



Smart Move

Melanie Jacobson

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The spark was undeniable the night Sandy Burke met the devastatingly handsome Jake. Conversation flowed easily, so after they parted, she waited eagerly for his call. It never came. A high-powered career woman at the ripe old age of twenty-seven, Sandy feels she has had her heart broken one too many times, and now the redhead trendsetter is facing a major quarter-life crisis. After some introspection, Sandy determines that helping others may be the key to helping herself. When she's presented with a job offer in Washington DC as the director of New Horizons, a nonprofit organization benefiting women in poverty, it seems providential.

But now that she's moved, two major obstacles threaten the success of her first assignment: The first is her mother and her constant fog of less-than-helpful New Age advice. Secondly, plans to build another New Horizons outreach center have come to a screeching halt, thanks to the interference of a pesky lawyer and his attempts to reverse zoning approval for the building project.

After weeks of verbal sparring over the phone, Sandy is in for a shock when she comes face-to-face with her foe. The smooth voice at the other end of the line is a heart-wrenching blast from the past. In this twist of fate, Sandy sees the perfect opportunity to ensure the success of the outreach center — and to enact a little payback on this man she thought she'd left behind. And so the battle of wits begins. Will Sandy's "flirt-to-convert" plot sway her nemesis' determination to block the center, or will his charming and undeniably attractive ways convince the sassy redhead to give love a second chance?

Smart Move Details

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From Reader Review Smart Move for online ebook

Tausha says

I was excited when I found this book. I really like this author and the other books of hers I have read. I struggled with this one though. I had a really hard time liking the main character Sandy. I felt she was judgemental, sarcastic, and prideful. It was supposed to come across as "sass and spunk" but it seemed more "mean and cynical" to me. I kept expecting to see her grow through it, but she was pretty close minded right to the end. I loved Jake! He made for a great Hero, but I struggled seeing them together. He was pretty patient to stick around so long. The story line was good and I am still glad I read the book...it just won't go to my read again pile. :)

Kelsy says

So, I guess sexual harassment as OK as long as the man is simply trying to convince the woman that she cares for him just as much as he cares for her. This wasn't a terrible read. In fact, there were some fun moments, and feelings of annoyance were trumped by the fact that I wanted to know how the novel concluded. But, for the most part, the story was full of a bunch of superficial tidbits about fashion and how the main character's life was centered around her supposedly awesome career and vast amounts of clothing. I found very little depth, and completed the novel feeling more annoyed than satisfied. I wouldn't necessarily steer readers away from this novel, but it was just OK and only may be worth the time.

Maaike says

A pretty good story! I liked the characters, especially how real they felt, with individual quirks, interests, and personalities. I wish we could have been shown more of their initial meeting rather than being told about it, but overall it was a lovely tale, with my favorite character being her mother. <3

Melanie Jacobson says

I love it. Of course I love it. I'm so happy it's ALMOST HERE!

Anna says

This was pretty cute, but it was probably not the best fit for my mood. It has a lot of arguing in it, some of it quite funny, but it can be exhausting as well.

Katie W says

Sandy is a no-nonsense go-getter and her mission right now is to save the place chosen to house women who are trying to get back on their feet again. Jake is a lawyer for the opposing side and is someone from her past.

Sandy is very standoffish. The way she pushes and pushes (and pushes) Jake away is crazy--and yet he keeps coming back and trying. I would have given up. Her background explains a little about why she is this way, but she seems to have a very hard time forgiving and moving on--even with her own mom.

I did like seeing her side of things (she was a minor character in Twitterpated), but I wish she had a happier story.

Content: clean.

Suzana says

I have read all of Melanie's books and have enjoyed her writing style and characters. I was especially excited to read about Sandy from Twitterpatted, but sadly I was disappointed. The writing is still great, but Sandy turned out to be a huge disappointment. I found her narrow minded and quick to judge without all the facts, and not one willing to research the facts. I was also annoyed at the ending. After all the grief she gave Jake, he's the one who apologizes, but Sandy didn't and I felt she was the one who should have. I can't believe Jake stuck around for so long.

