



Meat Market

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Jana Novak is the sixteen year old daughter of Serbian immigrant parents who has grown up on a South London council estate. While she is at Thorpe Park, a model agency scouts her. She decides to take up a modelling career.

Dawson's book tells the story of Jana's career in a first person narrative. The book does not shy away from the dark underbelly of the fashion industry. It is instead a searing exposé of the world of haute couture. Of course modelling can be a very glamorous career, especially for a working class girl for whom other opportunities may be scarce. But there is a price to be paid for the glitz and glamour. The costs of this glittering career are explored in this novel.

Dawson's book has a serious claim on our attention. Most readers, including this reviewer, know little about the inner workings of the fashion industry. When we see glamorous models having a wonderful time in the world's most attractive resorts, it never occurs to us that sacrifices may be demanded for this reward.

In this powerful book there are scenes of sexual abuse and a discussion of its consequences both for the perpetrator and the victim. These episodes have a purpose that goes beyond mere narrative interest. It is a worthy social aim for any author to teach young women that they have a right to sovereignty over their own bodies and decisive power over what happens to them. Reports from the cinema industry in recent years give a graphic and sinister view of what can happen when the lessons of individual self-determination are forgotten.

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