



Stars Over Sunset Boulevard

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In this new novel from the acclaimed author of *Secrets of a Charmed Life*, two women working in Hollywood during its Golden Age discover the joy and heartbreak of true friendship.

Los Angeles, Present Day. When an iconic hat worn by Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With the Wind* ends up in Christine McAllister's vintage clothing boutique by mistake, her efforts to return it to its owner take her on a journey more enchanting than any classic movie...

Los Angeles, 1938. Violet Mayfield sets out to reinvent herself in Hollywood after her dream of becoming a wife and mother falls apart, and lands a job on the film-set of *Gone With the Wind*. There, she meets enigmatic Audrey Duvall, a once-rising film star who is now a fellow secretary. Audrey's zest for life and their adventures together among Hollywood's glitterati enthrall Violet...until each woman's deepest desires collide. What Audrey and Violet are willing to risk, for themselves and for each other, to ensure their own happy endings will shape their friendship, and their lives, far into the future.

CONVERSATION GUIDE INCLUDED

Stars Over Sunset Boulevard Details

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Author : Susan Meissner

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From Reader Review Stars Over Sunset Boulevard for online ebook

Melissa says

<http://www.chicklitcentral.com/2015/1...>

Erin says

Find this and other reviews at: <http://flashlightcommentary.blogspot....>

I was really excited when I landed a copy of Susan Meissner's Stars Over Sunset Boulevard. I love old Hollywood and Gone With the Wind is one of my favorite films. The jacket description piqued my interest and I was absolutely giddy over the subject matter.

Unfortunately for me, this is one of those scenarios in which reality failed to meet expectation. I'd hoped Stars Over Sunset Boulevard would bridge the gap between A Touch of Stardust and The Woman in the Movie Star Dress, but the novel did neither. I might have fared better if I'd been able to relate to the character, but I was unsuccessful there too.

While the novel takes place during the filming of Gone With the Wind, Stars Over Sunset Boulevard is primarily about two women. It is a chronicle of the friendship they share, the decisions they make, the lies they tell, and repercussions their actions reap over the natural course of time. There are some fun anecdotes about the famous film, but Meissner's work is more Women's Fiction than Hollywood Historical. I've nothing against that, but the historic subject matter is what drew me to this title and I was disappointed that it played second fiddle to the personal drama of her leads.

I also had great difficulty with Meissner's writing style, format and structure. The narrative features a variety of locations and I felt the transitions between them awkward. I had similar feelings about the timeline and felt the narrative distinctly one-sided. The modern elements lacked intrigue and would have been content without the experiences of the younger generation.

A Touch of Stardust had many flaws, but at the end of the day I think Alcott's interpretation of the filming of Gone With the Wind stronger than Meissner's. Asthana's story line is modern, but his use of iconic clothing in The Woman in the Movie Star Dress is decidedly more creative than Meissner's effort in Stars Over Sunset Boulevard. The latter title definitely had moments and I found it entertaining enough to finish, but I think it pales in comparison to novels with similar subject matter and would have difficulty recommending as more than a beach read.

Sharon Huether says

A poignant story of two friends, one looking for fame in Hollywood and the other a good job. Violet would sacrifice a job for Audrey's benefit. They were both interested in the same man.

Audrey gave Violet what was the most important thing in her life.
Their caring for each other was very evident through out their lives.
A beautifully written story.
I won this book from RIF.

Julie says

Stars Over Sunset Boulevard by Susan Meissner is a 2016 NAL publication.

This story is very interesting in the beginning, with the hustle surrounding the movie set, the recognizable names, getting to know Violet and Audrey, who are so very different from one another, marveling at how well their friendship works, even when tested, and naturally, I was invested in the love triangle for a while, but the story tended to drag on, is very slow moving, and extremely heavy on the drama, almost to the point of becoming a little suds, which isn't really my cup of tea these days. I will confess to feeling bored on several occasions, and wishing for some kind of action or suspense to develop.

Having said that, the ending saw the release of years of pent up frustrations, resentments, fears, and of course, explosive secrets will come to light as a result. This climatic conclusion was tense and riveting, but also moving, as Violet and Audrey join forces in all things, proving their bond really is unshakable. Even though Violet and Audrey each did things they later came to regret, what kept these friends and lovers bonded is a testament to love, but, also, it is about forgiveness and the acceptance of the flaws all three of the main characters has, which is something we could all probably learn from.

Overall, this story is an interesting character study, an homage to friendship, with a whimsical parallel between Scarlett O'Hara's actions and Violet's, which fans of chick-lit and women's fiction will enjoy.

