



Memos

Amy J. Frey

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Navigating an office filled with incompatible employees is a scenario that countless people face daily, yet few can comprehend the madness that Amy J. Frey presents in *Memos*, a caustic and humorous spoof of the workplace. Exaggerated characters and dramatized audacity fill the pages of this entertaining novel peppered with emotional outbursts and childish tantrums.

Melanie Spensor walks into a coveted position as marketing director at Gessup Industries, a company that specializes in GPS equipment, expecting the quality of her life to improve, not worsen. From the first day she encounters a lascivious boss and a belligerent manager ... who are involved with each other. Predictably, Derrick Gessup makes advances toward Melanie, and the manager fumes. Trite, yes, but a funny situation nonetheless. Unfortunately, the story then veers into stereotypical backbiting and power plays.

The book is propelled by memos; strategically placed and seemingly inconsequential at times, their impact is tremendous. In the following vicious tirade, Renee Dandier, the manager, reprimands Melanie: "What, do you want me to do your job for you? Can't you come up with anything original? No, I am not going to share my notes with you. Who do you think you are, a manager or something? You don't tell me what to do. Find your own notes."

This is not a congenial crowd, but Melanie can pay her bills and support her son on the modest salary after a disheartening divorce. And with Marc Kramer, a courteous romantic interest to enhance her existence, she couldn't ask for a better deal, that is, until her office turns into a stress-inducing nightmare. Playfully referred to as the Piranha Pit, this miserable work environment escalates Melanie from one minor disruption, such as assembling her office furniture in a poorly ventilated room filled with paint fumes, to more serious messes like walking in on a sexual interlude at a party, and inadvertently launching a computer virus.

Petty and occasionally overdone, *Memos* is an immature parody of a dreadful bunch fighting relentlessly about anything imaginable. This may be a realistic examination of an American office gone bad, but certain readers might like to see the conflict-ridden scenes toned down at moments when less verbiage would achieve the desired effect. Also not beneficial, "Spensor" is spelled inconsistently throughout the book, including "Spenser" on the back cover.

Amy J. Frey holds a master's degree in management from Regis University in Fort Collins, Colorado. *Memos* is her first novel, a caper that won't disappoint. Tremendous effort went into her deadpan comedy, and that alone makes this newcomer worth following.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (August 1, 2011)

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