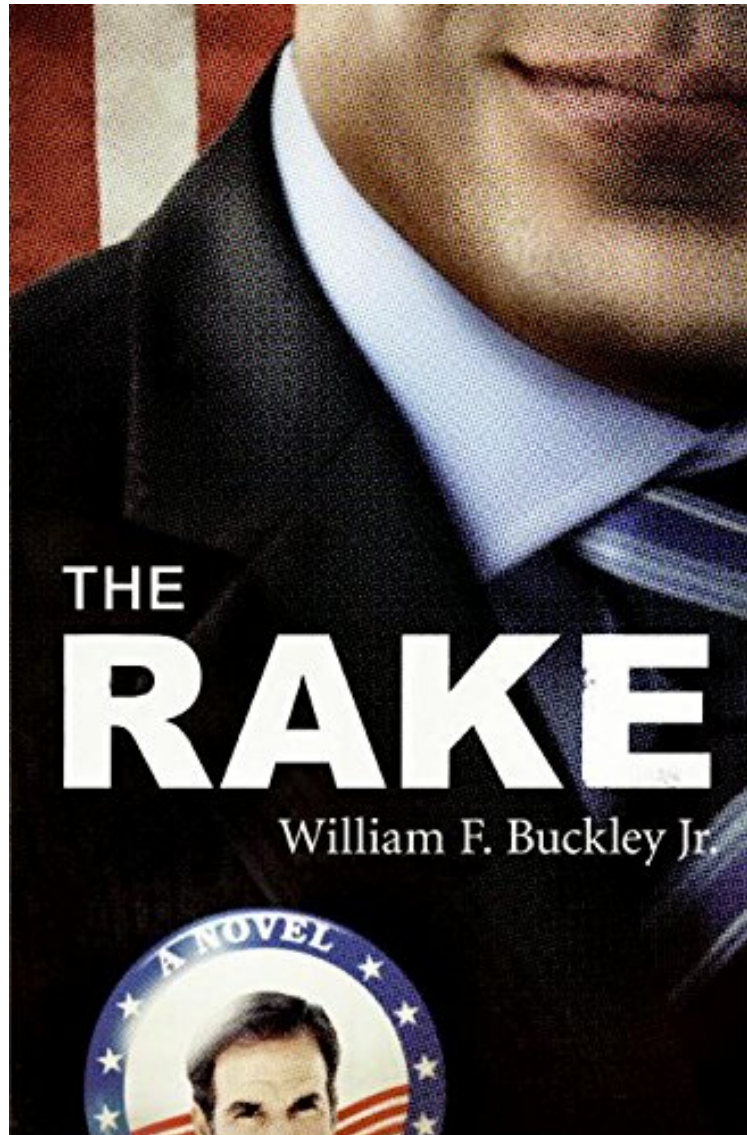


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The Rake: A Novel

William F. Buckley

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#1911163 in Books William F Buckley Jr 2008-08-12 2008-08-12Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.00 x .65 x 5.311, .56 #File Name: 0061257885278 pagesThe Rake | File size: 66.Mb

William F. Buckley : The Rake: A Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Rake: A Novel:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy HJ AnterAny WF Buckley is OK by me0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The RakeBy WrightWilliam Buckley's final mystery. He was a master of the English Language and spins an interesting web of events.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The author's superior vocabulary cannot redeem this mediocre satire.By Michael G.William F. Buckley died in 2008, the

year after this book was originally published. So to be fair, he may not have been at the top of his fiction creating game at the time he wrote *The Rake*. Also, given Buckley's stature, no editor would have been able to say: "Bill, there's potential here but you need to redo the manuscript to give it more kick." *The Rake* features a main character by the name of Reuben Castle. A lifelong North Dakotan, Reuben is naturally charismatic and very ambitious. He rapidly rises to the position of junior senator from his home state and by 1991 sees himself as a credible choice to be the Democratic nominee for the Presidential election of 1992. But there's a ticking time bomb destined to scuttle his chances. While still a college student some 22 years or so earlier, Reuben exchanged marriage vows in a secret Canadian ceremony, making him now a bigamist and worse. There's a bit more to the plot but that's pretty much the whole story right there. *The Rake* is a novel of political satire. As such, it would have been far better to make it more outrageous, more over-the-top, if you will. Reuben's rakishness, as Buckley describes it, comes off as rather anemic. Not nearly as entertaining as that of some real life politicians. In fact, the book in general is all too lackluster. Good satire needs to be more ridiculous than real life. Otherwise you might as well read history. Not recommended.

A prototypical child of the sixties, Senator Reuben Castle coasted through his early life on a cloud of easy charisma, leaving behind more skeletons than Arlington: a highly questionable Vietnam record, an abandoned wife, and worse. Now, two decades later, his greatest dream is within reach. But his personal history is about to become his political epitaph—unless he takes the direst of measures to protect himself. From William F. Buckley Jr.—nationally bestselling author and one of the keenest political minds of our time—comes an ingenious blending of satire and suspense, the riveting tale of an all-too-recognizable presidential candidate and the dark shadows cast behind him.

From Publishers Weekly Handsome, charismatic 1992 Democratic presidential candidate Ruben Castle is a former antiwar protester who now tacks to the center and is adept at taking both sides of an issue. He's also an inveterate womanizer with a scandal in his closet: a secret marriage to college sweetheart Henrietta, which he didn't bother terminating before wedding boozy ex-Miss America Priscilla, and which produced a son who now returns to haunt him. This story has the makings of an Arkansas trailer-trash saga, but conservative Buckley—über-pundit, Blackford Oakes yarner and social comentator (*God and Man at Yale*)—doesn't do tawdry. Characters are tepid rather than lurid, and the sex scenes convey the pertinent information (he didn't know then that his ejaculate had burrowed down into her ovum) without unnecessary sleaze. An inner wonk reigns, whether Buckley is describing office politics at a student newspaper, punning about the Wilmot Proviso or ruminating on whether Congress can retroactively usurp the President's authority in foreign affairs by denying him authority to conclude arrangements that he had made without any challenge to their constitutionality. Buckley's waspish wit sometimes scores—Ruben's handlers' intricate calculation of which commencement-address invitations to accept is hilarious—and like-minded readers will chortle over his satire of boomer politicians' mores. (Aug.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist In a sort of alternate-history tale of ambition gone astray, young Reuben Castle (read Bill Clinton) is an easy success at everything he sets his sights on, which we are supposed to believe is due to a natural charisma (found nowhere on these pages). While lording over his college campus, he knocks up a girl, marries her in a secret Canadian ceremony, and drops her as soon as she's out of sight. Then he traipses over to Vietnam, where his conduct, if not cowardly, is certainly questionable, as is his following stint in law school. Years later, as the Democrats are gearing up to topple George Bush Sr., young Senator Castle becomes the early front-runner but for some reason doesn't bother to think twice about the patently obvious skeletons in his closet primed to topple out and put the kibosh on the whole thing. Buckley certainly has a following as a mystery writer, but this book is designed to appeal more to politicians who get their kicks from C-SPAN than to crime fiction fans. Unfortunately, colorless characters with nonsensical motivations, a minimal plot with a few halfhearted throw-ins, and yawning prose make it doubtful anyone but hard-core fans of Buckley's fiction will slog through this flat, off-target attempt at a satire-tinged thriller. Chipman, Ian "Mr. Buckley's wry humor often takes aim at the left...And descriptions throughout are pitch-perfect" (Wall Street Journal) "A penetrating meditation on change, complication, and life's contingency" (New York Sun) "like-minded readers will chortle over [Buckley's] satire of boomer politicians' mores." (Publishers Weekly)