



Seeing Stars

Diane Hammond

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Ruth Rabinowitz believes. She believes that her daughter, Bethany, is a terrific little actress, so they have come to Hollywood, where dreams come true. Ruth's husband and Bethany's father, who thinks their quest for stardom is delusional, has been left behind in Seattle.

Joining Bethany Rabinowitz in Hollywood's often toxic waters are fellow child actors Quinn Reilly, who has been cast adrift by his family and excels only on Hollywood sets; beautiful Allison Addison, who is misled by her powerful need for love; and Laurel Buehl, who brings a desperate secret to LA that makes the stakes impossibly high. As talent managers, agents, coaches, directors, and teachers nurture—and feed on—their ambitions, stars will be made, hearts will be broken, children will grow up, and dreams will both be realized and die.

Seeing Stars Details

Date : Published March 23rd 2010 by William Morrow Paperbacks (first published March 13th 2010)

ISBN : 9780061863158

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Format : Paperback 480 pages

Genre : Fiction, Contemporary, Family

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From Reader Review Seeing Stars for online ebook

Caitlin says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book, was hooked from the beginning, and found myself thinking about and missing the characters once I was done. Ms. Hammond has written a wonderful story about the pursuit of dreams, about family (born and made), and very much about consequences of all kinds.

The writing is superb as are the characterizations, but best of all is story. In this age of 15-second fame and reality TV, Ms. Hammond captures the desperation of those looking for their big break, their moment in the sun - that these are children whose parents are often as (or more) desperate than they are is what makes the book a worthwhile read. Ms. Hammond has written a book that goes on the list of favorite books about Hollywood along with *The Day of the Locusts* and *Valley of the Dolls*.

Katrina Jones says

It was very draggy, and the plot only got a little more interesting towards the end. Overall, it was not a very enjoyable read, and it took me a long time to finally finish reading it.

"It wasn't that easy to smile at people and mean it. You had to open up, take risks, expose yourself to injury. But he was learning from her; he was trying to smile at people, too, and mean it, which was a struggle after so many years of holding people off, keeping them away. He even did that with Quattro, despite their growing friendship. Friends were risky; friends could turn. Friends didn't necessarily take care with you; sometimes they wanted to know you in case you got famous or met someone that they might like to know, too. Quattro wasn't like that, though."

"Everyone wants to be special, it's just that in Hollywood it's not a dream, it's an industry. Delusion makes the world go round, but here it goes much faster and the spinning never stops."

Meagan Houle says

I'll start with the good: this was an interesting read if you find yourself curious about the inner workings of Hollywood and what it's like to search for the "big break". Talent agents always have their hands out for more money; casting directors are brutal and harsh; fellow actors try to get along while competing for the same roles; directors are ruthless; the industry is a jungle.

The bad: I found it difficult to like or care for most of the characters. Bethany is entitled and a bit spoiled, Ruth is horribly naive and selfish, and practically everyone else is just a jerk and doesn't even try to hide the fact. I didn't even like Hugh; he treated diabetes like it was a diagnosis of stage four bone cancer and he was going to fight for his very life. Fortunately, there was no ugly, even though I expected it. The writing was quite solid, and the research, at least, was thoughtfully done. This saved it from receiving two stars instead of three. By this book alone, though, I won't be too eager to read anything else by this author.

Rachel Kelley says

I was actually given this book by Diane Hammond after I opened one of her book signings with a quick scene from *Macbeth* to set the mood for her presentation. The topic is very contemporary and interesting - I probably would have bought it regardless - and I began reading right away. This book holds trade secrets and things you wouldn't believe about the Hollywood life so many crave. The story is so tangible and easy to relate to you feel the anxiety of a supportive mother as if it were your own. Very easy to read, very enlightening and totally enjoyable. I finished it in a few days and promptly recommended it to many of my friends, lending my own copy to my father who read it and was also shocked at how much he liked it. Coming from Hammond's own experiences as the mother of a would-be child star, this book is very much a relation of what happened when her own family took off to LA out of Seattle to try the business of acting. A wonderful author and an intriguing tale.

