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Women's Studies

The Femme's Guide to the Universe
Shar Rednour
Alyson Books
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With a combination of wit, candor, and considerable spiciness, erotica writer Rednour serves up a how-to book quite unlike any other. Focusing on the femme side of the butch/femme dynamic in lesbian relationships, the author imparts knowledge on a variety of topics, including dating do's and don'ts, proper makeup application, buying the right shoes, and turning a bedroom into a love den. Many of her tips aren't restricted to gay women but rather, those "femmes-to-be" who want to be able to wear a boa with style, walk with Audrey Hepburn grace in high heels, and light up parties like a disco mirrorball.

Some tips, however, are clearly for true femmes, and those who don't like reading about sex, sex and more sex should probably seek other bedtime books. For those who welcome fun, raunchy tips about stiletto heels, adult toys and outrageous lingerie, Rednour provides copious amounts of information, often in a hilarious yet practical way. Of rubbery bodysuits, she writes, "Latex shows all of your curves yet perfects your surface into that of a shiny Mazzerati. I think it merges the best of the female body with the best of the automobile: beauteous, slick, shiny curves wrapping unbelievable power." After extolling the virtues of latex dresses at fetish balls, Rednour gives sensible advice on the mechanics of putting the clothes on and (more tricky, it seems) taking them off, caring for the garments throughout the evening to achieve maximum gleam, and periodic cleaning using polish rather than soap.

Rednour writes with a mix of giddy delight and Catwoman sultriness, and never fails to charm. She makes the outlandish seem like a pretty good idea, and the mundane seem scintillating. She is, perhaps, the first guidebook writer who can discuss pimples in an engrossing, fascinating manner. Her best and most useful riff is undoubtedly "Frettin' Over Body Size," in which she battles the negative ideas women have about their bodies. In her stream-of-consciousness writing, she emphasizes that how one looks pales in comparison to how one feels, and if someone feels sexy, then they are, period. The spicy, wild author certainly

shows how she feels, and helps other women to tap into that sexy, femme side as well.

Elizabeth Millard