



Girls on the Verge: Debutante Dips, Drive-bys, and Other Initiations

Vendela Vida

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In a fascinating look at how young women are coming of age in America, Vendela Vida explores a variety of rituals that girls have adapted or created in order to leave their childhoods behind. Vida doesn't just observe the rituals, she actively participates in them, going as far as spending a week at UCLA to experience rush--she emerges a Tri-Delt. She also goes to Miami to learn about the "quince" (the Latin American celebration of a girl's fifteenth birthday), to Houston to take part in a debutante ball, to Los Angeles and San Francisco to talk to female gang members, to Salem, Massachusetts, to interview a coven of witches, and to Las Vegas to watch young brides take the plunge--some of them in drive-through wedding chapels. With humor, insight, and illuminating detail, she explores girls' struggles to forge an identity and secure a sense of belonging through various rituals--rituals that they embrace without necessarily understanding the comforts they seek or the repercussions of their often all-too-adult choices.

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