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Alicia M. Long , Jayne J. Jones

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When recent college graduate Allison Amundson, a small town girl from South Dakota, lands the highly sought after job of scheduler to the newly-elected and rising star of the United States Senate, Senator Anders McDermott III, she thinks she is on the fast track to success.

However, she quickly learns that crazy co-workers, a high maintenance boss, an over-the-top family and an unexpected Presidential bid make Capitol Hill seem even more dysfunctional than portrayed on TV. In fact, it is Capitol Hell.

The second Allison sets foot in the prestigious Senate Russell Building, things begin to go awry. Allison soon realizes her co-workers consist of a Chief of Staff who has little to no control over the antics in the office, a Press Secretary who is not only pompous, but who is constantly primping and preening, and worst of all the Senator himself, who cares more about his rise to fame than the people of Minnesota.

As Allison struggles to juggle a new career, her blooming love interest in Cam (a quiet but loyal Legislative Assistant), and her ever-declining bank account, she is comforted only by her co-worker Janet, a fireplug who spends the majority of her time on-line dating, trying to land a Senator of her own.

Just as Allison and Janet begin to figure out the ins and outs of Capitol Hill, their lives are turned upside down when Senator McDermott announces his bid for President of the United States. Soon, Allison and Janet find themselves at the center of one of the craziest campaigns in history, and hilarity ensues.

This off-beat, funny novel captures and shares what it is like to be a young staffer working on Capitol Hill.

Capitol Hell Details

Date : Published September 4th 2012 by Beaver's Pond Press (first published August 30th 2012)

ISBN : 9781592985364

Author : Alicia M. Long , Jayne J. Jones

Format : Paperback 323 pages

Genre : Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Fiction, Humor

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From Reader Review Capitol Hell for online ebook

Sarah Erdreich says

Couldn't finish - repetitive, predictable, unreadable.

Cindy Roesel says

Thank God, Amen and Whoopee! The 2012 Elections are over! But for all you political junkies out there going through withdrawal, there's a new VERY FUNNY novel just for you! It's called CAPITOL HELL and it's about a gal working for a fictitious Senator based on my real-life neighbor, Minnesota Republican, Norm Coleman. Co-authors, Jayne Jones and Alicia Long worked on Coleman's 2002 Senate campaign and for several years after as DC staffers.

Those of you in the Land of Ten-Thousand Lakes will instantly recognize the fictitious Sen. Anders McDermott III, everyone else get ready for a sizzling page turner. Politics is politics anywhere you play it, especially "inside the beltway." No one ever said working on the hill was easy, but recent college graduate, Allison Amundson certainly isn't home in the Midwest anymore. She's hired as the senator's scheduler and now she belongs to whoever is calling or texting her on the campaign Blackberry 24/7/365. That includes the Senator, his staff, and family, including the nanny.

Allison's co-workers include a small circle of people whose job it is to jump, sit, run, and write and in some cases end up crying to make sure Senator Anders McDermott, III's life flows effortlessly. The McDermott office motto is "ATD," for Attention to Detail, which Allison is often reminded at various decibel levels. Allison finds comfort in fellow Midwestern co-worker and new BFF, Janet who is also shell-shocked to find she's working inside what could pass for a carnival.

This novel isn't your typical chick-lit. At one point, or actually, several, Allison tries to strike up a relationship with one of her co-workers, but that isn't possible because the only real relationship she has is with her job. Since I once was in my early 20's and had a prestigious pressure cooker position such as Allison's, I can appreciate her focusing on her career. I really enjoyed reading CAPITOL HELL, going behind the scenes and the little bit of flirting here and there was enough for me.

What about all the antics performed by the politicians, their families and even nannies? Come on, it's fiction, and it certainly provides a lot of comedy.

CAPITOL HELL is available on Amazon and B&N.com.

Betsy says

Amateurishly written, poorly edited and trite. As a former Senate staffer, I picked this up with high hopes, but nearly tossed it across the room several times. (On one of those occasions, a character "inquisitively questioned" somebody. Repetitious much?) I'd call this a squandered opportunity.

Teressa Morris says

I loved reading about Washington D.C. from the point of view of a wide-eyed 22 year old. I have never been to D.C., but the writers' sassy descriptions helped me to understand the ins and outs of an everyday staffer's life a little better. Allison describes her second day on the job, and her walk to work:

"DC sidewalks aren't the sensible sidewalks found in South Dakota or Minnesota. They're uneven bricks grouted together with large, heel-grabbing gaps in between. After five blocks I'd already lost the fight with the sidewalk three times. First, my shoe would get stuck in a sidewalk crack, which would cause me to trip. Luckily, I was just clumsy enough to have had plenty of past experience in balance recovery."

This paragraph reminded me of how many times I tripped on a crack in the sidewalk (even in flats) and also of the time I wore brand new heels to college and after walking around for a couple of hours, had another student approach me and whisper that I was bleeding from my heels and leaving a trail of blood behind me. What we won't do for fashion when we're young!!

