



How To Be Cool

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The national bestselling author of *The Next Big Thing* and *Your Big Break* presents her coolest novel yet.

After shedding seventy pounds, Kylie found a new career transforming the socially inept from geek to chic. Her classes on How to Be Cool are Chicago's hottest ticket. But Kylie's still a dork at heart, and she'd die before she let her clients in on her overweight, nerdy past.

Things start to unravel when Kylie's apartment burns down and she's forced to shack up with her parents. Making matters worse, there's a journalist shadowing her every move. The last thing Kylie needs is someone uncovering her dirty little secret... no matter how sexy he may be.

Now, with her life spiraling out of control, the weight she fought so hard to lose is starting to creep back on. But with the help of her best friend Ruby, a confident plus-sized model, Kylie's starting to learn that appearances aren't everything-and that being the queen of cool isn't all it's cracked up to be.

How To Be Cool Details

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Monica says

I usually really like her work. This one left a bit of a bad taste in my mouth. First of all, there is no real description of the main character. What does she even look like? I cannot picture her getting fatter or the clothes she's wearing without a proper description. I also found the story to stall out in the middle and towards the end of the book. Kylie doesn't really change or move anywhere in the book. The ending seemed very rushed and I'm still not quite sure what that essay was at the end. I'm left a bit puzzled having finished it. I hope not all of hers are like this. I read The Next Big Thing and that was written much better than this.

Mary Acosta says

It wasn't very good. It wasn't complete garbage, it just wasn't very good. The main character is insecure to the point of irritation, which is funny considering she is a cool instructor. I'm sure the author meant the irony, but it wasn't cultivated very well. There was little to no chemistry or build up between either love interest. I couldn't help but wish this had been written by someone like Jennifer Wiener, who would've given it the life it tried to have.

Nikki says

This is the second book I have read from Johanna Edwards, and I wasn't sure how I liked the first one, so I thought I would give a second one a try.

This book is long, while I understood that Edwards was truly trying to give the reader the experience of how heavy girls feel about food and what a role it plays in their life, I felt the book focused too much on Kylie's self loathing and not enough time developing the story around her.

It was like I hit the last chapter and all of a sudden in 20 pages Kylie gets the man and the glimmers of a perfect for her life. Skip to the last couple pages and save yourself the time.

Shannon says

Interesting premise - former "fat girl" becomes thin and works as an image consultant who teaches people how to be cool. Loved Kylie's insecurities and how she is able to push them back and be cool herself. I didn't really understand why she was ashamed that, after her apartment building catches on fire & she loses everything, she has moved back in with mom & dad for awhile. It may not be "cool" but that is what 95% of people would do. Kylie's fixation on wowing everyone at her 12-year high school reunion was humorous. All in all, this book was a fun read. Entertaining and believable plot.

Teresa says

I have read worse books than this - but I wouldn't even admit to reading those ones (I'm looking at you, Fern Micheals). If you want to read a well told story about a plus size girl, run as far as you can from How to be Cool; instead take a look at Jennifer Weiners Good In Bed. Your brain will thank you.

From the very beginning I found the main character annoying. She is poorly developed, and fails to grow or change throughout the book (letting your diet slip isn't self-discovery). The catalysts for action in the book were so contrived, and would have been easily fixable by a character with the maturity level of 16 or older. The "jokes" were obvious efforts that failed to make me even attempt a smile, let alone exhale through my nose quickly.

The only reason I finished this book was because I was holding out hope that it would get better. No such luck. I will, however, try a Johanna Edwards novel again in the future: I'd like to see if she can learn from her mistakes.

Dara says

“After shedding over seventy pounds and hiding her nerdy side, Kylie Chase has reinvented herself as a savvy trendsetter. Her classes on How to Be Cool—which promise to transform students from geek to chic—have become Chicago’s hottest ticket. But things start to unravel when Kylie’s apartment burns down and she’s forced to move back in with her parents. With a sexy journalist shadowing her every move, Kylie fears her private embarrassment may become public knowledge. The stress is driving Kylie nuts—and the weight she fought so hard to lose is starting to creep back on. But with the help of her best friend Ruby, a confident plus-sized model, Kylie’s starting to learn that appearances aren’t everything. And that morphing from an “ugly duckling” into the queen of cool isn’t all it’s cracked up to be...” In the book, Kylie attends her high school reunion. She wants to show her classmates how cool she is. You can imagine how that turns out! I guess some of the story line was a bit predictable, but this is definitely a good, mindless summer read.

