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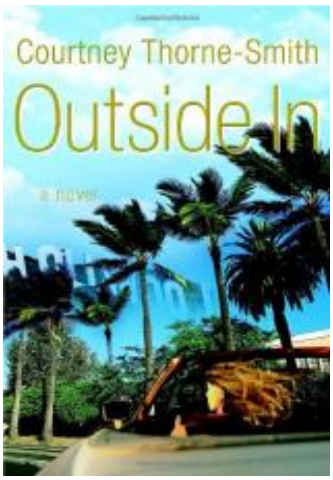
Outside In: A Novel

by Courtney Thorne-Smith



About the Book

From one of America?s most beloved television actresses: A sharply observed, comedic novel about the flip side of fame?and a fresh take on Hollywood in all its outrageous, entertaining glory.

On the outside, Kate Keyes-Morgan seems to have it all: a starring role on the hit television series **Generations**, a handsome husband who is also her manager, a model-thin figure, and a career that, after an earlier slide, is finally back on track. At the age of thirty, Kate knows what it?s like to have the tabloids turn on you, and she never wants it to happen again. Thank goodness her husband, Hamilton, is there to manage her every move?even if the strict dieting and morning weigh-ins are becoming more than she can manage.

But when Hamilton leaves her for another actress on **Generations**, the ruthless diva Sapphire Rose, Kate suddenly finds herself in charge of her own life. Now she must decide whether she?s ready to stop playing by the Hollywood rulebook and discover who she really is. With the help of her wise-cracking friend and tough-love makeup artist, Paige, and Michael, a high-powered film agent who secretly dreams of becoming a novelist, Kate begins to question her role in an industry that venerates appearance, money, and fame above all else, and that applies ceaseless pressure on women to always be thinner, younger, and more beautiful, at any cost.

From high fashion to on-set antics to the real-life whispers about celebrities that even the tabloids never tell, Courtney Thorne-Smith depicts the entertainment world as only an insider can. Yet beneath the glamorous facade lies a natural-born writer with a gift for comic timing and shaping memorable characters. If you?ve ever wanted to experience life in the spotlight or wondered what goes on behind dressing room doors, **Outside In** is your invitation into the glittering world of Hollywood?s biggest stars.

Discussion Guide

1. Discuss the novel?s title. Do any of the characters let the outside world see their real lives? What determines who the insiders and outsiders are in the Hollywood community?

2. What is the source of Hamilton?s control over Kate? Would she have been so submissive if he weren?t involved in her career? What does she see in him?

3. How would you describe the dynamic between Kate?s mother and father? What seems to determine whether they will be fighting or making up? What did growing up in this environment teach Kate about marriage?

4. What, if anything, would make Kate?s mother understand the long?lasting effects of the way she?s treated her daughter? What about Hamilton? Why, or why not?

5. What did you make of Kate?s ignorance of her financial affairs? Why is she so trusting and naïve? Do you understand why she?s chosen to stay in the dark about her financial situation all these years?

6. In your opinion, what determines the way a person reacts to fame? Is it nature or nurture that makes Kate and Sapphire so different from one another? Do you think people are capable of changing from a Sapphire into a Kate and vice versa?

7. What is the root of Kate and Paige?s friendship? What do they have in common, despite their very different lives and personalities? What does their relationship mean to each of them?

8. What are your feelings about the PR machine, as it is portrayed in **Outside In**? How does Sapphire use publicity to her advantage, and what missteps does she make? What other characters do you see taking advantage of publicity opportunities? Is this always a bad thing?

9. Did your opinion of Michael change throughout the novel? How did you feel about his initial deception of Kate? Would you have been able to forgive him?

10. One of the recurring themes of **Outside In** is Hollywood?s obsession with thin women and fad diets. To what extent does the entertainment industry encourage unhealthy body images and destructive eating habits in American audiences? Are Kate?s struggles with weight something that you relate to?

11. Outside In weaves together over?the top spoofs with realistic portraits of life in the entertainment industry. Which lines or characters amused you the most? Which scenes reminded you of Hollywood horror stories you have seen in the media? Could you tell how much of the action and dialogue was based in reality and how much was exaggerated?

12. What do you predict Kate and Michael?s future will bring? What about Hamilton and Sapphire?s?

Author Bio

Courney Thorne-Smith is best known for her roles as Alison on the primetime soap opera "Melrose Place", Georgia on

the Emmy Award-winning series "Ally McBeal", and currently as Cheryl opposite Jim Belushi in the hit situation comedy "According to Jim". As a writer, she has contributed articles to *Self*, *InStyle*, and *Allure*. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband.

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