



The Big Girls' Guide to Life

Bunkie Lynn

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The time for revolution is at hand, when plus-sized gals will raise their fists in protest against super-skinny celebrities and diet doctors, and the streets will be paved with chocolate. At least, that's the author's vision, and she bounces through this book staying true to her anthem "We're here, we're large, get used to it."

After acknowledging the importance of proper nutrition and the role of exercise in health maintenance, Lynn moves on to more important topics, like distinguishing "chocolate" from "dessert." This is important, since there are only four food groups, and these two items make up half of Lynn's food list (the other two are garlic and red wine).

The jaunty, delightful tone never gets wearing, and the author's ability to balance humor and insight is what makes the guide as sweet as a Hershey's bar. In the section on eating out, she writes: "Salad is most definitely NOT an entrée. It's SALAD. It is physically impossible to eat only SALAD and not die from starvation the very same day, with one exception: a taco salad at a Mexican restaurant." Interspersed with her tips on living large and loving it, Lynn includes anecdotes from her life to illustrate her points. These stories are quite entertaining, and give the book slightly more depth, and turn the author from a charming stranger into a warmly received friend.

In the section on exercise, for example, she tells a very amusing story about agreeing to walk half a marathon and actually completing it. Although her pride in the accomplishment shines through, the tale is suffused with enough self-effacement to make it truly funny. A week or so after the marathon, her toenails turn brown and fall off, and her description of it is actually comical. Now, that's talent. Other sections cover the unkindness of strangers, primping, medical issues, money, careers, and parties. That's a hefty menu for such a small book, but Lynn sails from one subject to the next with ease, armed with gung-ho advice on loving one's body and accepting non-skinny-girl habits.

This underpinning of positive affirmation keeps the book humming, just as the writing keeps the reader laughing. Under the chuckles, Lynn shows how difficult it can be for Big Girls to live in a body-obsessed culture, and she serves up a big helping of encouragement, love, and humor. For every plus-sized woman, or for anyone who likes a lively bit of writing, this book will fit nicely on the nightstand, right next to the box of chocolate truffles.

ELIZABETH MILLARD (January / February 2004)

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