Clarion Review

Humor

Ask Tammy Manners: Looking for tips on proper etiquette & manners? Ask Tammy!

Ask Tammy Manners
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Four Stars (out of Five)

With glossy blond locks piled high and a floral party frock tailored to perfection, Miss Tammy Manners is more than ready to answer questions on society's most urgent etiquette issues. Do you need to know how to make your thank-you note the very first one delivered to your gracious party hostess, complete with her signature scent? Or maybe you're wondering what to say, or not to say, about your boss's big, black nose hairs. *Ask Tammy Manners* tackles these topics, plus love, religion, and of course, popularity, in this collection of fifty essays from the outrageous Internet blog of the same name.

The first thing a reader may notice is that Miss Tammy comes across very differently than previous etiquette mavens like the conservative Emily Post. Her cover photo sets the stage, showing how very tall and, well, *masculine*, she is. This is not your usual homecoming queen. But a queen she is, a drag queen in top form, complete with an exaggeratedly feminine delivery style punctuated with lines from show tunes and Dolly Parton songs. Above all, Miss Tammy thinks she is fabulous and wants only for her readers to be fabulous as well.

A conventional question-and-answer format frames each *Ask Miss Tammy* essay, but the answer is often tangential to the question. A query about teaching kids not to talk to strangers launches Miss Tammy into a discussion of how she recently deleted a Facebook friend. The loss apparently reduced her to tears and brought about the need for another layer of eye makeup to cover up the puffy eyelids resulting from her crying jag. How does this relate to children and strangers? Not very clearly, but after readers get used to the chatty rhythm of the pieces, they won't mind so much. They will just want to see what the world's most unlikely Mary Kay lady will say next.

Many will find Miss Tammy's relentless, manic tour of the Dallas glamour scene tiring and shallow. Others may be put off by her matter-of-fact treatment of topics like intimate

grooming products for gay men. She never breaks character, though, and her outrageous comments are so over the top that she more often elicits laughter than scorn. Some readers might not approve of her frank consideration of becoming a porn star, but they will have to laugh at her reason for declining this particular career path: there's not enough money to be made in front of the camera.

Clearly, Miss Tammy must be in *front* of the camera. It's her unending belief in her own star quality, combined with a little good-natured self-mocking, that make readers contribute to her blog and eagerly read her answers. Since its launch in 2011, the Ask Tammy Manners website has garnered thousands of readers, even more Facebook fans, and several YouTube videos. This volume of essays from the blog is only the first in a planned series of collections celebrating the wild socialite life of this inimitable Dallas drag queen.

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