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# New York Debut (Carter House Girls)



## Synopsis

Mix six teenage girls and one '60s fashion icon (retired, of course) in an old Victorian-era boardinghome. Add boys and dating, a little high-school angst, and throw in a Kate Spade bag or two . . . and you've got The Carter House Girls, Melody Carlson's new chick lit series for young adults! New York Debut The New Year promises to be lively for the Carter House girls. No sooner does the calendar page turn and the girls are forced to confront a whole load of difficulties. There is constant pressure from Mrs. Carter as the household prepares to participate in the high stakes Spring Fashion Week in New York City. Competition flares from all directions as the girls vie for top billing, premium outfits, and attention from favorite guys. Stresses mount and some personal challenges grow into serious problems. Will the girls survive the big city experience and the even bigger trials that come along with it?

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Melody Carlson is a superb author for teen issues and for being a good book and series for high school and junior high students.

Book 6 in the Carter House Girls series picks up as DJ is being picked up from the airport on her return from Las Vegas (see my review of book 5, Lost in Las Vegas). Taylor is noticeably absent and DJ has to share with her grandmother that she is at a rehab facility in California for alcohol abuse. Grandmother is upset and disappointed because she is afraid that Taylor won't make it back in time for Fashion Week in NYC. As school starts up again after New Years, DJ, Rhiannon and Casey begin to notice that Kriti seems to be eating less and working out more. They do an intervention and Kriti confesses that Eliza has been influencing her to lose weight. They convince her she doesn't need to and move her in with DJ - away from Eliza. Grandmother begins having classes on Saturday mornings to teach the girls about etiquette, manners and how to "own" the cat walk. She opens these up to the community and the Carter House girls find themselves spending time with Daisy, a new friend, and Madison and Tina, two old enemies. I had only read book 5 prior to this book (other books in the series include Mixed Bags, Stealing Bradford, Homecoming Queen, and Viva Vermont). Again, it was hard to differentiate all the girls at first, and I would not have had a clue had I not read Lost in Las Vegas. I don't think it reads well as a stand alone. That being said, it does have good lessons and values for a teenage Christian girl to follow and illustrates how one can turn to God in all sorts of situations. I hope to eventually be able to go back and read the first 4 books in this series. Bikini Breakdown is book 7 of this series and it is due out in October 2009.

It's time for another adventure with the Carter Girls and this is time we get to visit New York City and discover the fashion world. This book is perfect for those who watch shows like America's Top Model or Project Runaway as the reader is taken behind the scenes of fashion shows and runway models. Since the story is from DJ's perspective, she's not really interested in this subject which I totally can relate with her. Her grandmother thinks that this should be the high point in her life and strives to make DJ and the other Carter House girls into the model-types she thinks they should be. It was really nice to see Taylor come back from rehab and be a changed person. She's not 100% changed, as that would be totally unrealistic, but she does now have a sense of maturity that she didn't show in previous books. Interestingly all her bad traits now seemed to have been passed on to Eliza, who has decided to become the house's mean girl. There is also a plot involving anorexia which is relevant to the main storyline about fashion. Even though it's a subject tackled many times in YA books, it's still relevant and important to mention. This story isn't as far fetched as the

previous story set in Las Vegas, although the girls still display independence in a big city that I could have only dreamed of when I was that age. I'm still not really a fan of DJ's grandmother but she is starting to change. Slowly but at least it's finally happening. To be honest I really don't understand why mainstream YA readers have been avoiding this series or other Melody Carlson books. Yes there are characters in these books that happen to be Christian but the story lines are not preachy. The plots rival those being published by mainstream publishers and the characters go through almost exactly the same events. Even the covers are spiffy enough to stand next to each other. I'm not sure if it's because of marketing or the fact that these books are on a Christian publisher but I just never see mainstream YA bloggers ever talking about these books. Hopefully that will eventually change because I really think they would enjoy these books. I know I do! Overall this is another great addition to the series and I'm looking forward to the next book!

Perfect for : Personal reading, great gift/read for teen girls, probably a good book for parents of teenage girls to read as well (gain some insight into today's teens!!) In a nutshell: I was recently asked if I could recommend any "edgy" Christian fiction for young adult girls, and I have to say that *New York Debut* by Melody Carlson is just that (my niece even confirmed it!). This is the sixth book in the Carter House series. Carter House is a boarding house for teenage girls, and in this book, the girls are coming back from winter break, getting ready to head back to school, and are preparing to participate as models in New York's Fashion Week for one of the designers. The thing that makes this series so great is that the author has created teenage girls that have real-life problems. This book tackles issues like teenage drinking, eating disorders and peer pressure, and provides responsible actions and consequences (helping a friend enter rehab, encouraging another friend to eat healthier and know that she is perfect the way she is, police involvement and house arrest and consequences for girls who throw a party and sneak in alcohol, etc). And to make it even better, there is a bit of faith interspersed throughout the book in a way that is subtle and not overdone, girls who simply say, "I've been praying for you" can really make a statement to the girls reading this book. I love what this book stands for and the message Melody Carlson is giving today's girls - add that girls actually enjoy reading these books and you've got a great combination! Extended Review: Characters: The girls in the book talk and act in ways that today's girls can relate to and understand. A few of the girls are bent on making it through life the hard way, and they act as a good backdrop within the book to show the "good" choices that some of the other girls are making. Story-Line: I can still remember being wrapped up in my own world as a teen, thinking that my parents knew NOTHING about what I was going through. I wish I could have been reading

books like this one, where the story shows girls making tough choices (both good and bad), and having to deal with the consequences, and learning from each other, as well as getting a little exposure to faith, and knowing that it is ok to pray and lean on faith, even as a teen. Readability: This is a young adult/teen book, and as such, it is written to a level that teen girls will be able to relate to. I enjoyed the book as an adult, but read it knowing that it was a teen fiction book. Overall: This is a great book for teen girls (and adults), that will help impart the importance of making good choices, while allowing the reader to understand that making the wrong choice will result in consequences. I especially like that Melody Carlson has taken this opportunity to tackle some of the tough issues faced by today's teens. Note: this is the sixth book in the Carter House series, and I had no trouble reading it without having read the other books, but I would like to have read the other books as well.

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