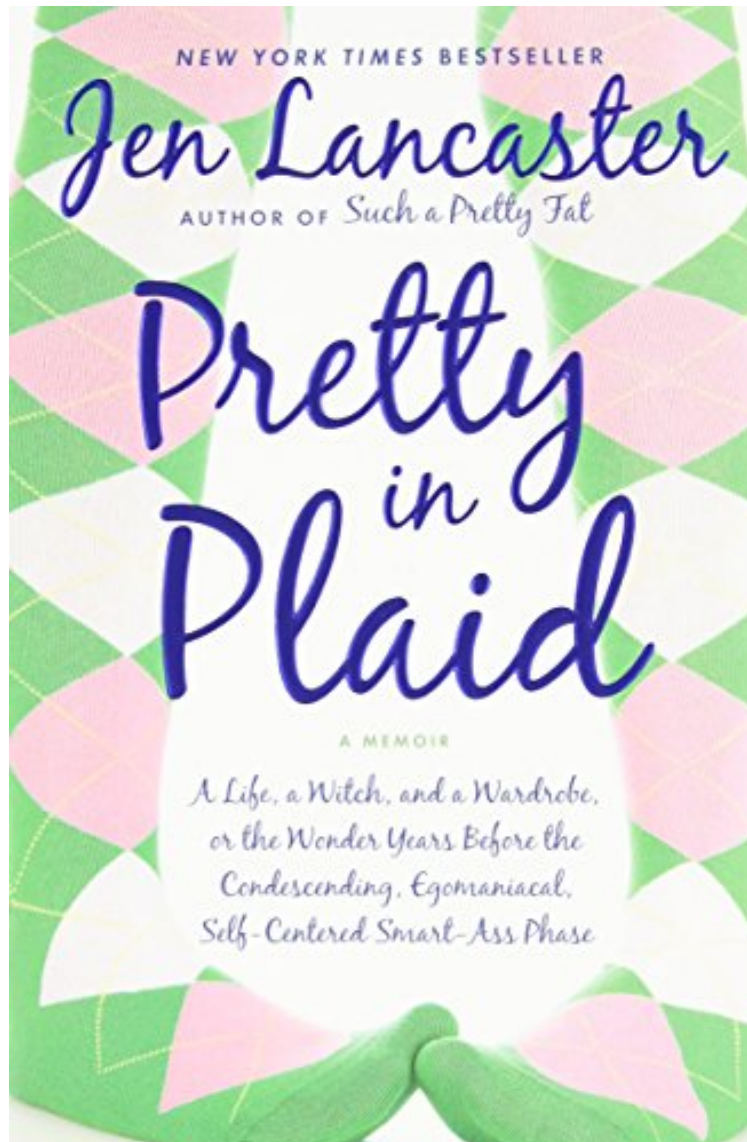


[PDF] *Pretty in Plaid: A Life, A Witch, and a Wardrobe, or, the Wonder Years Before the Condescending, Egomaniacal, Self-Centered Smart-Ass Phase*

Pretty in Plaid: A Life, A Witch, and a Wardrobe, or, the Wonder Years Before the Condescending, Egomaniacal, Self-Centered Smart-Ass Phase

Jen Lancaster

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Jen Lancaster : *Pretty in Plaid: A Life, A Witch, and a Wardrobe, or, the Wonder Years Before the Condescending, Egomaniacal, Self-Centered Smart-Ass Phase* before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Pretty in Plaid: A Life, A Witch, and a Wardrobe, or, the Wonder Years*