Meg says

More than anything, Diane Hammond's *Seeing Stars* seems to be a cautionary tale for aspiring Hollywood types — and in that vein, it functions very well as a work of contemporary fiction. With plenty of nods to certain Disney stars and topical references to films like "High School Musical," which seems to be the dream gig of every working teen in L.A., Hammond's book draws the reader into a sordid, often sad world of backstage lots, incredibly long hours, droll parents and sacrifice rarely displayed to those of us who simply enjoy the end results: glamorous movies and well-packaged TV shows.

Though Bethany and Ruth are the "stars" of the book, plenty of peripheral characters fill in the landscape — most notably Allison Addison, a spoiled but talented teen who lives full-time with Mimi Roberts, the girls' manager, and is one of the kids collectively known as "the Orphans." Dumped by their parents and from all reaches of the U.S., the Orphans board with Mimi while she sends them out on countless auditions and passes them off to unsuspecting stage mothers like Ruth. It's impossible not to feel for these kids, shuttled around in an endless waiting game and lacking any real parental guidance, but it was really frustrating, too.

In fact, *frustrating* is the way I would describe much of the book — and not because the writing wasn't solid. It definitely was. Hammond does a great job of introducing us to a very motley crew of folks who don't seem to have much in common other than their shared dreams of success, and sometimes that's enough to bind them . . . but sometimes it's not. And watching everyone desperately chasing something that often seems so elusive actually made my stomach hurt. I wondered, too, about everyone's motivations — especially Ruth's. Why put themselves through this? Who were they benefiting and who were they hurting? Can the kids even get a decent education while working like this? And since many of these motivations seemed anything but altruistic, that bothered me, too.

Readers interested in the fame game will find plenty of "behind the scenes" information in Hammond's novel, dropping us everywhere from auditions to sets to popular Hollywood landscapes — and everywhere in between. The jargon was flying from the get-go and, as someone interested in the movie biz, I found it pretty interesting. *Seeing Stars* also examines close family relationships and motherhood, too, and has some poignant scenes, though the sheer length of the novel dragged it down for me. Pick it up if you're interested in the making (and breaking?) of a star, but skip it if character-driven drama isn't for you.

justablondemoment says

A group of kids, all with the same talent agent, all with Hollywood dreams wrestle with the ups and downs of getting their big break. Some have mothers who help them along others are on their own without much emotional support from their parents. The story takes us on a roller-coaster ride from the eyes of all of them.

I fell in love with this book from the first few chapters. The author did an excellent job of reeling you into the characters and making you feel as if you were right there along with them. It at no time felt 'unreal' to me. I actually whooped with joy when Quinn...oops almost gave it away. This book was a winner for me!!!

(Won through LibraryThing early review program)

Colleen says

I thought this book was going to be a frothy look at the life of a child-star in the making, but it was actually so much more. The story of these children trying to make it in Hollywood was touching and well-written, highlighting the darker side of seeking fame and fortune as an impressionable young adult. I thought the voices of the kids rang true, as did the presentation of their parents' motives in sending them to Hollywood. All in all, a rather bleak look at life as a child star but also a story about the redemptive power of love.

Deon Stonehouse says

. Hollywood sparkles as child actors reach for that gold ring, desperate to make the next booking and land the part that will make them a star. Ruth is Bethy's biggest fan, her confidence in her daughter so strong she leaves her husband Hugh behind in Seattle while she spends real bucks in Hollywood trying for Bethy's big break. Hugh is afraid his wife and daughter are searching for fool's gold, but he stays behind working hard to keep sending those checks south. Allison is picture perfect pretty with talent to burn, but is it enough to book the part that will make her a star? Quinn's star is rising, but he is so volatile he might burn too hot and fall like a shooting star. The characters feel real, full of angst, ambition and heart. Life made Allison a lovely feral creature. The story draws you into the drama in these young lives as they try booking Hollywood. Obstacles litter their way, from curt casting agents to demanding directors and insane traffic. Hollywood is a town that hums along on a different frequency from other places; it dances to the beat of a whole different band. Surviving requires talent, drive, and a keen desire to win. Diane Hammond brings this world to Technicolor life as she draws you into the whirlwind of booking Hollywood. It is a world Diane knows well, her daughter was a child actress.

