



Five Fortunes

Beth Gutcheon

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Witty, wise, and hope-filled, *Five Fortunes* is a large-hearted tale of five vivid and unforgettable women who know where they've been but have no idea where they're going. A lively octogenarian, a private investigator, a mother and daughter with an unresolved past, and a recently widowed politician's wife share little else except a thirst for new dreams, but after a week at the luxurious health spa known as "Fat Chance" their lives will be intertwined in ways they couldn't have imagined. At a place where doctors, lawyers, spoiled housewives, movie stars, and captains of industry are stripped of the social markers that keep them from really seeing one another, unexpected friendships emerge, reminding us of the close links between the rich and the poor, fortune and misfortune, and the magic of chance.

Five Fortunes Details

Date : Published May 3rd 2005 by William Morrow Paperbacks (first published 1998)

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Author : Beth Gutcheon

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From Reader Review Five Fortunes for online ebook

Ginny Ewing says

I'm only 23 pages in and Beth Gutcheson must really hate "fat" people. She's made at least 10 remarks about how no one notices fat people, no one cares about fat people, and fat people are to be felt sorry for.

I'm not fat but the author is a total b****! Massive discrimination and just down right mean.

Donna says

I picked this book up since I just finished another of Beth Gutcheon's books, More Than You Know, and liked it quite a lot. But this book is nothing like that one. Although the jacket description sounded interesting (5 women meet at a week-long stay at a spa, and we learn about the dramas in each of their lives) I thought it bogged down very quickly. I had lost interest by about page 50, but pressed on (as I do - I hate to give up on books). But then it started getting confusing, too: we find out that one of the young women, who is overweight and depressed, was raped when she was very young. That adds intrigue to her story, but then a mysterious stranger appears and gives her "a ball of light" and she suddenly feels better. Huh? Anyway, by page 85 I'd had enough...too many other books await! I'll try another of Gutcheon's books at some point but not right away.

Kat says

I felt like I could relate to some of these women. I feel like there should be a part 2 to this book. I really want to read more, and there isn't any more...I'm sad about that.

June Harris says

I love Beth Gutcheon's books, and I keep pushing them on my friends. Mostly they have received a cool reception, but I'm not deterred. I LOVED Leeway Cottage. Gutcheon writes about people, relationships, interactions--if you're looking for fast-paced action thrillers, skip her stuff. But if you're looking for ways people live their lives, well, give her a shot.

This one is about friends who meet at a--well, fat farm, I suppose, called The Cloisters. Five of them have their fortunes told by a woman who works there, then we follow their lives as those fortunes unfold. I loved it.

Audrey says

Fun! It's weird that the Goodreads synopsis of this book is the title....only.... that's not helpful. I'm not going to type in the story to compensate, but I do recommend this book.

Ruth Jalfon says

enjoyable book but nothing special. some women meet at a spa week and then it follows their lives afterwards. there's some conversation at the start in the spa and then you're supposed to believe they're all amazing friends - it all seems too neat especially when the profession of each woman just happens to be come in handy when one of them runs for the senate ie one is a caterer and organiser so can do fund-raisers, one is a pop-singer so can draw in crowds for fund-raising, one's son just happens to be an experienced political agent and she herself rich enough to provide leverage etc etc. Characters are believable to an extent but they're all so good-natured which is rather boring.

Joanne says

I've actually had this book for quite a while and just got around to reading it and am glad that I did. It is chick-lit but it was good anyway.

A group of women meet at an exclusive fat farm where they are staying for a week. When they arrive, they are strangers but over the course of the week, 5 of them get to know and like each other. Once they return home, each has an event in their lives that requires them to call upon at least one of the others for support. The stories while separate are interwoven and the outcomes mostly happy with some open endings.

I looked for a follow-on book but did not find one.

Beverly says

I really enjoyed this book, I was sorry when I finished it. The women in this book would not have ordinarily met each other, but when they did they formed a strong and lasting friendship. They were so different from each other. It left me wondering where all of them might be today.

Georgia Herod says

Anne Rivers Siddons calls Five Fortunes "the quintessential American woman's tale." I finished this book a couple of months ago and I'm still wondering how she came to "quintessential."

quin·tes·sen·tial--adjective

--representing the most perfect or typical example of a quality or class.

"he was the quintessential tough guy—strong, silent, and self-contained"

synonyms: typical, prototypical, stereotypical, archetypal, classic, model, standard, stock, representative, conventional.

Five women meet at a luxurious health spa, all perhaps escaping aspects of their lives, themselves--or hungering for dreams and seeking direction for their futures.

A widowed politician's wife, a private investigator, a mother-daughter duo, and an energetic octogenarian--all very different, of course, develop surprising friendships as they shed their masks and begin to live somewhat more transparently.

It is a woman's read--a good beach read.

Mary Bennett says

This is an older book that was first published in 1998 and was selected this month by one of my book groups. The book revolves around five women ages 20-80 who meet at a week-long health spa. Although they all bonded during the week, little did they realize that their lives would become intertwined after they departed at the end of the week.

Rae is an elderly woman with grown children who had attended the spa over 25 times. She is wealthy and married to a man who is suffering from Alzheimer's. Amy and Jill are a mother and daughter attending together. Amy is married to a successful, busy doctor and Jill is overweight and has struggled with depression after being raped as a young teenager. Carter is a tall divorcee who is a private investigator, and Laurie has recently lost her popular politician husband who was killed in a plane accident. Their lives take them in directions none of them anticipated and the book examines female friendships, politics, mother/daughter relationships, and motherhood.

There were a few things in the book that seemed to me to be somewhat contrived, but that didn't detract a huge amount from the enjoyment of the book. I was surprised that given how old the book is, the political topics being portrayed are still the same ones today, so although other aspects were a little dated, that aspect was surprisingly not as dated feeling.

Although a little on the long side, around 400 pages, this was not a difficult read. It read more like a beach read. This book would appeal to women who are looking for a lighter read about women's relationships and women who are strong or become stronger during the book.

Please see my other book reviews on my blog: marysreadallaboutit.wordpress.com

Sharon says

This is an older book I happened upon recently. It's a wonderful example of the female-friendship genre. Five disparate women meet at a tony spa and have their palms read. The remainder of the book follows their lives for the following year. The characters are varied - ages twenty to eighty; married, divorced, single - and each of them experiences big changes. The author obviously did research on a lot of different topics, all of which are interesting. There's a great scene of a woman hooking up her computer - modem, DOS prompts, and all! It's easy to forget how far computers have come in 12 years!

Cristina says

I hate the way this woman talks about women.
She's shallow and judgmental. And her characters are sad cookie cutter stereotypes.

Almost couldn't finish this book

Terri says

Five women meet at an upscale health spa. One is a young widow coming to terms with her husband's death, one is an older woman who will soon become a widow, a mother and daughter trying to come to terms with a tragedy, and a feisty private eye who isn't sure why she is there at all. In a week, they become friends. Even after they return to their homes and their lives, they keep in touch. They all experience life-changing events and decisions, but their support for each other never wavers. Beth Gutcheon draws you into each character's story, told separately, but never losing the thread that weaves them together. It is a positive and uplifting book, and I really enjoyed "spending time" with these women :)

Jaclyn Perry says

Disappointed that I had high hopes for the storylines in this book to build up for each character, but instead I felt it stayed fairly monotone and never pulled me in. Stopped halfway through

Lisa says

Great beach read
