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The Dating Games #1: First Date (Volume 1)



Synopsis

Bestselling author Melody Carlson starts a new series about five high school girl friends with one goal in common: a date for homecoming.

Book Information

Series: The Dating Games (Book 1)

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Customer Reviews

First Date is the first book in The Dating Games series by Melody Carlson. Carlson is my favorite author, so I've read most of her books. Considering her teen series that I've finished, this isn't my favorite. That being said, I did enjoy it. I only had minor complaints. I'd say The Dating Games probably won't be near as good as the Carter House Girls or Bloomberg Place, but it may be better than the On the Runway series. First Date follows a group of high school girls who decide to make a game of dating. The thing is, none of them have ever been on a date before, and the boys at their Christian high school aren't showing any interest. A teacher gives a speech to the boys every year challenging them not to date and to respect the girls. Most of the boys take this challenge seriously. So this group of girls decide they're going to somehow get dates to the homecoming dance. Carlson has always been able to write teens in a very realistic way, and she doesn't disappoint here! I could definitely believe these girls exist--there's the struggling Christian, the athlete with overprotective parents, the new girl from a broken home, the beauty who secretly wants friends, and the down-to-earth girl who is caught between old friends and new. The group dynamic works well--we see these girls forge friendships and improve each other's lives. There's not a super strong faith element to this book, but it's definitely evident throughout. As the girls band together to get each other dates, there are inevitable misunderstandings, backstabbing, gossiping, and intense

situations.

I love reviewing young adult fiction, so of course I jumped at the opportunity to read First Date by Melody Carlson! Most of the young adult fiction I read is aimed at ages 13-18 and I would say that this book definitely fits that category. The story centers around 5 teenage girls who have formed their own clique at their school despite the fact that they are not especially fond of all of the members. The girls: Devon, Abby, Brynn, Cassidy and Emma all come from unique backgrounds and family styles. Devon's parents separated when she was young and she has a track record of being wild and irresponsible. Abby is the only daughter of a racist African American family who is very vocal about the fact that they disagree with an African American dating or marrying a White person. Brynn has a great family life, but since her older siblings have all moved away to college or have gotten married, her life feels empty and lonely. Cassidy has grown up in a Christian home her whole life, but lately has been feeling far away from her faith. She doesn't really know where she stands with "religion" or how she feels about sharing her Christian faith with her non-Christian friends. Emma's parents just recently divorced, and she lives with her mother while she struggles to make ends meet. Devon and Emma used to be close friends, but after Devon moved away a few years ago, Emma grew closer to Cassidy. When Devon moved back to town, she was eager to share her dating advice and created a dating game/club called "The Dating Games". The goal of the game was for each girl to help another girl find a date for the homecoming dance which was only 3 weeks away.

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