Denise says

Seeing Stars is the story of wannabe child actors and actresses and the lengths their parents will go to see their dreams come true. Bethany Rabinowitz wants to be a Hollywood star and her mother believes she has what it takes. So they leave everything behind, including Mr. Rabinowitz, and enter the world of Hollywood

desperation. From the horrible way producers treat these impressionable young kids to the manic drive their parents succumb to in the search for success, all of Hollywood's dirty, seedy sides are exposed.

In the end, I just found this book depressing. Seemingly reasonable and loving people (as well as dirty, rotten ones) were constantly making terrible choices having lost all sense of perspective in the race for fame. I didn't have much respect for the characters and I didn't like many of them either. I loved some of Dianne Hammond's other books. I will eagerly await her next one and hope she is back to funny, entertaining, likable characters!

Paige says

I picked this up on a whim at the library and enjoyed the author's style from start to finish. It probably helped that I'm intrigued by parents that come to Hollywood with their child, because they "just know" that their child will become a star. While there are plenty of "shout outs" to Disney, High School Musical and all the current popular kids in tv and/or film, there is also a great story telling on each section of characters. A little weird to read about a child desperately chasing something that often seems so out of reach, it made me question...why? Why put yourself through this? Not to mention, the parents. (Oy!) But, there to, is another story within the story.

Corinne says

Entertaining read. The characters are very well drawn, though I think a couple could have been jettisoned and it wouldn't have detracted from the work. Ms. Hammond is great with dialogue - it's very real and fresh, and each character has a distinctive voice. She paints a very accurate picture of life in Hollywood/LA for struggling young actors, and her scene set in Venice Beach stood out to me for its authenticity. (I used to hang out there a lot and I know exactly which street performers she was describing.) The ending seemed too pat for me - I think she could have gone another 50 pages or so to round out a few plot lines more effectively - but overall this was a good book.

Ginny says

Seeing Stars follows the lives of young, aspiring actors as they follow their dreams to become Hollywood successes. It's a believable and realistic view of the almost unattainable hope of making the big time. The most realistic and sympathetic character for me was Quinn Reilly, who I was rooting for throughout the book. I loved Diane Hammond's book "Hannah's Dream" so much that I was expecting a lot from this novel; however, the storyline of this book disappointed me by comparison. "Hannah's Dream" was a fully realized and developed plot with the most lovable and unforgettable characters imaginable.

Sydney says

This book really dragged on. I don't think it needed to be as complex as it was. For me, there were too many side characters and stories. The character of Quinn could have had a whole book just about him, rather than

mashing him in with all the other child actors in this book. Same with Laurel.

The story of Ruth and Bethy, a mother and daughter who go to LA in search of stardom for the young teen daughter was good. It was fascinating to see the challenges young actors and their parents face in Hollywood. It appears to be a much tougher life than any of us know.

But I felt there were one too many audition scenes. I think this book probably could have been about 150 pages shorter if the focus were narrowed to Ruth, Bethy, and the other child actor Allison.

Jaime says

Wow...so I am not the type to put a book down before I finish it, but this is the 3rd book I have stopped reading midway through in the last month. I am 150 pages in and bored out of my mind! Nothing has happened! The auhor started telling the story from different characters' points of view, which usually always works as an easy plot progressor, but it did not help. Nothing has happened... Maybe I'm put off by the book because I just picked up some books I had on hold, where as this book I just chose randomly from the library display. I'm going to set this aside while I read the others; if I have to come back to it because I'm dying to see how it ends then I will... Not completely sure that will happen, but who knows...

Jennifer says

A 13 year old girl, Bethy and her mother, Ruth move to Hollywood so Bethy can be a movie star. The only problem is she is not very talented or very pretty. A fascinating look inside the life of a stage mom. We also meet the talent agent, Mimi, and her projects which include Allison and Quinn, both from tragic home lives.

The writing was excellent and you actually started looking from the messed up eyes of Ruth, wanting her daughter to be a star so badly.I could not put this down.

I had a very emotional response to this book of the kind of parent that would want this life for her child. It seems like being in high school for eternity with everyone judging you and putting you down, with a select few popular people.
