



Clarion Review ★★★★★

Da Ultimate Hookup: Free Things for all Canadians

Claudette McGowan

Excelovate (September 2009)

Softcover \$14.95 (144pp)

978-0-9812114-0-4

There's a world of free stuff out there, from talk show tickets to pet food to video games, which, according to Claudette McGowan, most people don't know about. Such offers may be poorly advertised or just little-known, which is where *Da Ultimate Hookup: Free Things for All Canadians* comes in.

Tackling the subject with casual energy and verve, McGowan focuses, as the title suggests, on offers for those who live in Canada. She does all the legwork for readers and includes only those offers that she thinks are most helpful and worthwhile. *Da Ultimate Hookup* collects 144 pages of freebies in a variety of categories.

Author and life coach McGowan claims no special background that brought her to the subject of freebies. Instead, she has firsthand appreciation for how difficult life can be. Her parents immigrated to Canada from the Caribbean and the young family struggled during their early years there. Her interest in making life more efficient and easier prompted her to research free opportunities not only for herself, but for others as well.

McGowan brings to *Da Ultimate Hookup* a great sense of organization, as well as a cheeky, informal style. She breaks down the freebies into several major categories—home, school, play, and life—under which are more specific topics such as reward cards, babies, and pets. She covers more well-known subjects such as tax breaks and Craigslist, but also highlights little-known scholarships and tourist destinations. Each free item is introduced by a description, sometimes with an amusing anecdote from the author's own experience. McGowan's presentation makes *Da Ultimate Hookup* a lively, fun experience.

Da Ultimate Hookup is a pleasure to read. The layout is accessible, with descriptions of each freebie, followed by Web sites or mailing addresses highlighted with little graphics. The categories make sense with their intuitive design. The index, ordered by both company name and subject, allows readers to find appropriate freebies fast.

Suggestions for improvement are minor. The title, with its slang connotations of casual sex, rather than freebies, could have been better chosen. Additionally, *Da Ultimate Hookup* could benefit from sections focusing on services for special populations, such as people with disabilities or people of color. As it stands, though, the book is solid and helpful.

Canadian readers will be able to find useful offers in this book for themselves, friends, or family members. This smartly packaged, reader-friendly, and informative book really does contain something for everyone.

(September 22, 2009)

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