The character of Allison is smart and sassy. I felt for her because she didn't want to take a lot of the crap that her boss and other staffers were dishing out, but she felt like she had to in order to be able to advance in the political world. Her friend Janet is her perfect counterpoint, shy, sweet and deferential, but with very dirty mind!! They find themselves in the middle of one minor catastrophe after another, but using creative problem solving, always manage to come out on top.

The political story line is creative and funny (If this book and the TV show Veep are any indication, it would appear that most members of Congress are, to be polite, more than a little eccentric). I think older women would enjoy looking back on their idealistic youth and younger women would identify even more closely with Allison and Jane. I would not recommend this book for most men - it's pretty firmly in the "chick lit" category.

Lindsay says

I am always a little dubious about starting a new "chick-lit" book; it isn't my first choice genre however, after reading psychological thrillers creepy enough to have me checking under my bed at night I often feel the need to lighten the mood and Capitol Hell sounded like just what I needed. Capitol Hell was laugh out loud funny as well as being interesting, engaging and insightful; it was clear that the personal experiences of the authors added credibility and authenticity to the story.

I really enjoyed experiencing life as Allison, there were points in the story I found myself a little confused or dazed by what was going on but, quickly realised that I didn't have all the facts, because Allison didn't either. As the book progressed the characters really came to life and I found myself taking breaks so I could update my husband on the latest antics or to complain about some unjustified office bitching.

I felt horribly frustrated and a little cheated when the book finished; I so wanted to know what happened during the presidential campaign, find out what craziness Karma pulled out the bag and whether Allison and Cam's relationship developed further. I guess I will just have to wait for the sequel!

Linda says

A very funny and lighthearted story of life on capitol hill. The characters were smart, a little sassy, but yet a little on the naive side. I enjoyed and got a few chuckles from their escapades. A really enjoyable book. I recommend it highly! I received this book free as a Goodreads First Reads

Christine says

This book was really good. The characters did frustrate me because they just took everything and never stood up for themselves. There were tons of Minnesota references that could be confusing to those not familiar with some of the Minnesota quirks.

I won this as a Good reads first and loved it. The authors are creative.

Kelly Woodward says

Really 2 1/2 stars, but I like to round up.

Pros:

- * varied cast of colorful characters
- * moves at a good pace; is rarely slow or dull
- * provides an interesting behind-the-scenes look at politics
- * the staffers have decent values, for the most part

Cons:

- * needs extensive editing; lots of punctuation errors (including an extra period in the heading of every page of chapter eleven), poor word choice, etc.
- * needs more plot structure; sometimes it just feels like a neverending list of anecdotes instead of a novel with a storyline
- * many plot elements seem forced and show up out of the blue (a character's tendency to tearfulness/emotion is not mentioned until it is necessary; same with allergies, etc.)

All in all, a cute story, but very uneven. Some parts were lots of fun to read, but I had to struggle through others.

Jessica says

This book provides a lighthearted look into the life of a scheduler working on Capitol Hill. It definitely reminded me of the time I spent working as an executive assistant - the good times, along with the more trying times, of my tenure.

This is a great laugh out loud type of book for women of all ages. Can't wait for Jayne and Alicia to publish the sequel to Capitol Hell!

Erin says

This book was a very funny portrayal of what a young woman, Allison Amundson from South Dakota, who landed a job on Capitol Hill deals with on a daily basis. The book was hard to put down and I finished it in a day. I enjoyed that no matter what Allison does to help Senator Anders McDermott III, something always goes wrong. She has to deal with the gossipy girls in the office and with their snide remarks. Just when you think that things can't get any worse, they do.

This book will have you laughing with all of Allison's and Janet's excursions and the crazy situations they end up in. I love how Allison is such a down to earth person, and how she really has everyone's best interest at heart but is not afraid to stand up for herself.

Laura says

Probably actually 3 1/2 stars. This was a fun read. I liked the characters and the political storyline. And it's always a refreshing change of pace when the dominant relationship in a novel is a friendship rather than a romance. And it ended with me wanting to know what happens next. I would definitely read a sequel if one is written!

On the downside, the writing could use a little polishing. (Way too many exclamation points, especially in the beginning, and not every line of dialogue has to be accompanied by a "he exclaimed," "she whined," or as one other reviewer noted, "he questioned inquisitively"!) And there were one or two plot developments that seemed implausible enough to bug me. But overall, I'd recommend it for anyone who likes not-too-heavy political novels.

Jan says

I like the book because the authors sent me a copy! Capitol Hell reminded me of my first job, working for Jimmy Carter's Gubernatorial Campaign, then in the Governor's Office. After serving as a go-fer, I was promoted to Prisoner Mail Answer-er. In those days, we typed a letter, and I signed Jimmy Carter's name to each one. It turned me into a Republican! However, Capitol Hell was a fun read for me. I'm into D.C. centric books right now. I no longer think like a 22 year old, so occasionally I wanted to say, "time out," but overall it was one of life's little pleasures - a good book.

