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The Book of Styling: An Insider's Guide to Creating Your Own Look

Somer Flaherty
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Tailored to a teenage female audience, *The Book of Styling* insists from the get-go that perfect style does not exist. “Style is about the journey, not the destination,” explains Somer Flaherty. “The key to enhancing your own style is figuring out what works for you.”

To help readers accomplish this, she offers a handy book that starts with a quiz to discern your fashion personality and gives direction on finding websites and blogs that offer ideas and inspiration. Then she gives examples of specific personas, explaining the kinds of dress style that characterizes each and how a great outfit for a particular occasion can be arranged and adjusted for work. There’s the glam girl, the socialite, the tomboy, the preppie girl, and the hipster, among many others, making it easy for female readers to find themselves in the various pictures. For each persona Flaherty points to a well-known example of a real person who wears that particular ‘look’ well. Then, she delves into the elements of style, explaining color-blocking, printed motifs, footwear, and how to put together a series of outfits using three items from various wardrobe categories.

The author’s advice is pragmatic, well written, and easy to understand. Rather than send readers on expensive shopping expeditions, she advises them on how they can use items they already have or can acquire inexpensively. Flaherty also explains different body types, how to identify each, and what kinds of outfits work well to accentuate various figures. She endorses various role models who embrace their bodies, pointing to Kat Winslet’s hourglass figure, Naomi Campbell as the inverted triangle, and Paris Hilton as the quintessential rectangular body shape. Each example contains a history, a how-to-make-it-work section, and a challenge about what readers might wear to accentuate that shape further.

Where should you splurge? And how do you handle your closet, eliminating clothes you don’t need and adding ones that best suit you and that you will use the most? Flaherty discusses all these subjects in depth in a voice that is supportive, empowering, and never once condescending. This approach coupled with her straightforward attitude to a complex subject makes *The Book of Styling* a great resource for any woman—teenage or adult—who wants to improve their image.

LAUREN KRAMER (September 24, 2012)

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