

Stars Over Sunset Boulevard

by Susan Meissner



About the Book

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.

Discussion Guide

1. What aspect of the novel had the strongest emotional impact on you?
2. Who did you like more --- Violet or Audrey? Which woman is most like you?
3. Who is your best friend? Did she ever save your life? What do you think is the most remarkable quality about friendship?
4. The novel suggests that Melanie in *Gone with the Wind* is as capable of deceit as Scarlett is, if deceit is required to get

what she wants. Do you agree? How do Violet and Audrey compare to Scarlett and Melanie?

5. Have you ever stolen your friend's boyfriend?

6. Are you keeping a secret from your husband and/or friend because the truth would reflect poorly on you?

7. In Chapter 29, Violet tells herself that "sometimes a person had to do something drastic, like rip apart beautiful curtains to make a dress and hat, to bring about the better good." How does Violet use this analogy to rationalize her actions?

8. How would the characters' lives have been different if Violet told Lainey the truth about her mother when she first began to ask?

9. It has been said that there are only two basic emotions, love and fear, and that all the other emotions are variations. Do you agree? How are fear and love the same? How are they different?

10. Are you a fan of *Gone with the Wind* --- the book and the film? Tell us how you felt and what you thought when you first read the book or saw the movie. Has your opinion changed over time?

11. Have you heard stories, or read depictions, about what life was like in the U.S. during World War II? How do they compare to Violet's experiences?

12. What do the nightingales represent in the novel? Have you ever looked for something beautiful that might not exist?

Author Bio

Susan Meissner is a former managing editor of a weekly newspaper and an award-winning columnist. She is the *USA Today* bestselling author of *ONLY THE BEAUTIFUL*, *THE NATURE OF FRAGILE THINGS*, *THE LAST YEAR OF THE WAR*, *AS BRIGHT AS HEAVEN*, *A BRIDGE ACROSS THE OCEAN*, *SECRETS OF A CHARMED LIFE*, *A FALL OF MARIGOLDS* and *STARS OVER SUNSET BOULEVARD*, among other novels.

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