Meg - A Bookish Affair says

Okay, let me first say that this book was so much fun! Growing up in the Washington, D.C. area and being majorly afflicted with political fever, at some point in my life, I wondered what it would be like to work on the Hill. I went a totally opposite way after college so I really enjoyed living vicariously through Allison, the main character, in this book. All I can say now is that Allison definitely does not make the Hill as glamorous as I had dreamed that it would be.

Allison is a girl after my own heart. She's smart and all she wants to do is to do a good job. After all, the Hill is her dream. Unfortunately there is a cast of characters who almost seem hellbent on destroying her career or at least making her life miserable. Even if you don't have political aspirations, I think that anyone who has worked in an office setting will enjoy this book. There is the cast of characters that you may find in your own office. They are so dysfunctional that you find yourself wondering how they got the job in the first place. People like that are very funny to read about even if they are not funny to actually have to work with.

I love the writing in this book. Told from the first person perspective, it feels like Allison is a friend telling you exactly what's going on in her world. While the writing and some of the things that happen in the book are indeed funny, the writing is also very smart. I would say that this book is the kind of book you want to read when you need something lighter but you don't want just fluff. This book is definitely more of the brain candy variety.

I was also very excited to see that there might be a hint of a sequel to this book at the end. Will there be? I really hope so!

Bottom line: Funny, smart writing!

Nicole R says

The short synopsis of this chick lit novel completely caught my attention: two women who used to work for a U.S. Senator combined forces to write a book about what you *really* do in your job as a Hill staffer.

Allison is fresh out of college, straight off the campaign trail, and has been offered a job as a scheduler for the newly-elected Senator McDermott. She jumps at the chance to move to Washington DC, get paid much less than she ever expected, work insanely long hours for little thanks, and constantly wonders why she is doing it. Of course, she has her office BFF, her office crush, and her ever at-hand BlackBerry to see her through the days.

Her stories are hilarious and hit oh-so-close to home. While I have never been a scheduler, I totally know what it is like to be asked things that there is no feasible way for you to be able to do....but you have to figure out a way! Things go wrong even though you set them up perfectly and it is still your fault. You had nothing to do what-so-ever with the error that has occurred but you still have to fix it.

The book was probably more funny for me since I experience it on a daily basis - other would probably think it is made up but I assure you it is not! However, the stories soon got to be repetitive and the complete lack of anything good happening was unrealistic. The story attempted to have a story line that progressed to a specific end point, but it was poorly put together and really felt like it ended in the middle of a larger story.

I probably could have overlooked some of that and rounded this book up to a 3 but then there was the storyline of Janet and her love interest. It was ridiculous. It involved a bit too much crude sexual foreplay description for me without any real point. And it was a situation that I like to think no staffer would ever be stupid enough to get herself into. And, if she did, there is NO WAY the media would not exploit it. It was just stupid and absurd. It made Janet look like an idiot. It made women look bad.

Okay, my rant is over. If you work on the Hill and especially if you are a scheduler then this is a good read as a quick, entertaining chick lit. If you are anyone else, I would give this book a pass.

Samantha Julmisse says

What's does working in the senate, and then jumping into a presidential campaign train head on make for? I'll tell you what, a hilarious adventure sure to get the driest souls laughing so hard they'll have tears streaming down their face. In Capitol Hell we join the lovely Allison and several of her companions as we make our way not only through the life of being an underpaid senate work, but being risen up to becoming an underpaid presidential campaign worker! Not only do you get to see the funny side of our government (I mean it is politics, who would have thought it was such a laugh riot when the root words are poli- which means many and tics referring to blood sucking creatures), but you can go through all the sweet little scandals and drama. From trying to get a fellow worker in the office to notice her to dealing with a hostile work environment complaint and who can forget the ever faithful CROTCH (when you find out what this is you will probably die laughing so don't go searching it until after you finish reading this please :p). The characters were a laugh riot, with wit and sass and some misplaced here and there. They really know how to spark up an office building, but the work doesn't stop after you leave. Oh no, it follows you everywhere (remind to never go to work in politics).

I really don't know how to describe how much I enjoyed this book but I'm trying really hard here x3. From very literal blind dates to typos that can just about ruin anything, you've got yourself a book with laughter, lust, hard work that for the most part doesn't really seem to pay off (how could mom lie to me about that) and just so much thrown into the pages of a well written fast paced book that is sure to give everyone just what they want. In all honesty when I was first asked to review this book I was hesitant to read it, I mean when did politics suddenly become humorous. In fear of finding jokes that would make no sense to me I became pleasantly surprised that it was just the opposite.
