



## More than Rivals

*Mary Whitney*

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## **More than Rivals** Mary Whitney

When is a chance meeting not by chance? Maybe when you hide who you are.

The night before Lily Robles announces she's running for Congress, she meets a handsome stranger at a coffee shop. Their chemistry is strong, and not wanting to scare him off, she avoids telling him she's a local politician. She doesn't want the night to end—until she realizes he's one of her opponents in the primary.

Jack Bengston can't place where he's seen Lily's pretty face. He's taken with her, and he's sure the feeling is mutual—until she leaves him hanging and without her number.

When Jack and Lily meet again as candidates, California State Senator John Bengston and Sonoma County Supervisor Ursula Robles, they find an awkward romantic encounter is no way to kick-off a campaign, but how do you stop an attraction once it starts? There are times when politicians want to put their identities aside.

## **More than Rivals Details**

Date : Published March 11th 2013 by Posit Publishing

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Author : Mary Whitney

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## **From Reader Review More than Rivals for online ebook**

### **Anne OK says**

Short non-plus political romance trope. Light on just about everything including romance and plot. Readers will find editing problems as well. This one was an Amazon freebie so I'll not complain too much.

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### **Azucena Sandoval says**

We are in the year of Political Romance, "House of Cards" on Netflix, new Political Romance/Thrillers on TV, why not get your reading fix with Mary Whitney?

Mary Whitney combines California Politics and Romance, keeps the reader either running through Point Reyes National Park to the Community Town-halls in Northern California with the same aplomb as Ursula Robles would in her sensible pumps. Her heroine has spunk, grace and intelligent, why not hang out in that world for a while? The best part of this predicament is that one can do that, since Mary has a few more books in her published shelves, so go ahead read all of them.

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### **Rae Sontheyon says**

Predictable but Pleasant Political Read

If you are a reader looking for danger, suspense and scandal . . . look elsewhere. This book is a sweet romance filled with witty banter, flirtation and real romance. Its not a book you need to over think or isn't over sexualized, it's just a pleasant romance to read a cold day. Where to rivals might realize they have something in common that could be more than a race.

Though the plot and outcome may be cliché the characters are still cute and you still want them to have their HEA. Ursula Robles, or Lily, is a hard worker who as a single mom, a nurse and County Supervisor that decides to make a run for Congress. State Senator Jack Bengston is a privileged son of politics who's background groomed him for the Senate and higher. These two should be perfect rivals but turnout to be a perfect match instead, they can't help being friends and perhaps more, if the politics weren't between them. Ultimately it will come down to love or the Congressional seat?

Overall the book is a good read that with a flowing plot that keeps you in Lily and Jack's relationship till the end. A reader may how how it might end but may still be a bit surprised at some of their decisions and how they choose to go about their relationship. It's a sweet romance were normally rivals in politics are known for being vicious and backstabbing, but here Lily and Jack are seen finding their equal and possible love, but question it's timing. So pick this book if your looking for a pleasant political read that will leave you happy in the end.

-----Read more of my reviews at: <http://heyitwasfree.blogspot.com/>-----

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## Stella says

I gotta confess that when I read the word RIVALRS in the title of this book I really thought I would find a little more angst in the story. The fact that there was none was not a disappointment though.

MORE THAN RIVALRS is a sweet story with all the romantic elements of a "classic" love story even the meet cute. The fact that both MC are "politicians" was very new for me (in romantic stories) and I think the author did a great job because I loved reading about it and was really curious to know what was going to happen next in the election and to the candidates et al.

GREAT BOOK, DEFINITELY RECOMMEND IT.

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## Katie says

*More than Rivals* is a sweet story about two political candidates that find friendship and love after a random meeting at a coffee shop. Sonoma County Supervisor Ursula "Lily" Robles meets California State Senator John "Jack" Bengston after one of her nighttime runs. Neither Lily nor Jack recognize the other at first, until Jack removes his hat.

Lily is a widow with a seven year old son who lives with her parents. While Lily is the only woman up against more seasoned and experienced men, she has a strong head on her shoulders and appears to have some great ideas that would benefit her district. While Jack understands that Lily is his opponent, he can't seem to stay away from her. He chases her relentlessly until Lily has no choice but to give in. She can't deny that there is something between the two of them and that it could be so much more.

There wasn't a whole lot of "romance" per se because they did have to spend the entire story keeping their relationship under wraps. It would not have looked good for either candidate if that information was distributed to the public. And because of that, their meetings were few and far between and lasted anywhere from minutes to a few hours together.

There isn't a whole lot of angst and struggle found in this book. While they hide their relationship, it is actually a very light and happy read. Look forward to reading more from Mary Whitney.

