Boy, it seems as if life could take a turn for the better. But even the kung fu train can jump the tracks, and Rob just might prove to be the antagonist to Nicci's hero. Can one little lady find love AND a fulfilling career, and never drop her chopsticks?

Or something like that.

Coffee and Kung Fu - B+
