

SAMPLE EXCERPT FROM NICOLE BECKETT'S BOOK: *THE FANTABULOUS GIRL'S GUIDE TO WARDROBE STYLING*

INTRODUCTION

Life as a Wardrobe Stylist is like living in a modern-day fairy tale. Red carpets, flashing lights, runways, movie sets and magazine shoots are everyday occurrences. Our daily routine is a whirlwind of shoes, handbags, gowns, suits, neck ties and ascots, bracelets and jewels, designer jeans, vintage hats and hand tailored dresses. We read *Cosmopolitan* over coffee in the morning and lull ourselves to sleep with the fantastical pages of *Vogue* at night. Our dreams consist of Cinderella ball gowns and fairy wings. Yet when we wake, we realize we are still in a dream, because that's what dressing living dolls is: a dream come true.

We Wardrobe Stylists and Costume Designers are the guardians of glamour, the advocates of sophistication and the tellers of stories. With unbridled passion, we work tirelessly to keep the fantasy of Hollywood alive. Our mark, made through the clothing we choose, is present in the epic drama that graces the silver screen, to the most outlandish comedy spoof on *Saturday Night Live*, to the pages of fashion magazines far and wide.

We have an influence on the world through our art, our styling and design, that helps audiences laugh, cry, and understand what they see. No wonder Wardrobe Styling is considered one of the most sought after careers in the entertainment and fashion world! It's not just a career; it's a lifestyle.

LETTER TO THE READER

Dear Fashionista,

This is the ultimate fantabulous guide for aspiring Wardrobe Stylists and Costume Designers who want to start out in the entertainment business creating their own amazing designs, looks and costumes, rather than spending years as an assistant. For more than a decade, I have received thousands of emails asking how to get into the fashion and entertainment business and become a Wardrobe Stylist.

Because of these passionate queries, I've decided to share my experience and expertise with all the burgeoning fashionistas who have followed my career. I wrote this book based upon my own personal experience as a Wardrobe Stylist and Costume Designer in fashion, film, music videos and commercials.

As a fellow fashionista, I have lived for fashion my entire life. From a very young age, I studied *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Seventeen* –frankly, any magazine I could get my hands on. After graduating college, I jumped head first into the largest fashion mecca in the world: New York. Working in public relations, I was lucky enough to represent Vidal Sassoon at 7th on Sixth, which, as every fashion enthusiast knows, is the ultimate culmination of design, glamour and beauty. The first show I saw was Vivienne Westwood. My breathing stopped. My heart skipped a beat, and I knew this was my destiny.

I began designing my own flirty, fun, vintage-inspired dress line Agogo. During its first season, Agogo made a huge impact on the fashion industry by shifting the trends toward a vintage-inspired look and away from the street-inspired J-Lo look that Jennifer Lopez made famous in the early 2000's. My original cherry print sundress was featured so many times in fashion magazines that by the next season, cherry prints were carried in most major mall chain stores and boutiques.

By age 24, my designs were published in *Cosmopolitan*, *Twist*, *J-14*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Daily News*, *Teen People* and on *MTV*. My designs were featured on hip hop star Mya and were associated with Beyoncé, Gwen Stefani, Kelly Osborne and Ashlee Simpson.

Designing my own clothing line for seven seasons and having it sold in 200 boutiques worldwide was a dream come true. However, I began to realize that my sweet spot was really in Wardrobe Styling and Costume Design. I liked working with actors and celebrities one-on-one, creating stunning, outrageous looks for them. I wanted to spend less time in manufacturing and more time looking at every gorgeous garment I could lay my hands on. I wanted to experience everyone else's designs and put them together into one masterpiece. That is what Wardrobe Styling allows me to do.

I have had the pleasure of designing for many amazing projects: comedy spoofs with Andy Dick, Jack Black and Ben Stiller, where I designed Cleopatra gowns, head pieces and gigantic snake costumes; an action movie with wrestling legend Hulk Hogan dressed as Zeus; a lotto commercial with satin robes for boxing legend Oscar de la Hoya; a movie with sexy dresses for bombshell Vivica A. Fox; an SFactor commercial with the vivacious Lisa Rinna; gigantic lotto ball costumes for Kentucky Lotto commercials; Mexican wrestler costumes for a Compass Bank ad; music videos for punk, metal and hip hop groups; fashion photo shoots for PhotoGenics at Smashbox, and fabulous runway shows for Los Angeles, New York, Las Vegas and Atlanta Fashion and Market Weeks.

Because fashion is my life, I think about clothing 24 hours a day. For every party, event, or job, the first thought I have is, "What am I going to wear?" Now, as a Wardrobe Stylist, I'm lucky enough to not only ponder what I am going to wear, but what others are going to wear as well. It is my job to understand what apparel is appropriate for every event my clients attend, whether a red carpet event, a fashion show or music video shoot. It is also my responsibility to dress actors for film and commercials in a way that accurately reflects each of their characters, stories or brands. This is the basis of Wardrobe Styling and Costume Design.

Before we continue, it is important for you to understand the difference between a Wardrobe Stylist and Costume Designer. The titles are often used synonymously in the industry, but there are specific job descriptions for each one. In this book, I will go back and forth between the two, depending on the scenario I am writing about. During your career, you will probably be both before deciding which one you love the most.

Wardrobe Stylist Defined

As a Wardrobe Stylist (or Fashion Stylist), you will style or put together the clothing for print advertising campaigns, television commercials, music videos, concert performances, published editorial features, and any public appearances that celebrities, models or other public figures make. You may also provide services, such as personal shopping.

As a Stylist, your job description will vary depending on the project. If you are a Stylist in the editorial and celebrity fields, you will work primarily with fashion designer samples. You will get to see and work with all the hottest designs, months before they hit stores. Not only will you see all the latest designs, you might even collaborate directly with designers to produce custom apparel for celebrity clients or editorial layouts. If you are a clothing/fashion designer as well, you will create your own amazing garments for celebs. This type of styling is typical if you become a celebrity Stylist with clients who attend awards shows. In this case, your goal is to get your celeb client on the Best Dressed List.

Costume Designer Defined

As a Costume Designer, you will design/create/construct costumes for film, television, new media or theater productions. These costumes can be contemporary, fantasy or time period garments, depending on the project. Your role as a Costume Designer is to enhance characters' personalities, help tell their stories and reflect social status and the time period through clothing and accessories.

Basically, you tell a story with the clothing you choose for a particular character. You will get to collaborate closely with talented directors, producers, actors, production designers, hair stylists, makeup artists and directors of photography to make sure that all of your costumes work together within the production. Being extremely creative and artistic is super important as a Costume Designer, as well as having a really strong knowledge of fashion trends and costume history. You never know when you will be hired to costume a 16th century drama or a '70's disco film.

As a Costume Designer, your creativity will truly shine if you love constructing costumes. Horror films call for monsters, while comedies call for wacky costumes, like a giant corn on the cob. Action films need awesome superhero costumes, while commercials may need human-size bowling pins and ice cream cone mascots.

As you can see, being a Wardrobe Stylist, Costume Designer or hybrid of both is an exciting, ever-changing journey filled with fabulous clothes, glamorous people and most of all, YOU! I'm flattered that you chose me to help you along the way. Good luck ... and ACTION!!

Nicole Beckett