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## Luli says

*You can find this review in English below.*

2.5 stars.

La premisa de esta historia captó mi atención en un plis-plas. Me encantan los romances entre políticos y/o abogados. Son tan difíciles de encontrar. Así que cuando leí que dos candidatos compitiendo por el mismo puesto (sin saberlo) se sienten atraídos el uno por el otro... bueno... ya me tenía ganada antes de empezar.

Pero aunque la idea de la historia era atractiva, la ejecución ha dejado mucho que desear.

Lily y Jack son perfectos. Son guapos, buenas personas, trabajadores y anteponen las necesidades de los

demás a las suyas propias. Sobre el papel son la definición perfecta de cómo deberían ser todos los servidores públicos. Sobre el papel. Porque en la realidad, bien, en la realidad, por muy cínico que suene, esto es completamente irrealista. Ha sido todo como flotar en el vacío. No hay baches, ni altibajos, ni aceleraciones ni frenazos. Todo ha sido una línea plana. Sin emociones. No una buena receta para un romance.

Podría decirse que ha sido todo **demasiado** políticamente correcto. Valga la redundancia.

He echado de menos las confrontaciones, las luchas de poder, las consecuencias que las acciones de uno mismo tienen en los demás. Ha sido todo muy limpio, muy claro, nítido, sin la menor sombra o duda. Incluso la breve e insignificante trama con *la otra mujer* se ha solucionado limpiamente casi antes de empezar.

Esperaba algo ~~más~~ de esta historia. Pero ha sido tan dulce, tan empalagosa y tan plana que me ha resultado imposible de creer. Muy irrealista.

O a lo mejor es que estoy acostumbrada a series e historias sobre políticos fríos, calculadores y capaces de cualquier cosa por alcanzar el poder y esta historia se ha parecido más a Sonrisas y Lagrimas (que me encantó, dicho sea de paso) que a una historia sobre políticos y política **reales**.

Así que, mi pega es que la historia es demasiado perfecta. Los protagonistas demasiado perfectos. Sus familias demasiado perfectas. La carrera de los candidatos limpia y perfecta. Y el final, bueno, el final, como ya he mencionado antes, demasiado políticamente correcto en detrimento de la poca personalidad que los protagonistas tenían en un principio. Ha sonado todo a cuento de hadas.

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2.5 stars.

This story's blurb caught my attention as soon as I read it. I love romances between politicians and /or lawyers. They are so hard to find. So when I read that two candidates competing for the same position (unknowingly by them) are attracted to each other ... well ... I was a goner...

But although the story's premise was attractive, the execution has left much to be desired.

Lily and Jack are perfect. They are handsome, good people, hard workers and they always put others' needs before their own. On paper they are the perfect definition of how all public servants should be. On paper. Because in reality, well, in reality, however cynical it may sound, this is completely unrealistic. It has been like floating in a vacuum. No bumps, no ups and downs, no accelerations nor brakings. Everything has been flat. Emotionless. Not a good recipe for a romance.

It could be said that everything has been **too** politically correct. Pardon for the redundancy.

I have missed the confrontations, the power struggles, the consequences that one's actions have on others. Everything has been very clean, very clear, precise, without the slightest shadow or doubt. Even the brief and insignificant plot with *the other woman* has been solved cleanly almost before it had started.

I expected something ~~more~~ from this story. But it has been so sweet, so cloying and so flat that I found it impossible to believe. Very unrealistic.

Or maybe I'm used to series and stories about cold, calculating and capable of anything to achieve power politicians and this story has been more like *The Sound Of Music* (which I loved, by the way) that a story about **real** politics and politicians.

So, my main complaint is that the story is too perfect. The MC's too perfect. Their families too perfect. The candidates race too clean and perfect. And the end, well, the end, as I mentioned before, too politically correct to the detriment of the little personality that the MC's had at the beginning. It had sounded too much like a fairy tale.

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## **Stefanie Wille says**

First off, I would like to start off by saying that I am not usually into politics. I don't really follow it and secondly I know next to nothing about politics in America, especially on this level. Yet this book was still easy to follow, even for me, an absolutely uninitiated person in the land of politics. This was a great plus for the book, because to me it seems pretty smart to not exclude any readers so easily. Because it may be a love story, it's pretty important to understand the politics at hand to get a more complete view of the situation.