Before the Condescending, Egomaniacal, Self-Centered Smart-Ass Phase:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Just right for winter blahs - light, airy laughs!By DogsHorses
Having been in a reading slump after weeks of books that just could not catch my interest or were so badly written, so depressing, so off-putting I was using them as kindling in the fireplace, I remembered Jen Lancaster had put out *Pretty in Plaid*. Normally I shy from "pre-quels" as they are never as good as the original stories you fell in love with - can we say *Star Wars*? I finished a book for the first time in 3 weeks and ENJOYED IT!!! Yea me - yea Jen! Wonder if this is what guys with the little blue pill feel like? Sorry.... I digress.This book is a nice walk.... jog... no, it's a stumble through Jen's childhood into teen angst and many years of college (really Jen? how many years? Party much? LOL) as she finds her way to the book where we all made her acquaintance for the first time. If you are from the generation before Jen's or the one after ours, then you probably won't care for her story or her voice much. However, for those of us born in the early '70's (or so) Mrs. Lancaster's journey rings true on many levels, for many reasons. Not the least of which is the burning need to fit into a size 6 Jordache jeans with no panty lines and making our mothers understand that spending the same for a pair of said jeans as she spent on two week's worth of groceries was not unreasonable. Her European trip as a junior was a SCREAM! Oh and thank you for reminding me of the awful first car - the Toyota Tercel and it's evil GM twin, the Geo Prizm. I love that we now have a glimpse of the real reasons Jen is who she is.Granted, parts of this book aren't quite as funny as her previous efforts and in fact there are sections that do feel rushed and stretched, but heck, no author is perfect and when you have multiple books out, there will always be one that isn't as good as the rest. Hopefully her next one will be focused again on the present which is where her current observations on life and people are their snarkiest and thus funniest.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. She makes me smile and have good hard belly laughsBy shopgirlOkay let me just start by saying this woman is my soul mate (not in a creepy stalker way). She makes me smile and have good hard belly laughs. Much like me, her filter is on the fritz. I appreciate her genuineness. I don't care what others say, Jen Lancaster you are my savior!!This book will make you LOL throughout each chapter. I'm always sad when her books come to an end. It's nice to escape everyday life and get a sneak peak into someone else's dysfunction for a moment. *Pretty in Plaid* may be my absolute favorite and I've read all her work. Thank you for putting the F U in FUN!!!!!!1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Jordache jeans, flipped up collars, floppy tiesBy E. Griffin*Pretty in Plaid* is a "prequel memoir" from Jen Lancaster, as her fourth book takes us back to the times before the big city, the Prada bag, and the weight loss adventure. Each chapter uses an iconic fashion trend from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s as a backdrop for Jen's stories. If you lived during any of those times, who can forget the Jordache jeans, polo shirt with the turned up collar, navy blue knee socks, or the sweater (oh so casually) slipping off your shoulder.The chapters about Jen's first "real" job are laugh out loud funny; I could see so clearly the frumpy blue suite with the business blouse and the dreaded fax machine. When Jen gets promoted, you cannot help but to cheer her on, even though you have a pretty good idea about what will happen!*Pretty in Plaid* is a great book, well written, insightful, and very funny (I forget to mention the bits about her parents--wickedly funny!). Reading *Pretty in Plaid* reminded me of so many forgotten adolescent / young adult mortifying moments that are humorous now only in retrospect. Like the other three books by Jen Lancaster, you hate to come to the final chapter.

Now in paperback! Jen Lancaster's cultural inferiority complex had to come from somewhere...and now fans can find out where in the New York Times bestseller *Pretty in Plaid*. Before she was bitter, before she was lazy, Jen Lancaster was a badge-hungry Junior Girl Scout with a knack for extortion, an aspiring sorority girl who didn't know her Coach from her Louis Vuitton, and a budding executive who found herself bewildered by her first encounter with a fax machine. In this hilarious and touching memoir, Jen Lancaster looks back on her life-and wardrobe-and reveals a young woman not so different from the rest of us. Prepare to take a long walk in her (drool-worthy) shoes in this hilarious and heartwarming trip down memory lane.

From Publishers WeeklyFunny girl Lancaster has crafted a successful career by honing the breezy, bloggy style she first exhibited in *Bitter is the New Black*; her latest, in part a backhand to the resurgent 80s fashion trends, is sure hit resonant, hysterical notes for anyone who came of age in the era of the *Preppy Handbook*. Authorial voice is at the heart of Lancaster's charm, and she chronicles her early 20s-blunders from fashion and finances to academics and retail jobs-with a candor that few will be able to resist. Lancaster confesses to a fascination with plastic (the material, not the credit card), gloating over her impressive new Liz Claiborne bags, and difficulty finding faithful friends, even (especially) in her Greek affiliations ("Even though I read *Seventeen* and *Glamour* every month, I'm already thought of as the Jean Jacket Jackass in my rush group"). Falling somewhere between David Sedaris and Laurie Notaro, Lancaster's goofy charm will no doubt continue to win fans, as well as influence the next generation of sardonic, winning, self-effacing memoirists. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.About the AuthorJen Lancaster is the author of *Bitter is the New Black*. She has lived in Chicago for ten years with her husband and pets, and has yet to get the hang of the subway or returning library books in a timely