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Pam Jenoff says

This wonderful book travels between two worlds, from present day Los Angeles, where a vintage boutique owner searches for the owner of an iconic hat from Gone With The Wind, to 1930's Hollywood and the intertwining fates and friendships of two young women. Heartfelt and so fun!

Lori says

I really enjoyed Meissner's last novel, Secrets of a Charmed Life, and I am so happy to say she has done it again. I seriously could not put this down. Gone with the Wind as a backdrop worked so well in personifying the relationship between Violet and Audrey. This was such an enjoyable novel.

The Lit Bitch says

This is a novel that I liked so much more than I expected to. I love when books do that!

I've read a ton of books this year that have been set in the 1920s and 1930s eras, some with the glitz and glamour of old Hollywood as a backdrop. So many books in fact that I am getting a little tired of the era.

So when I picked up this book, I wasn't sure what to expect and how I was going to feel about it. As soon as I started the book and found out the backdrop was not just old Hollywood but also had hints of the movie *Gone with the Wind*, I was immediately caught up in this story!

One of the things that I thought worked really really well in this novel was the relationship between Violet and Audrey playing out with the movie as a backdrop to add an additional dramatic flare! *Gone with the Wind* is one of my all time favorite novels and Scarlett O'Hara one of my favorite heroines so this added element of dramatics worked really well for me as a reader and I enjoyed seeing how the relationship between Violet and Audrey changed and evolved with the whole movie in the background.

Each of the main characters had their own set of issues and they each struggled with overcoming difficult times or events in their lives. Though Violet and Audrey were vastly different, it was fun watching how their friendship helped each of them overcome personal obstacles and find a balance of sorts.

This was a great book for fans of women's lit and books about friendship and sisterhood. I really enjoyed it much more than I anticipated. Not going to lie this was an emotional book so if you cry easily at books then I would have a box of tissues ready! I did find some parts to be real tear jerkers!

Both Violet and Audrey had equal time in the story which was awesome, sometimes it's hard when you have two main characters.....who gets the most 'page time' or 'story time'. In this book I thought both characters shared the spotlight well and I enjoyed learning about each women. In that same vein, I also thought the balance between the modern day and historic periods were well done. The time periods were split and balanced well within the story.

The only thing I struggled with in this novel was the amount of locations that the author talked about throughout the story. At first this was a little disorientating along with the some of Meissner's prose took me a few pages to get used to. Also if you are looking for a book that's historical fiction, I would say this is more light on the historical side. While a lot of it is set in a historical period, I would classify this one as more of a women's literature novel so if you are looking for pure historical fiction then as long as you are aware that it's more of a women's lit novel, then I think this is a very enjoyable read but if you are expecting something else you might be a little disappointed.

The last thing I want to comment on is the stunning cover. I love the glamorous dress and mysterious looking woman on the cover. It screams old Hollywood...add in the stars in the background and you have a winning cover! I am in love with it. This cover alone makes me want to read this book.....cover lust!

See my full review [here](#)

?Karen says

2012: A familiar looking green velvet hat is found in a box of donated clothing, and the owner wants it back.

1938: Selznick International has just started filming *Gone With the Wind*, and Audrey and Violet are watching them film the burning of Atlanta, on a Hollywood set.

Pop quiz: Can you guess the connection? Are you intrigued?

The story of the friendship of these two young women and what they hope to achieve from working as secretaries on the GWTW set, I was quickly engaged and wanting to know what would happen next. Audrey has stars in her eyes and is waiting to be discovered. Violet is working right among the stars every day, yet is more preoccupied with a certain young man over in wardrobe, Bert.

The main characters are well developed and very human, forgiving of each other's flaws and learning to cope with their own. We follow them as they age and remain friends, despite jealousy and deceit.

Thank you to NetGalley and Penguin Group.

Laura.125Pages says

This review, and many more, was originally posted on 125pages.com

Stars Over Sunset Boulevard by Susan Meissner had the potential to be great. Instead it was good but lacked the emotional pull needed. Violet and Audrey are both secretaries at the movie studio filming *Gone With the Wind* in 1938. They become roommates out of necessity and friends out of shared hopes and dreams. When a hat from the set goes missing, a series of decisions will forever alter the dynamic of the two women.

Stars Over Sunset Boulevard had a very intriguing plot. It did not focus on the stars of the film, but highlighted the lives of those working behind the scenes. The plot moved through history from 1938 to the present day with the hat as the anchor of the interweaving timelines. Susan Meissner's writing was nuanced and full of emotion. She was able to paint a vivid picture of the action and the settings. The pacing was a little off to me. About 70% of the story happens from 1938 to 1941 and the remaining 70 odd years felt shoved into the end of the book. The world built was bright and I could very easily see the scenes unfold. There was a nice emotional feeling to the story, however it never grabbed me. The characters were also a little lackluster to me. Violet, was on the surface, a deep and caring person, but her jealousy overwhelmed her and made her seem petty. Audrey also seemed caring but really only cared about herself and what others could do for her. Bert was a bland place filler as the man stuck between both women.