Also, I could be me, but it felt there were political undercurrents that just rubbed me the wrong way, which is why I rated so low. I was so looking forward to a few hours of escape after a VERY stressful month and especially stressful week and instead of feeling refreshed from reading a good book, I was perturbed!

Jacob Proffitt says

I really liked Sandy. She was engaging and vivid and I loved her passion and determination. I also liked . . . uh. Well. I liked Sandy. Oh, her friends didn't suck! But that's about it. Jake was pretty much a dead loss from the start and never improved.

The biggest problem with Jake is subtle, but it persists from the start to the end and is key to my dissatisfaction with the book. See, he's kind of fundamentally selfish. That's behind the past where he blew Sandy off after they "connected" for an amazing night of good conversation in an unlikely setting. Which was bad, but his excuse made it *even worse*. (view spoiler) This persists, though, through the whole story. He doesn't ever seem to think "hey, maybe I can prepare Sandy for this thing that's coming up, even if obliquely." or "hey, maybe I can talk to my client and see if I can't give her a heads-up or something." But no, it's all *trust me* because . . . uh.

And that's the other thing. I never could find what attracted them to each other. I mean, chemistry, sure. But I never got the sense of actual connection beyond yearning. Frankly, Sandy's right to shut him out based on how he doesn't seem to consider how she might react to the blind-siding he knows she's going to receive. Sure, he plans mitigating actions but he does so completely under her radar. He doesn't even bother to inform

her of his emotional stake in their relationship or that he has concerns or fear that the strictures of his job might impact it. He's so connected to his vision of how things will play out that he doesn't consider her likely reaction.

I had this flying at a low three stars hoping Jacobson would pull it together at the end. Unfortunately, the reverse was true. Jake's actions at the end sank him further, in my opinion, and reinforced his fundamental, selfish character. It was all centered around him and his vision of how things would work out. Frankly, Sandy's taking a real gamble taking him back, though at least they shouldn't run into professional conflict in future...

A note about LDS: This book is completely and unselfconsciously Mormon. There are a lot of cultural and religious terms that are presented without explanation or elaboration. This isn't a bad thing, but needs pointing out.

Lisa (Bookworm Lisa) says

This book had me right from the beginning. I love it when I can have fun reading and laugh a time or two.

Sandy is a great main character. She is sassy and witty. She has a great sense of self, in spite of her less than conventional upbringing. In fact she may be so successful because of she had to learn from a young age to stand firm in her ideals and beliefs. Her mother is a new age guru. She has really taught Sandy many great life skills from her "religion", but some of her beliefs are a bit extreme.

Jake is a lawyer. He and Sandy met a year previous to this book and hit it off, unfortunately for him, he didn't call. He now has to prove his intentions, of course it is unfortunate that he is on the other side of legal wrangling from Sandy. She refers to him as "el diablo" and it's not in an affectionate way.

The sparks fly between the two of them. They have great chemistry. The only one who really can't see it is Sandy. She is so focused on her job and proving that she is right that she is blinded to what is around her.

I loved reading this book and now Melanie Jacobson is on my radar, I will be checking out her other books.

Lexie says

YAY!!!! Two Melanie Jacobson books in one year?! How awesome is that! The only thing that would be better? THREE!!! :)

Anyway, enough celebrating. On to the book. First off, how cute is the cover?! (I really want those shoes!) It gives you a taste of what the book is like - a fun, cute, and romantic story set in the sophisticated world of east coast politics.

I love when romances begin with the characters starting out as arch-enemies. It is inevitable that they will end up together but it is so fun to see the sparks fly as their relationship goes from "hate" to "love". I especially liked how Sandy referred to Jake as "El Diablo"!

My favorite part of Sandy's character is that she is a smart, driven, and successful woman who is confident in who she is. I admire her passion for the outreach center and her willingness to fight for what is right. I love that she doesn't play dating games and is honest and upfront with Jake. And even though her stubbornness gets her into trouble a couple of times, it all turns out in the end.