Christine says

The setup for this book was entertaining--a young career woman changes from ugly duckling to swan and doesn't want the world to discover the duck. Her painful mistakes, over and over, got me frustrated with this heroine. I just wanted to grab and shake her when she made stupid mistakes over and over again. The amount of self reflection the character has in other portions of the book does not reflect that whole "clueless about social mistakes" issue. I had a hard time reading the last 75 pages or so. (And yes, I did guess the ending.)

Elle says

It is about Kylie, a former fattie who is trying to escape her nerd image from high school. Okay, so to some extent, high school was traumatic for some people. It appears that instead of learning from her mistakes and

from the mistakes of others in high school, the protagonist used the negative experiences from high school to spurn a type of revenge that she was using in her life. Whenever the motives of what you are doing is not for yourself, sooner or later, the motivation for the endeavor falls apart. Kylie was living her life not for herself and who she truly is as a person, but for who she thought everyone wanted her to be. Never assume is a saying because it's true. It took losing everything for her to finally find out who she really wanted to be.

What I really liked about this book is the way that we deal with our stigmas about weight. What's so wrong to be bigger if we truly are healthier and we are not using food as some sort of substitute for something. Sometimes, the bigger problem is trying to lose weight to look skinnier as a measure of what we should be.

Kim says

This book is OK, decent. Seems to me though that the author rushed through the last third of the story. Character development seemed to stall and the ending is not as polished/wrapped up as I would have liked to have seen.

Katy says

I read a review of this in the Nashville Scene (apparently the source of all my reading advice). It's not the book I expected, (again, happens a lot in relation to these Scene reviews - do they even read these books?) Anyway, the main character used to be overweight and dorky and now she's lost weight and runs a business called "How to Be Cool." I kind of expected it to be funnier than it was, but it turned out to be standard chick lit formula. Girl is happy at the start of the book, crisis occurs, she is rejected by the man of her dreams (who is quite clearly a jerkazoid to the audience from early on), then she is "rescued" by the "shy yet hot" guy she least expects to fall for. Cute enough, but a sure beach or other mindless activity read.

Kshydog says

There was not really anything to this story. Kylie lost weight and becomes confident enough to tell other people how to live their lives. Although she could relate to nerd type people, where she felt she could be so much better than them never came across clearly. It was obvious that both her high school obsession and the journalist were not going to be the right fit for her. Her mother helps her

Stephanie says

I loved this book. It was funny and sweet, but the main character also dealt with a lot of home truths: revenge, the fantasies we build up about people, learning to love ourselves, accepting people the way they are, self-acceptance, and others. Again I compare the author to Jennifer Weiner--her main character, Kylie, has lived a life in which she was constantly judged by her weight. She's now turned her life around and considered to be an arbiter of coolness. But inside she's the same person dealing with insecurities, trying to maintain the appearance of coolness, being who she thinks others want/expect her to be. Kylie goes through a learning and growing process throughout the book, and makes the reader think a lot about what 'cool' really

means.

Holly says

Set in Chicago, Kylie has lost 75 lbs and is now one of the hottest image consultants around. she is different on the outside, but what about the inside? Throw in Ty, a hottie metrosexual journalist from Nashville via NYC, who is writing a big story on her will he discover just how "cool" she really is? A great summer beach read that tells us there is a little nerdiness inside all of us, and that isn't a bad thing after all. I am interested in reading another Johanna Edwards book.

Beth Pratt says

I don't know why I keep reading this sort of book. Typically written in first person or sometimes in third person limited, with the main character a twentyomething straight white woman who feels insecure about her looks and yearns to be a fashionable queen bee who gets the supersexy guy. These books make me feel dirty and confused. Why are such shallow goals supposed to be aspirational for women? We should all be wishing ourselves thin, pretty, clad in designer labels, and on the arm of a generic Prince Charming type? I suppose that is what these books are saying. I pick them up because they always look like a fun little read, like going to a romantic comedy movie, and I guess they are rather like a romantic comedy.

Kellie C. says

From the opening sentences: "My name is Kylie Chase and I used to be fat. I also used to be a nerd." I knew I was going to enjoy this book! Kylie Chase, the shunned fat girl in her high school, lost a lot of weight and shed her dorky image. Now Kylie teaches other people "How to Be Cool". Nothing earth shattering here, but I was highly entertained and it was a very quick read. I identified with Kylie and her insecurities...I also found myself identifying with some of her more dorky clients!
