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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

When it comes to catching the eye of that cute boy at school, sometimes you just need a little help from your friends. Devon, Emma, Cassidy, Bryn, and Abby have one thing in common as they start their sophomore year: none of them have ever been on a "real" date. With homecoming looming, the girls make a pact and start a secret club they call the DG (Dating Games) that has just one objective--dates for the dance. They're sworn to secrecy, but the club is their way to set each other up on their first dates so they can report back to the DG. They'll have to navigate expectations and rules from their parents, figure out how to act on a date, and endear themselves to the guys they like. What could possibly go wrong?

Melody Carlson is the award-winning author of more than two hundred books, including the Life at Kingston High series, Double Take, and A Simple Song. She recently received a Romantic Times Career Achievement Award in the inspirational market for her many books, including the Diary of a Teenage Girl series and Finding Alice. Melody and her husband live in Oregon. Find out more at www.melodycarlson.com.

Melody Carlson is the award-winning author of over two hundred books with sales of more than five million. She is the author of several Christmas books from Revell, including the bestselling The Christmas Bus, The Christmas Dog, and Christmas at Harrington.

I'm 13 reading this book, and it is amazing! Learning about dating in a Christian setting was more exciting and fun than meets the eye. 5 stars for realistic events and humor.

I think this would be a cute series for a Christian teenage girl to read who is hoping to start dating. A group of girls that attend a Christian school decide that they will start dating boys that they may or may not have a crush on already. Some of them aren't too keen on the idea while others really want to date badly. A "game" of sorts is created between these girls where they just want to find good guys that can take them to the homecoming dance. We learn a bit about who each girl is and what their personalities are like. The book is also very much about friendship and working together. There is talk about faith in God too, but it isn't focused on a lot. It is more in the background. As a woman who has only dated one guy (to whom I am married), I found some of this to commend some bad ideas. For instance: what is wrong with these girls? They can't approach a guy themselves at all to get a date? They can't try to talk to them and have their friends talk to other guys for them to get their dates? This mentality and way that many girls do things is terrible. Maybe I'm just crazy because I was always one to approach a guy to say, "I like you." The thing is that these girls are just trying to go on a date that may not even last longer. That is weird to me, maybe because I had a mentality where if I were to date someone, it was to work towards an eventual marriage (and I started dating my husband less than a month before my 17th birthday and now I am 31). I definitely felt like I was back in high school with some of this, as a lot of people I knew who were dating or trying to had lots of drama with their own friends. This made me chuckle a bit. I read this book basically because I have read some of Melody Carlson's books and enjoyed them in the past. This was not bad, but I think it was a bit too short.

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. They had 10 rules for the club which varied between "Helping other DG members find "good" guys" to "Not being jealous of a fellow DG member's boyfriend." The girls all agreed to the rules and began "working" on guys for their friends. Despite the fact that all of these girls go to a Christian school, throughout most of the book, none of these girls are living a Christian lifestyle. All of their decisions are made primarily based on social status, good looks and their ability to "snag a guy". All of the girls in this book were fairly shallow, excluding Cassidy. The characters were quick to point out the other girl's flaws regarding their appearances, and even gave 2 of the girls makeovers because they felt that no guy would ever take a second glance at them without highlights in their hair or brand new clothes. The girls all end up with dates for homecoming, and have a great time. All except for Devon, who finds herself in a bit of a problem because of the type of guy she has chosen. At the end of the book, the girls discuss shutting down the DG club or whether they should continue. All of the girls decide they should continue in the club, and even announce that they should start looking for different dates for the Halloween party. It seems The Dating Games is exactly that. A big game. I don't mean to sound harsh to the author. As a writer myself, I know how difficult it is to write a good story. But this would not be a book I would allow my daughters to read. The story was just so superficial and shallow. The girls were so self centered and dating was just a big game to them. This is not how I want my girls (or sons if I ever have one) to think about dating. I want them to focus on the personal qualities of their future mate. Not how expensive their clothes are or whether or not they have colored hair and wear makeup. There was little or no spiritual content at all in this book except to say that Cassidy was a Christian, and that Devon "used to be a Christian." I would expect a Christian young adult book to have quite a bit more spiritual content. I am sorry to say that I was not a fan of this book. I rate it as 1 star. **This book will be available October 2013 at your favorite bookseller from Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group. **I received this book for free from Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group to give my honest unbiased opinion.

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