Most of the "comedy" half of this romantic comedy comes from Sandy's mother, Magdalena. (You can imagine what she is going to be like just from her name!) She was hilarious! And yes, if she was my mother, she would probably have driven me insane. So I give Sandy credit for putting up with her. But I love her colorful and unique personality and the crazy antics she adds to the story.

Smart Move is a companion novel to Twitterpated. However, it is definitely a "stand-alone" book and only references parts of the Twitterpated story.

Overall, it is fantastic, "non-put-downable", success from the queen of LDS romantic comedy!

Aimee (Getting Your Read On) says

Really, Melanie Jacobson? You want ME to review your book? (Big squee, little squee, dance a jig or two.) Okay. I'll review it. :)

If you have never read a book by Melanie Jacobson, you are missing out. Melanie writes LDS fiction with such fun and wit that you will be smiling the whole time.

Sandy. Oh, Sandy. (I'm having some Grease flashbacks here) You mean well. You have such passion for your job and you are so good at it. Your mom may be a TAD BIT odd and you may have been burned a bit by love in the past but can't you see that incredibly handsome, charming and determined guy right in front of you just begging for a chance to prove himself?! Sheesh, Sandy. Give the poor guy a chance. And when he does an idiot thing, can't you be nice? You do so enjoy his kisses, right?

The above was my plea to Sandy. If you couldn't tell. Sometimes I just wanted to shake that Sandy! She was so obstinate. She had some valid reasons for the wall of protection and it was good to see it come down as she learns to trust and love both mom and Jake again.

One of my favorite scenes in the book is when Sandy is trying to get something that has fallen way back inside a cupboard thing at work. She is down on the floor, wiggling her way inside to get it when she realizes she has caught her hair and can't get out. Guess who comes in at that very moment? Jake. Of course. So, with her bum sticking out in a very less than lady like way and her humiliation at an all time high, Sandy accepts Jake's offer to help her untangle. It is so funny and tension filled that I am still smiling and thinking about it days later.

I enjoyed this book so much. It was fun and flirty and provided me with a happy distraction from real life not so fun things. Thank you, Melanie for letting me read your book. It was really my pleasure.

Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says

Melanie Jacobson writes enjoyable, witty contemporary romances with LDS main characters, so the boy-girl action is limited to kissing, but without any other really noticeable religious content or proselytizing. They're great when I want a romantic read that's quick, light and fun but doesn't make me feel like I'm killing off my brain cells.

This particular novel has Jake, a lawyer who's almost too sharp for his own good, tangling with Sandy, a cute redhead who finds him attractive, but is at odds with him over a legal issue: they're on opposite sides of a zoning battle, with Sandy fighting for the rights of her employer to open a new center to help poverty-stricken women gain employment skills. Jake and Sandy also have a bit of a history: they spent one magical evening together a year ago, but then Jake disappeared from her life without ever calling her. Now he wants back in her life, but (a) Sandy's still carrying a grudge because he blew her off back then, and (b) she can't see how to have a relationship with someone who's fighting against a cause that's so important to her.

I had a couple of fairly major issues with the plot. First, Jake is kind of a nasty shark of a lawyer at the beginning, but gets much nicer very quickly when he realizes he's dealing with his old acquaintance Sandy. His rudeness at the beginning didn't jibe well with the nice guy he's really supposed to be. Second, I think he was playing too fast and loose with his ethical obligations in connection with this case and his actions toward Sandy and her organization, particularly toward the end. I'm a lawyer, and his actions just weren't passing the gut test for me. But at the same time, I'm not a litigator, and I'm not really certain whether he was on the wrong side of the legal ethics rules or not.

For all I know, Melanie Jacobsen got her plot vetted by a lawyer who knows ethics [ETA: she did--see comment #2 in the thread], so I'm reluctant to come down too hard on this. I suppose I could take this to one of my partners who's a litigator or ethical expert, but I'm having a difficult time envisioning a conversation with another lawyer that begins with the words, "So I was reading this romance novel, and it raises some interesting legal ethics issues that I'd like your input on . . ."

