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The Prom Book: The Only Guide You'll Ever Need

Lauren Metz
Zest Books (Mar 5, 2013)
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The Prom Book is no “dummies” guide, and first-time author Lauren Metz is a whip-smart, funny writer. Part keepsake, part journal, practical, and loaded with advice relevant today and for the readers’ future, *The Prom Book* is comprehensive, colorful, not at all fluffy, but easy to read.

The book is divided into four sections, Prom Planning, Prom Day, Prom Night and Post Prom. Each features specific how-tos not only from Metz, a former staffer at Seventeen magazine, but also from experts and consultants to celebrities in exercise, hair, makeup, and skin. Interspersed are pages for notes, photographs, appointments, and planning.

Metz provides au courant advice useful not only for prom-going but also for real life, including: how to read a contract, the art of negotiation, comparison shopping, organizational skills and party planning. An excellent suggestion—and a way to minimize stress—is to have friends congregate at one’s home pre-prom to have picture-taking in one place. No house hopping needed. Clever indeed, and she offers ideas for preparing a red carpet and backdrop.

Etiquette lessons are quietly slipped into the text—well-worth noting—including table manners, thank-you notes and gifts, and the ever worrisome who-pays-for-what part of the evening. Don’t have a date yet? The author recommends going with a group of friends and provides no-nonsense tips on asking that cute boy you are “crushing on.”

Sidebars contain useful tips from pre-programming phone numbers for all reservations and transportation companies into your cell phone to earning money to augment your budget. Metz also cautions against taking inappropriate photos that may come back to haunt you when applying for college or job hunting.

Part 1 contains a section about exercising by celebrity trainer Ramona Braganza. Different “circuits” correspond to the type of dress one may be sporting, such as sculpting biceps for the strapless or one-shoulder dress. The exercises are simple, no fancy clothes or gym membership required, and are doable enough for the reader’s mother, aunts, and sisters to join in and keep going long after prom is over.

A superb infographic, more like a teenage version of Candyland or Shoots & Ladders, helps the reader determine their personal style. The first question says, “Quick! Take a look in the mirror. Are you wearing more than two pieces of jewelry?” The answer points readers in a direction and questions continue until the reader learns they are either “Hollywood Glam,” “Fierce and Fun,” “Totally Unique,” etc. What follows are descriptions of corresponding silhouettes, accessories, makeup, dress styles, and so forth.

Lately, many nonfiction/how-to books read as if the author is pointing her finger and castigating the reader or bullying them into doing as they say. Metz’s *The Prom Book* breaks the chain with gentle, happy instructions that make sense for teens. Parents will enjoy the read, too, with recommendations for splitting the costs, who to call if things get out of hand and how to be safe while enjoying this important rite of passage.

DINDY YOKEL (March 18, 2013)

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