The story was good; it was clearly a romance novel so the story storyline was very clear cut. But it was very well written and I especially enjoyed the conversations. They were just so much fun and felt so real. That was really one of my favourite parts in the book, hands down. Especially the conversations between Jack and Lily were a lot of fun. As mentioned above the political situation was very well explained, but also in a very subtle way. It wasn't just dumped in your lap with a "this is all you need to know". It was eased into conversations and inner dialogue which made it very unobtrusive to the story itself. I would have liked this book a lot less if all this information was integrated into the novel in a more obvious way. (As I said, I'm not into politics and I would have put down the book pretty soon if that had felt more like the focus of the story)

Next up: the characters. In my opinion they were pretty great. As mentioned above I liked their dialogue a whole lot and this definitely made me love them. Though I have to say, when I found out Ursula was Lily's full name I couldn't help but think of the witch in "the little mermaid". Thankfully this book didn't use Ursula a whole lot because otherwise the story would have definitely looked different in my mind. She was a great character, despite her name. Jack (or John, depending on how you see him: as a regular guy or a senator) was a well-rounded character as well. They really seemed like people I'd like in real life as well. Their respectable best friends were ok. It's not that I didn't like them; it has more to do with the fact that we saw them so little throughout the book. They might not have a huge role to play, but I definitely would have liked to see more of them throughout the book.

The writing was very easy to read, I just flew through this book. That is definitely something I'm looking for in a romance novel. If the story doesn't flow well, I'm very likely to put it down. Romance novels are just a lot nicer when you get sucked into the story right away and are continuously pulled into it. This book really had that. As a last thing I'd like to discuss the ending. I have to say that I'm not such a great fan of it. I was hoping it would have gone differently. I'm not saying that I don't like where the story ended, but more that I don't like how it got there. If that makes any sense at all.

In general I really liked this book but I was a little disappointed with the ending. It could have ended so many different ways, so many more exciting things could have happened. It's a nice ending, but nothing special in my opinion.

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## GW says

Really enjoyed it!

Got this free on the kindle, and I honestly didn't think I would like this book as much since it involves politics - and I'm not a huge fan of it. But it's more of a romance book with a little bit of politics integrated into it. I loved the beginning, and I absolutely loved the ending. Carrots. Hah, got me there! The ending was simply so adorable and hilarious. The characters, Lily and Jack, are depicted so realistically and they have depth to them. It's a quick paced read - and I read it under two hours. A page turner and a favorite.

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## Eva • All Books Considered says

I love everything Mary Whitney writes and this book is no exception! I absolutely love Lily and Jack together and the ending could not have been more perfect!

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## Smut Fanatics says

[Click here to read my entire review!](#)

**What I Loved:** This was a cute quick read that I really enjoyed. Lily Robles an educated strong single mother is running for a seat in the US Congress only find herself falling for one of her rivals Jack Bengston. From the very start there wasn't much I didn't like about both of these characters. Jack, although young has the drive and expertise to have a full life in politics while at the same time is personable and lovable. Lily is a determined woman who has shit together, I love that she broke the mold of a typical inexperienced woman falling for a rich powerful man. She had a mind of her own, and knew what she wanted in life.

For me the way both of these characters were written made it easy for me to be captivated and stay that way. I liked the balance of passion and common sense between them because it made the story more realistic and grounded. I certainly liked the twists and turns the plot took as well because although the ending was predictable how they got there certainly wasn't.

**Not So Much:** Although this was a really quick read, I felt like it kind of skimmed the surface of Lily and Jack's relationship rather than delve into it when there should have been more details. They did get to spend a lot of time together and it was obvious the commitment they building for one another but at the same time those scenes were only touched upon when I would've liked to have seen more passion and emotion between the two. There were times I felt like they were both robotic rather than human and it would take me out of the story rather than sucking me in further. The beginning of the story had a lot of details and but the second half of the book didn't really follow through the same when it came to their growing feelings for one another.

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## **Kara says**

Review posted at: <http://bookcrushbookreviews.com/2013/...>

So this is the 2nd political romance I've read so far this year. I'm starting to think I'm falling for them. The political side provides a different realm of depth that we see in the characters that in other novels has to rest solely in the hands of open communication. Lily's character and wit makes it hard for you not to love her. She's devoted and focused with set goals and putting her son (Luke) first. She's also skeptical and careful which again with the politics involved its understanding that she questions motives. Jack, oh Jack! So he's one of the other runners in this race to Congress but he's also racing for something else. Jack's also focused and driven while his personality is somewhat more cocky, but in a healthy & seductive way. The sexual tension can be cut with a knife and more descriptive scenes in that department would've been nice, but how they were flew well with the rest of the story. I love the family roles in this book and the support and morals/values that both Lily and Jack's parents put forth. Give it a try!