I did like *Stars Over Sunset Boulevard*, however I wish more attention had been spent in the latter time

frames. There was an issue that happened very near the end that tore the two women apart and I would have loved to see their process back to each other. Instead, it was mentioned as an afterthought that they made up. That is the story line I was super interested in and wish that more focus was spent on it. Susan Meissner does have a way with places and descriptions and even when I wasn't thrilled with what a character was doing, I could always picture them doing it. This was an enjoyable read, but I felt it spent too much time on the build up and not enough time on the emotions.

Favorite lines - "Don't forget I told you this. This is the city where everything is possible if you are just patient. Don't forget it."

Biggest cliché - I am super happy until I get what I want.

Have you read *Stars Over Sunset Boulevard*, or added it to your TBR?

What readers are saying . . .

"Susan Meissner deftly casts a fascinating friendship between two complex women against a glittering 1930s Hollywood backdrop. You will love this book for its very human characters and for its inside look at one of the greatest movies ever made."

Marisa de los Santos, New York Times bestselling author of Belong To Me

"Beautifully simple yet impactful."

Romantic Times, 4 stars

"A lovely, well-crafted story that peeks at a fascinating moment in cinematic history and examines the power and vulnerability of sincere friendship."

Kirkus Reviews

About the Author

Susan Meissner is a multi-published author, speaker and writing workshop leader with a background in community journalism. Her novels include *A Fall of Marigolds*, named by Booklist's Top Ten women's fiction titles for 2014, and *The Shape of Mercy*, named by Publishers Weekly as one of the 100 Best Novels of 2008. She is also a RITA finalist, and Christy Award winner.

A California native, she attended Point Loma Nazarene University. Susan is a pastor's wife and a mother of four young adults. When she's not working on a novel, she writes small group curriculum for her San Diego church. She is also a writing workshop volunteer for Words Alive, a San Diego non-profit dedicated to helping at-risk youth foster a love for reading and writing.

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Angie says

I was thrilled to get a chance to read this pre-publication:)

Dual-time story with the initial Historical fiction set in Hollywood during the filming of Gone with the Wind. (This is the second book I've read this year that has this same setting). It's enjoyable to get a background look at the iconic movie. There wasn't a ton of detail from it, I would've liked even more. But what was there was enjoyable.

From the first page I was totally drawn into the story of Audrey & Violet, film industry secretaries who become fast friends. Our southern belle is from Alabama and that brought an instant smile to my face. The behind the scenes look we got through them was interesting, and a different perspective from what actresses would have been. I loved their genuine friendship and the fun they had together. As the story progresses, we see a different side to one of the characters due to what else than interest in the opposite sex. Desire brings in deceit. The friends have different ideas of where they each want their life to go. Many years and many things happen until things finally come to a breaking point. A very realistic look at what can happen if you tangle yourself in a web of lies. In spite of this, there is a good conclusion to the story. The present day storyline really plays backseat to the historical, but that was fine with me.

Recommended!!

Many thanks to NetGalley and Berkley Publishing Group-Penguin for an advance reading copy in exchange for an honest review

Elizabeth of Silver's Reviews says

Violet, the Southern Belle, and Audry, the aspiring actress met by chance, became roommates, and worked at

the same secretarial pool at Selznick International.

The stages of *Gone With The Wind* were the feature of the book along with Violet and Audry's personal lives.

STARS OVER SUNSET BOULEVARD has the glitter of Hollywood, the disappointments of Hollywood, behind-the-scenes fun, and the wonderful, amazing friendship between Violet and Audry.

I really enjoyed **STARS OVER SUNSET BOULEVARD** because of the warmth of the characters. It wasn't as much about Hollywood, as it was about friends, lives, and choices.

STARS OVER SUNSET BOULEVARD will enchant and delight all women's fiction fans and of course fans of Hollywood and *Gone With the Wind*.

Don't miss reading this beautifully written, touching book.

You will not be disappointed with the love and tenderness along with some jealousy that oozes off the pages with Violet and Audry's enduring friendship.

A lovely, heartwarming read that will have you thinking about your friendships.

ENJOY....I definitely did. 5/5

This book was given to me free of charge and without compensation by the publisher in return for an honest review.

Jennifer says

"Stars Over Sunset Boulevard" is a tale of old Hollywood, friendship, and secrets with a few "What would I do?" dilemmas thrown in for good measure.

