



Spin

By Catherine McKenzie
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Introduction

Kate's To-Do List:

1. Go to rehab
2. Befriend/spy on "It Girl"
3. Write killer expose
4. Land dream job

Piece of cake!

When Kate Sandford lands an interview at her favorite music magazine, *The Line*, it's the chance of a lifetime. So Kate goes out to celebrate and shows up still drunk to the interview the next morning. It's no surprise that she doesn't get the job, but her performance has convinced the editors that she'd be perfect for an undercover assignment for their gossip rag. All Kate has to do is follow "It Girl" Amber Sheppard into rehab. If she can get the inside scoop and complete the thirty-day program they'll reconsider her for the position at *The Line*. Kate takes the assignment, but when real friendships start to develop, she has to decide if what she has to gain is worth the price she'll have to pay.

Questions for Discussion

1. In the beginning of the novel, Katie is writing for small local music or indie magazines, trying to make it as a music writer, but the impression she has of herself and that others have of her is that she's not a success or doesn't have a "real" job. Discuss if there are limits (age, amount of time, salary) to following your dreams, and how people are influenced by the expectations of others.
2. One of *Spin's* central themes is the public's obsession with celebrities, even in their private moments. Do you think an experienced journalist would take the assignment offered to Katie? What would be the moral implications of doing so?
3. Do you read gossip magazines or websites? Do you talk about celebrities with your friends? What do you think constitutes "going too far" when covering a celebrity's life? How do you feel about the ways that celebrities and the media seem to manipulate each other?
4. Is Amber a sympathetic character? Do you understand Katie's attraction to her as a friend? Did any of Amber's actions take you by surprise or reveal something about her that you didn't expect?
5. The description of the days that Katie spends writing her article echoes the description of the days she spends in rehab. Do you see a parallel between the arc that Katie goes through in rehab and the one she goes through while writing the article?
6. How did you feel when Katie wrote the article? Were you disappointed? Could you relate to her choice? Why or why not?
7. Did you find Henry appealing? Many books and movies merely "tell" the reader that a couple is in love, rather than "showing" it (i.e., music set over scenes of frolicking in parks, etc.). Did the author successfully overcome this problem? Did you "see" a progress from Katie and Henry's initial attraction to love?
8. Katie and Henry each seem to work through their problems while running. Do you have a similar activity in your life that helps you think things through?
9. How did the ending of this book play with the convention of the romantic comedies that Katie discusses? Did you find the ending of the book satisfying in this respect?
10. The author has said that she was trying to write a novel that was a musical. Did you pick up on this idea? Did the author succeed in creating a soundtrack for the novel? The songs on Katie's playlist are meant to reflect the mood/theme of the chapter. Do you think the song choices were suitable?
11. Do you think *Spin* would make a good movie? Who do you see playing the main characters?

About the Author

Catherine McKenzie was born and raised in Montreal, Quebec, where she now practices law. An avid runner and skier, she also sits on various boards and professional organizations, and teaches part-time at the McGill Faculty of Law.