manner. Visit www.jennsylvania.com Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. November 6, 1974 Dear Mattel, Your Bella Dancerella Barbie is junk! Just today the head fell off her. Yesterday, her body fell apart. I do not have any of the pieces to send you because they are junk now. Maybe you should send me a replacement another one immediately before I tell all my friends what shoddy products you manufacture. Your friend, Jennifer Lancaster P.S. My Dawn dolls fell apart in the tub when I tried to take them swimming. Please send two Dancerella Barbies to make up for this tragic loss. October 1, 1976 Hi, Mrs. Cummings, You don't know me but I am my brother Todd's sister. My mom says Todd is failing your Spanish class. She yelled at him a bunch for getting an F on the test and he was mad. He kept saying "no bueno." My mom is probably too emotional about Todd's grades to discuss the situation rationally, so you should probably work through me. I am enclosing a blank piece of paper so you can give me a progress report on Todd. Okay, thank you, Jennifer Lancaster P.S. Hola! P.P.S. Look at me! I'm already bi-lingual! December 12, 1980 Hello, Brooke Shields! I'm a big fan even though I'm not allowed to see The Blue Lagoon. Plus you're from New Jersey and I used to live in New Jersey and we have the same eyebrows, so it's like we're already kindred spirits. Anyway, I saw your commercial and I like the Calvin Klein jeans you advertise. I figure you probably have some extra since Mr. Klein likely gave them to you for free. You're in luck – I happen to need some Calvin Klein jeans and no one will buy them for me so why not solve both our problems and send me some? Seriously, no one in this stupid cow town has Calvins and I'd be the first if you sent me some and I'm pretty sure that would catapult me to instant celebrity. Your friend, Jennifer Lancaster P.S. My auntie says your ads are kitty porn, but that makes no sense because you're totally wearing pants! Also? There are no cats! February 14, 1981 Brooke, I am not saying "dear" because you are not dear to me. I ask you for extra pants and you send me back a frigging postcard? You are NOT COOL. And I totally pluck my eyebrows now. You should, too. NOT your friend, Jennifer Lancaster P.S. All is forgiven if the pants are in the mail. January 28, 1984 Principal Stern, I'm sorry you had to take time out of your busy day of principal-ing to deal with such a trivial matter. Honestly, I have no idea how or why Justine Moore got the idea that I hated her and that I specifically carried nail scissors around to simulate snip-snip sounds whenever I was behind her in the hallway. And I couldn't begin to tell you who started the rumor about people wanting to hack off a chunk of her hair ridiculous red hair to punish her for being such a b-i-t, well, you know, female dog. These allegations against me are hurtful and untrue even though she TOTALLY tried to get with my date by grinding on him when I hit the bathroom at the last school dance. As you can see, she'd have it coming if someone were to give her an unexpected haircut, but it wouldn't be me. Your student, Jeni Lancaster P.S. She has NO proof. December 15, 2008 Dear Self, Someday in a fit of nostalgia, or perhaps after watching Gross Pointe Blank again, you will be tempted to attend a high school reunion. Before you load up the CD player with eighties tunes and create a triptych, please read this book and re-familiarize yourself with all the smack you talked about your classmates and hometown. And then take yourself on a spa weekend instead so you don't accidentally, you know, get lynched. You can't go home again. At least not after mocking the prom queen. Best, Jen PROLOGUE When I was a kid, my mother's mantra was You are what you eat. Considering that I broke the long silence from birth until my thirteenth month of life by uttering the word "cookie," it was safe to say even then that it would not become mine. I knew I wasn't a bruised banana pulled from her handbag while waiting on line at the post office, nor was I an unsweetened bowl of Cheerios topped with wheat germ from the foul-smelling hippie health food store. Sure, I'd have happily been a Hershey bar or a bowl of mouth-shredding Crunch Berries, but a poorly boned bowl of homemade chicken soup or a salt-free lentil casserole? No. Right about the time I was able to cut my own meat and make my own sartorial choices, my Auntie Fanny gave me some of my cousin Stephanie's old clothes. I was instantly enamored; there were colors and styles I'd never seen before. Instead of the ducky-and-moo-cow tops my mother bought or made by hand, I took first grade by storm in Steph's old purple suede fringe vests and rainbow-striped corduroy bell-bottoms and peace symbol T-shirts. I mean, why would I dress like a baby when I could look like an extra from Sonny and Cher Show reruns? I may not have been able to tie my shoes or spell my last name, but I knew one thing for sure—I was not what I ate. I was what I wore. You never can tell when nostalgia might strike. For many people, it's triggered by a long-forgotten scent, say the nose on a glass of wine that evokes the aroma of ripe grapes hanging from the arbor in their great-grandmother's backyard. For others, memories come flooding in when a fancy small-plates restaurant conjures up an ironic bread pudding that happens to taste just like the one Mrs. Maguire brought to that block party the day Nixon resigned. For some, it's a snippet of a song: Three bars from Toto's "Africa" broadcast from a passing car and they're no longer swinging a Halliburton briefcase down Michigan Avenue to get to a branding meeting. Instead, they're huddled in their high school commons at lunch, cramming for a fifth-period chemistry test. And me? Well, more often than not a piece of clothing will spark my memory. I clearly remember what I had on when I learned the Challenger exploded, and I know what I was wearing when President Reagan was shot. I saw my husband, Fletch, for the first time when I was waitressing in a pink polo and low-waisted men's green chinos, and a year later when we had our first kiss, I was in a red Ralph Lauren turtleneck, loose sand-colored 501s, and had a red and blue grosgrain band around my watch. I can even tell you the exact gauge of the sweater set I wore the day I made the mistake of carrying a Prada bag to the unemployment office. . . no matter how much I'd like to forget. The sizes on the tags of my clothing may have changed over the years, but the memories are a constant. In *Pretty in Plaid*, I recall the outfits (and events) that ultimately made me the kind of

condescending, egomaniacal, self-centered smart-ass who would bark orders at waitresses and make assistants cry. My road to hell wasn't paved with good intentions—it was cobbled with gold lavalieres and Gucci purses. As I examine my life through this book, I can't help but wonder if my mother was right. Maybe I really was what I ate. And maybe if she'd let me eat a little more sugar, I'd have come out sweeter. But, really, who knows? All I can say for sure is that my story begins with kneesocks and a lobster bib. . . .