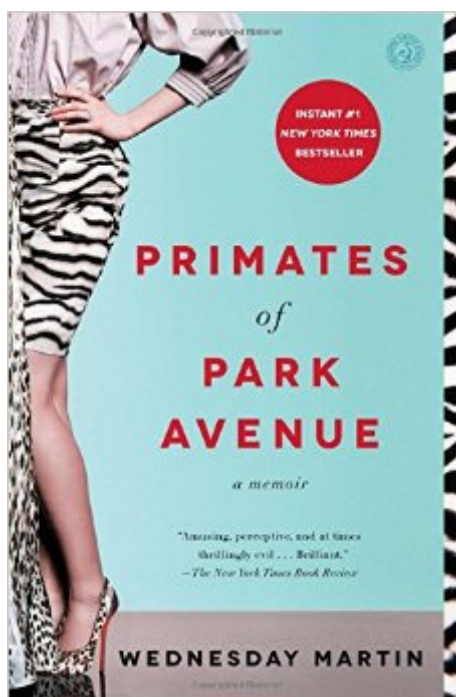


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# Primates Of Park Avenue: A Memoir



## Synopsis

An instant #1 New York Times bestseller, *Primates of Park Avenue* is an "amusing, perceptive and deliciously evil" (The New York Times Book Review) memoir of the most secretive and elite tribe "Manhattan's Upper East Side mothers. When Wednesday Martin first arrives on New York City's Upper East Side, she's clueless about the right addresses, the right wardrobe, and the right schools, and she's taken aback by the glamorous, sharp-elbowed mommies around her. She feels hazed and unwelcome until she begins to look at her new niche through the lens of her academic background in anthropology. As she analyzes the tribe's mating and migration patterns, childrearing practices, fetish objects, physical adornment practices, magical purifying rituals, bonding rites, and odd realities like sex segregation, she finds it easier to fit in and even enjoy her new life. Then one day, Wednesday's world is turned upside down, and she finds out there's much more to the women who she's secretly been calling Manhattan Geishas. "Think Gossip Girl, but with a sociological study of the parents" (InStyle.com), Wednesday's memoir is absolutely "eye-popping" (People). *Primates of Park Avenue* lifts a veil on a secret, elite world within a world "the strange, exotic, and utterly foreign and fascinating life of privileged Manhattan motherhood.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I read this book through the end waiting for some redemption of content and character - let me save you the trouble - there is none. The author spends a lot of time establishing, emphasising and reiterating that she was an outsider who achieved insider status. That's all fine and dandy if you use

it to reveal a meaningful or at least an amusing portrait of a culture even if it is more realistically an NYC subculture. But the observations are largely superficial and it is far more important for Dr. Wednesday Martin to lay out her anthro-creds than tell a good story. For example Dr. Martin discusses *Physique 57* in great depth but neglects the fact that it's wildly popular because it doesn't mess up a blowout! Even if a reasonable reader decided to ignore the author's latent hostility against women who have chosen to be "only" mothers and wives on an admittedly grander scale the big issue is that reading this book makes you feel like you're listening to a mean-spirited gossip rather than the anthropologist gone native. This is frankly an abuse of the memoir format and she has compassion for no-one outside herself. I felt sorry for her late-stage miscarriage and when I read how the other women rallied around to help her I felt that she totally betrayed all her friends. More than being unfunny or wearing too heavily the curse of anthropological knowledge what this book is centrally is unsisterly and unkind. Specifically given the base torment she went through to get her Birkin, sharing with us her condescension to a shopgirl who she believed would never get one make me dislike her even more. I wish that shop assistant identifies herself and Dr.

Judging by the cover, the publishers are clearly aiming for the beach-reading-chick-lit audience, and I was happy to oblige, picking up the book for a fun summer read. Unfortunately, even for a breezy story I was disappointed by the laziness of this book. If you have ever seen the movie *Mean Girls*, you know the predictable storyline. Fish out of water 'normal girl' attempts to integrate herself into a strange subculture of wealthy, spoiled and entitled girls. Secretly, she reports on their strange behaviors to her 'normal friends' while comparing them to jungle animals, eventually turning into the very thing she was initially repelled by. I was into the concept, however without the addition of Tina Fey's wry humor, the story is just...boring. With broad strokes, the author paints herself as an 'anthropologist' and frequently structures the beginning of chapters like a tongue in cheek scientific paper. Quoting Jane Goodall over and over and over and over again, the author seems to think that we won't understand the title unless she brings up the mating rituals of primates every 20 pages. At the start of the book, we are led to believe that this privileged culture is ridiculous to the author and her family, laughable even. However this breaks down after the first few chapters, when she purchases an expensive handbag just because she 'wants it.' The next 75% of the book is a stream of brand names and nursery schools. There was no character development, or even characters! Everyone was described by an outfit, a handbag, a child. No one was a person. Which would be fine, if the author was a fully developed character. After all, the entire book is in her point of view. However, perhaps in an attempt at privacy, we learn nothing about the author other than her

address.

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