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## **KB Wayne says**

One thing I've both found and enjoyed in the Mary Whitney stories I've read is that while the necessary plot device of Tension exists it never does so in an insulting ( to the reader) way. I never recall getting frustrated with the characters / author about ridiculous plot contrivances and ridiculously immature / unrealistic lack of communication betwixt the characters. I've felt it and read in so many reviews how the reader wants to throw their Kindle and shake the characters.

But not here. Instead we have adult, professional, smart, educated characters who behave in an adult, professional, smart and educated manner. Yea!

Lily and Jack are both Democrats running in a primary for a vacated northern California congressional seat. Jack's a career politician and attorney while Lily is a part-time RN, county Supervisor, mother to a young son, and a war widow. They both have impeccable backgrounds and are ethically and politically compatible, not to mention athletically compatible (lots of going for runs, training for a triathlon). They are attracted to one another but recognize the futility of the situation. Due to the nature of local campaigning they spend a lot of time in the same towns, at the same venues, and a genuine friendship results.

It's a quiet, simple story, nothing fancy, nothing too detailed or intricate. I'm sure the author is a relatively naive writer and I'd like to see her work on adding layers and details to her stories. In her Acknowledgements she says something about being part of a writers group so hopefully they're stronger writers and can encourage her development. Because I like her characters, her stories, her smart writing, I'd really like to see her become a more detailed creator. Bet she can.

If you don't mind more graphically depicted sex then I'd recommend checking out the works of author Rosalind James. Her stories are also mature with smart, self-sufficient characters who don't dabble in the embarrassing world of immature lack of communication.

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## **Dannica Alcantara says**

Wow, a politics and romance combination, that's a first for me.

I got this for free on Amazon Kindle. But it wasn't a disappointment, although most of the time I don't get how they run for congress, I think it's interesting concept of competition and tension.

The local state senator, now running for Congress, John "Jack" Bengston suddenly met supervisor Ursula "Lily" Robles who also runs for the same position. The first time they met Jack immediately got attracted to this smart and fun girl. Unfortunately being a co-competitor isn't the right time to put any attraction between the two. They tried to stay away but, a guy like Jack, wasn't able to resist this girl.

*“We should be friends.”*

*Her lips curled into a small smile, and she extended her hand. “Friends.”*

But avoiding each other isn't the best way to handle themselves, and so they agreed to less torment each other and have a mutual relationship as friends.

But they can't leave it just like that, because being together is one of the best thing that ever happened since they started seeing each other.

I like them, they both acted as mature adults and really work out their relationship despite the circumstance they are in. This is a rare book who didn't make me cringe with the characters.

It was really interesting since I think this is a first time I encountered this concept. But I don't totally love it, since I think there's just lacking something but overall, I liked it!

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## **Funmbi says**

Quite simply, Mary Whitney is one of a kind. In the genre of political romance...if such a genre exists...this author has an incredible gift for creating charming, vibrant, and diverse characters and placing them in fascinating contexts. Whitney combines beautiful love stories with interesting political situations, and compelling family/friendship bonds. This is absolutely the case with *More Than Rivals!* I gladly give this story 5 stars, and strongly encourage you to give this a read!

We begin with Jack and Lily randomly meeting at a coffee shop one evening. At first sight, there's a spark between them. Jack and Lily spend a few moments getting to know each other while flirting about their similar tastes in coffee. Jack is ready to pursue something more:

"Come on. You're the prettiest, most interesting woman I've met in a long time. Let me see you again."

However, Lily seems reticent. Even though she leaves Jack without a promise of a date, Lily implies that

they will meet again soon.....

Well, it turns out Jack is really California State Senator John Bengston, candidate for the recently vacated U.S. House of Representatives seat. And Lily, is actually Ursula Robles, Sonoma County Supervisor, and Jack's newest rival for Congressional office!

Moreover, Lily's previous encounters with Jack aren't very good:

"John Bengston had always annoyed the hell out of her...Senator Ignore." Yikes!

When Jack and Lily meet again at a campaign event, he is still eager about pursuing a romantic relationship, but she is very wary:

"...you should treat me differently. Don't be friendly to me at all. It will be better for both of us." :(

As Jack and Lily continue in the campaign, things between them get complicated. But while trying to negotiate the politics of their situation, they find that they are more than rivals and more than friends.

I adore both Jack and Lily, and they share many of the characteristics I admire. They are savvy and ambitious, yet kind and generous, especially when it comes to one another, their families, and their friends. I really like watching Jack and Lily meet, realize that they like one another, avoid one another, and then finally pursue a relationship.

Before delving into some of my fave moments, I think it's important to make a few comments about Whitney's writing decisions.

