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Being Audrey Hepburn — The Best of Both Worlds?

Erin Preimesberger · Wednesday, February 24th, 2016

Erin Preimesberger is this week's feature on "Tomorrow's Voices Today", the new series curated by poet and educator Mike Sonksen.

Being Audrey Hepburn — The Best of Both Worlds?

From the first glance, it was clear that this novel was going to be quite an adventure. In *Being Audrey Hepburn*, Mitchell Kriegman gives every girl the opportunity to live out their fantasy through the main character, Lisbeth. It's a book full of ups and downs, love and heartbreak, and most importantly ? a girl's constant internal battle to discover her true identity and purpose in life. For Audrey Hepburn, many say her true career and success started with the "little black dress." This wasn't any old dress, though; it was a dress made by none other than Hubert de Givenchy. For the Audrey Hepburn-obsessed Lisbeth Wachowicz, her sudden stardom would also come from this eminent article of clothing. Lisbeth was your average Jersey nineteen-year-old, who had a dysfunctional family and a typical job at a diner known as "The Hole." Unfortunately, her future was already planned out by her mother; in which she would go to college to eventually become a nurse practitioner. What no one knew yet was that Lisbeth had something entirely different in mind, and she wasn't going to go through with this arrangement. Although Lisbeth, like many of us young teenagers, wasn't exactly sure what she wanted to do, she knew that the life planned out by her mom just wasn't for her.

Lisbeth's best friend, Jessica or "Jess" Pagliuzzi, worked as the special projects assistant at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC. Jess, knowing how much she adored Audrey, was able to show Lisbeth the actual black satin Givenchy masterpiece that once clung to the body of the very movie star. Of course, that wasn't enough for her. Lisbeth *had* to try the dress on, and pleaded with Jess until she finally agreed. Seeing her reflection in the mirror left her and Jess in complete awe. It's almost like the dress was made for her. It felt *right*. This touching moment proved to be short-lived as Jess's boss notified her that he would be returning briefly. In a panicked rush, Jess forces Lisbeth to wait outside where the fancy party was being held. She would fit right in, so it seemed like the best possible solution at the moment. Joe, the security guard, didn't even recognize Lisbeth in the disguise and asked her to go downstairs since no one was allowed where she was. She had no choice but to go along with it. Walking down the steps, Lisbeth had no idea what she was getting herself into.

She did end up blending in with all of the elegant, wealthy celebrities ? maybe even a little too well. After all, she had been waiting for this moment her whole life. Now, she was living her

dream that she had seen in countless Audrey Hepburn films. Lisbeth actually became a good friend of Tabitha Eden, the “princess of pop,” after helping her out of the bathroom and out of the building without anyone noticing how drunk she was. As we see soon after, Tabitha was essentially Lisbeth’s ticket into the world of fame and fortune. Let’s not forget the unbearably handsome ZK Northcott who talked to Lisbeth at the event, along with his seemingly lovely date, Dahlia Rothenberg. Somehow, Lisbeth and Jess avoided getting caught with the \$923,187 dress and returned it to its normal place. They really dodged a bullet, but this was only the beginning.

The identity that Lisbeth created for herself was Lisbeth Dulac; “Dulac” being her Nan’s maiden name. She starts a fashion blog called “Shades of Limelight,” and it’s instantly a hit thanks to her new friend, Isak Guerrere, who comments on her first post. Tabitha invites Lisbeth to several events, gaining her even more popularity and recognition. She’s this mystery girl that everyone is intrigued by, with her mystery “Designer X” ? the title given to Jess, who creates / designs all of her looks for her. Lisbeth meets Robert Francis, Tabitha’s manager and uncle, but develops a bad feeling about him; especially from the information Tabitha shares with her.

Over time, Lisbeth wins over ZK, who is practically the most eligible bachelor in America! At the same time, though, her heart is also with a guy named Jake. He’s a musician, but he had also been working at The Hole with Lisbeth. They had a “thing,” until her busy life of unknown fame had caused her to miss his gigs that he desperately wanted her to attend.

Both Lisbeth’s and Jess’s lives are going in huge directions; with Lisbeth becoming an adored fashion mogul and Jess anticipating her very own “Designer X” fashion show. There are definitely obstacles that both of them have to face along the way. Lisbeth’s mom’s health takes a sharp turn, Robert has something rather devious planned, and Lisbeth is torn between Jake and ZK. Can Jess and Lisbeth keep up this act, or will their true identities be revealed? Who will Lisbeth end up choosing, the notorious ZK or the sweet Jake Berns? Sorry, as much as you probably want to know what happens, you’ll just have to read it!

Being Audrey Hepburn isn’t just some story about the drama of a nineteen-year-old. It’s a unique piece that explores something that we all wonder about at one point in our lives: what it’d be like to be famous. It also goes far deeper than that, with Lisbeth’s family problems that she has to endure/overcome and with Tabitha’s story. Everyone always assumes a celebrity’s life is perfect. When you learn about Tabitha’s life, it’s anything but perfect. She claims that she’s miserable and hates her life. She has even tried committing suicide; you would never guess something so horrible was going on in her life with the way she appears in public. She also says that she can’t trust anyone, which is a sad reality for many famous people. Then Lisbeth, an ordinary Jersey girl, comes along into her life, someone who Tabitha can finally trust and rely on. She even describes Lisbeth as an “angel” that was sent to her. It goes to show that these rich celebrities and regular common folk are really not that different. As Lisbeth says at one point after an encounter with Dahlia, it was the “same trash talk that went down in the girls’ locker room at Montclair High, only we were wearing better clothes” (Kriegman 185).

Kriegman executed this story very well and made Lisbeth an incredibly relatable character. He makes you laugh with his use of sarcasm and modern diction, he pulls at your heart strings with Lisbeth’s love triangle and family issues, and he keeps you on the edge of your seat page after page. Personally, I was glued to the book for a while, unwilling to escape the world of “Being Audrey.”

I would recommend this novel to really anyone who is a sucker for fame, romance, and fashion, especially teenage girls. *Being Audrey Hepburn* is unequivocally worth a read, and I hope you enjoy it as much as I did!

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