The story centers around Violet, Audrey, and Bert who all work together on the set of "*Gone with the Wind*." Bert is enamored with Audrey (who doesn't reciprocate his feelings), and Violet has designs on Bert. Meissner crafts a story line that keeps their lives linked throughout the decades.

Although I'm not a huge "*Gone with the Wind*" fan, Meissner has woven in some behind-the-scenes detail about the film's production and release that was not only integral to the plot, but also interesting (GWTW fans may want to read the book on that measure alone).

The book kept me interested enough to read for long stretches at a time (but it could have been that I did the bulk of the reading the day after Thanksgiving, in a cozy robe, with a cat curled on my lap). Meissner's character development is good, and I did appreciate that the characters' actions aren't black and white. On that measure this might make for a good book club choice as there would be much discussion about whether the characters made the "right" decisions.

3.5 stars

Thank you to NetGalley and Penguin Group for a galley of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Pamela says

"If people couldn't be honest with one another, then life was just fluff and pretense."

Three friends are - living in the Hollywood Hills during the Golden Era - looking for love, acceptance, and purpose to various degrees during the filming of *Gone With The Wind*. Audrey is on a serendipitous quest to be 'discovered' as the next Hollywood dream girl. Violet is fleeing the stigma of being jilted at the alter, along with fleeing the confines of southern gentile expectations. Then there's good old, kindhearted Bert - pining for the figurative and literal, elusive nightingale of Sunset Boulevard. Like Hans Christian Andersens' fairy tale, though, not all that is bejeweled is genuine.

Hollywood is full of people with dreams, and most of the time that makes it an exciting place, but can also make it a lonely place . . . you can be in a room full of beautiful people and still be alone."

Genuine friendship is hard to come by. True love, even more so . . . especially in Tinsel Town. As these three friends forge their lives separately and together, they must come to terms with what is good, and right and acceptable within the building of relationships - and what is not. Ultimately, truth need be the cornerstone. Without it, like a house of cards it might surely tumble. Then again, it might not..... Old wounds can heal. Wrongs can be righted. And hidden agendas can be carried away on the wind.

As Scarlett once said: Tomorrow is another day..... Just as Tara can be rebuilt with heartfelt determination and tenacity, so can relationships. It's just that relationships also require a good bit of grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

Gone With the Wind truly makes a wonderfully interesting backdrop setting. It's also a an apt literary parallel to Meissner's story-thread. I learned a good bit about the film itself, and about the directors, how they accomplished the 'burning of Atlanta', what it's like to be on set behind the scenes.

Characterization was a key element to the story. Meissner is known for creating unique, true-to life characters. I thought each of the main characters were equally appealing and believably true to era. Audrey, however, was my favorite. Something about her spoke to me. I also enjoyed the moral undercurrents. And delightfully, as typical with a Meissner novel, there were no expletives blighting the text.

Overall, a splendid good read. A FIVE-STAR-MEISSNER..... However, compared across the board with novels of like kind:

FOUR **** Historically Iconic and Fascinating, Friendship Expository, Golden **** STARS

Jaksen says

I won this book in a Goodreads giveaway AND was really looking forward to it! I mean a story about two young women, an aspiring actress and a secretary, working for Selznick Studios in 1939. What a rich topic to

explore. They're on set while *Gone With the Wind* is being filmed! They get to meet many important and famous people, and yet...

The whole book is tiresome, tedious and overly sentimental. I felt like I was reading about a group of paper doll people that a ten-year old was pushing around, making up stories for them. Stilted and unnatural dialogue. Events play out like a 1950's soap opera. We made cookies. The cookies burned. My mother-in-law wanted to know if I set the stove too high. Blah blah blah

Yeah blah. The whole story is bland, uninteresting, boring. The writing is pedestrian. Seldom do any of the characters talk like real people. (Oh wait, I see they used a contraction here and there, hurrah!)

The story revolves around the desires of the two women. One wants stardom; the other wants a husband and family. Their friendship waxes and wanes through a series of 'mishaps,' which is a word I'm sure this writer is familiar with. If anyone ever does have a strong emotion in this book, I missed it entirely. Truth is the two main characters are just so booooring...

I couldn't finish this, but read to page 250, hence the review. I've read enough.

I read too much.

Laura Lee says

Two young women who meet on the set of *Gone with the Wind*. They both have their own ambitions. One is an aspiring actress and the other wants to meet someone she can marry and have a family with. They become quick friends and end up as roommates. Their friendship survives a lot of ups and downs and sadness and misfortunes. I enjoyed the book very much. It shows the power of friendship and love. I liked the two main characters and they were realistic to me. More than just chick lit.