First, I vigorously applaud the diversity of her characterization. Whitney isn't afraid to use characters of diverse races, sexual orientations, ethnicities, and other cultural qualities. As a woman of color, it's so refreshing to pick up a book and read about another woman of color dominating in the politics. In my opinion, this predilection--which is also evident in her other novels--sets Whitney apart (and above) other contemporary romance authors.

Second, I think Whitney does a great job of describing political institutions and events in a way that is accessible to the average reader without getting bogged down in details. This is true about the description of California's system of primary campaigns, debates, and elections. Again, I believe this characteristic is evident in *More Than Rivals*, and also indicative of Whitney's other writings.

Finally, she is a dynamo at using time. In *More Than Rivals*, we cover the entire primary election season--roughly 9 months. Whitney does a great job of moving the story along, while giving readers enough markers so we don't get lost in the campaigning.

On to my fave moments:

1. I love learning about Lily's home life. It's so heartbreaking to learn about Lily's former husband. But her son Luke is adorable, and it's great to see Lily with Luke. And while Lily is definitely a political animal, it seems she inherits it from her mama, Martha!

2. There are other fantastic secondary characters, in particular Jack and Lily's best friends.

For example, Bill Dresser (Jack's campaign manager and friend) is funny:

"Prince Charming got rejected? That's so sad. Now you know what it's like for the rest of us." LOL!

And Jordan (Lily's campaign manager and friend) is hilarious too. He has the best interactions with Lily:  
L: "Objectively, he is good looking."

J: "Well, I wouldn't kick him out of my bed."

L: "That's not a very high bar." Bwahahahahahaha!

Bill and Jordan are good mirrors for Jack and Lily too. Billy and Jordan have a great way of clarifying the conundrum facing Jack/Lily, presenting different scenarios and options, and helping Jack/Lily flush out their thoughts.

3. The first debate is great! And Lily stands out in a fantastic way! She relates to people so well on a human level...I love seeing that!

4. Jack and Lily's interactions are so cute. And I have to give Jack credit, he's persistent when it comes to Lily. He's very watchful...watching her interact with family, friends, and potential voters. Jack also defends Lily and reaches out to her. Plus their jogging dates make me extremely happy!

5. I love the scenes between Jack and Luke. There's this moment with a soccer ball, that's \*beyond\* adorable! Fate just keeps intertwining Lily and Jack and their friends/family...so great!

6. L: "It's stupid when people discount a candidate for spending their life in politics. I don't think less of you. In fact, I think you're meant to succeed. You're good at it, and you work to help people." (Random, but) I COMPLETELY AGREE!

7. Jack is so enamoured with Lily...it's so clear:

J: "Babe, you don't even know... I adore you." \*FAINTS\* SO WONDERFUL!!!

8. The sweet moments between Jack and Lily are excellent, but there are also some VERY SEXY MOMENTS:

Playing in the pool...

"I think you're beautiful. And I've wanted to kiss you for months." Awwwwww!

When Jack comes to Lily's work and then they have their first kiss and date...

The little lemon at Point Reyes is NICE...

J: "You're close aren't you?... Give me a second, then." UNF! Semi-public sexy times FTW!

And I definitely enjoy the couch foreplay...

"As she touched him through his jeans, a human growl came from his chest. He leaned back from her breasts and smiled. "Time to take you to bed." HOT HOT HOT!

There is quite a plot twist towards the end that totally throws the characters (and the reader) into a tailspin.

Alas, such is politics! Jack and Lily are able to weather the storm, and by the time we get to the resolution, we have complete faith that they're going to share a long, happy, and politically active life together:

"When I was growing up, I'd hear in church at a sacrament was an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Lily, you have truly graced my life." \*CRIES\* PERFECT!

I had a blast reading *More than Rivals*. Whitney takes a really interesting premise and weaves it into an engaging story that keep readers on their toes. This is a MUSTREAD folks, you'll love it!

Many thanks to the author for the opportunity to read this book!

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## **Lisa Filipe says**

This was a REALLY enjoyable read for me. I liked the realness of the plot line and the characters were interesting, and kept me reading long into the night. The plot line was different, and I wanted to know HOW these two, who seemed at a crossroads, were going to pull off a relationship and keep on running against each other.

Jack is charming, and determined, and Lily, is not a pushover, but she has a big heart, and despite not wanting to be "the girl" in the race, she sure has girl feelings towards Jack.

My favorite scene was at the Democratic Dinner that Lily wasn't supposed to go to, you finally see her break down and actually let herself be a woman, and have those "Feelings" we all HATE when we see the boy we like with another girl.

Fabulous read, interesting characters and I know many of my followers will enjoy it! Just so you know, the bedroom door is closed!!

Enjoy and Happy Reading!

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