3.5 stars, rounding up because overall I still thought this was one of the better LDS romances I've read, with some quirky and interesting secondary characters.

Kathy * Bookworm Nation says

I've read and enjoyed Ms Jacobson's other books and was excited when I saw she had a new one coming out. I was a little surprised when I had a hard time getting into this one though. From the start, I didn't really like our heroine Sandy. Which is never a good sign when you're starting a book and already don't care for the lead character. I was really hoping she would grow on me, but she never did. I thought from beginning to end that she was narrow minded and was always jumping to conclusions. At the end of the day she just seemed cold to me. I couldn't understand what Jake saw in her.

I liked Jake, although I wish he would have stood up for himself a little more. At one point he finally takes a stand and even tells Sandy he is done. But, the very next time they are together he starts chasing her again. He was always chasing her. It's great that he is crazy about her (for some reason), but come on. I just wish he would have let her stew a little bit, let her think she has actually lost him. She was constantly putting him in the wrong, when he never actually did *anything* wrong. So, the whole time he is trying to win her over, when really she should have been trying to win him over.

I didn't really feel the chemistry between them. I guess we're supposed to assume that once this case was over things would go all happily ever after, but I have some doubts. Sandy never really proved herself. Sandy never really showed any growth. IMO. I get that she had a messed up childhood, crazy mom and nonexistent dad. But, I would have liked to see her show a little faith. Speaking of faith, I would have liked to see her faith play a bigger role in the story. It seemed pretty non-existent and I wasn't sure why it was even brought up if it wasn't going to be a part of the character or growth. It just seemed like a plot devise that would occasionally bring them together (he's her home teacher, FHE, church, etc.)

Wow, this sounds harsher than I intended. Overall, it was okay, others will probably like it more than I did. I'll still look for and read anything Ms. Jacobson writes, this one just didn't click with me.

Content: Clean.

(I just realized this is a companion novel to Twitterpated.)

Taffy says

First line:

"Sandy tapped the toe of her high-heeled boot as she considered its sharp point and where it would do the most damage to Jake Manning."

Sandy Burke has her heart in the right place. She wants to help women who need a hand up and she's passionate about saving the place she works that helps those women.

Jake Manning is a lawyer with a good, honest work ethic. He's been hired to stop the place where Sandy works from building an annex.

Unbeknownst to either party, they met, and connected a year ago. But now they are on opposite sides of a good fight.

Ms. Jacobson is a good writer and does a good job at keeping romantic tension in the story. This is a good, clean story that I was able to read in one sitting.

I have to admit though that I was annoyed with Sandy's character. While she was passionate about her side, she never listened to Jake's side. She'd rant and rave about evil corporations and how if Jake liked her he'd back off. Jake tried to explain his side several times but she always cut him off or walk away. It got old. I felt sorry for Jake and wondered WHY! he kept coming back to her. I know he felt a strong connection but why?

Finally, they called a truce and dated (against their better judgement) and something happened at court where Sandy decided she hated Jake...again. Then finally, in the last few pages of the book, Sandy really listened to Jake and they resolved their differences. I couldn't help wonder if they married what their relationship would be. Would Sandy ever listen to Jake? Would he feel he had to constantly defend himself? Not a great start I think.

And don't even get me started on how she treated her mother. Once again, Sandy didn't listen, only judged. They did make amends towards the end, which was good!

Rating: PG

S: No

V: No

L: No

Liked:

Sandy's real name was Sand Dollar

Jake

Clean, romantic book

Book cover

Disliked:

Sandy not changing until the very end

Relationship issues

Monica says

Melanie Jacobson certainly made a Smart Move in her latest novel. Sandy (Jessie's roommate from Twitterpated) has moved across the country to pursue a new job and lifestyle. Her change of scene prompted by the encounter a year earlier with a man that left her hanging and emotionally off balance. A classic romance with misconstrued motives and flirty banter mixed with colorful characters, Smart Move is definitely a solid read dressed for success.
