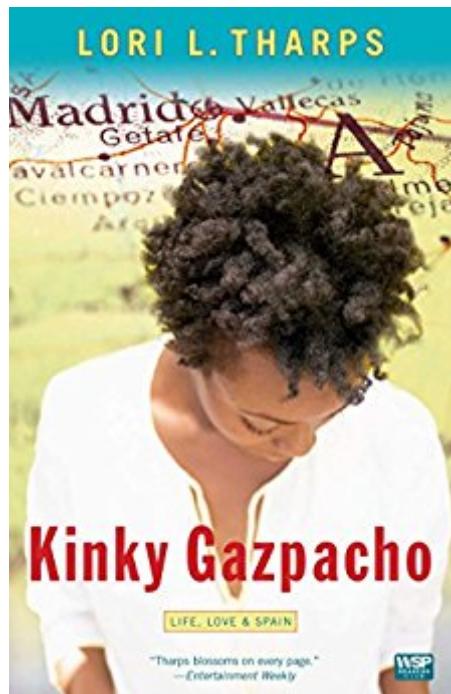


The book was found

Kinky Gazpacho: Life, Love & Spain (Wsp Readers Club)



Synopsis

Magazine writer and editor Lori Tharps was born and raised in the comfortable but mostly White suburbs of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where she was often the only person of color in her school and neighborhood. At an early age, Lori decided that her destiny would be discovered in Spain. She didn't know anyone from Spain, had never visited the country, and hardly spoke the language. Still, she never faltered in her plans to escape to the Iberian Peninsula. Arriving in the country as an optimistic college student, however, Lori soon discovers Spain's particular attitude toward Blackness. She is chased down the street by the local schoolchildren and pointed at incessantly in public, and her innocent dreams of a place where race doesn't matter are shattered. The story would end there, except Lori meets and marries a Spaniard, and that's when her true Spanish adventure really begins. Against the ancient backdrops of Cádiz and Andalucía, Lori starts the intricate yet amusing journey of rekindling her love affair with Spain and becoming a part of her new Spanish family. From a grandmother who spies on her to a grandfather who warmly welcomes her to town with a slew of racist jokes, the close-knit clan isn't exactly waiting with open arms. Kinky Gazpacho tells the story of the redeeming power of love and finding self in the most unexpected places. At its heart, this is a love story. It is a memoir, a travel essay, and a glimpse into the past and present of Spain. As humorous and entertaining as such favorite travel stories as *Under the Tuscan Sun*, this book also unveils a unique and untold history of Spain's enduring connection to West Africa. Kinky Gazpacho celebrates the mysticism of travel and the joys of watching two distinct cultures connect and come together.

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Customer Reviews

Kinky GazpachoKinky Gazpacho by Lori L. Tharps is a memoir of her growing up in a Black American, middle-class family, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Despite her parents' education and background, Lori had a lack of self-worth concerning her origins. This was evident when she was in third grade, during International Day at a private school. At one point, Lori's parents sent their children to public school for a year. Lori deemed this an experiment. However, because of her middle-class background and clear, expressive speech, she was not accepted by the three other minorities in her class. She and her older sister were returned to private school. By seventh grade, Lori regards herself a hispanÃ filo. She longs to someday visit Spain. Due to the stereotyping and racist jokes she experienced as a young girl, the effects of negative prejudices were probably hidden throughout her childhood. She didn't confront her friend's teen sister who drove them home as she told a racist joke to a fellow student. Lori questioned, "Maybe I was different? Special? Maybe she forgot I was Black since I was so good at fitting in with all the whiteness around me." At school and in her neighborhood, Lori's friends were white. At Smith College, Lori decided she would dissociate with white students. She attempted to befriend Black students. Most Black Smith College students are from middle and upper-middle class backgrounds. Lori felt she would have something in common with them. She wanted to fit in. However, this turned out to be a fiasco. The young women weren't friendly. But I think Lori didn't give them a chance. Tucked inside Lori was years of feeling like an outsider on both sides. The young women didn't welcome her with open arms.

I was excited to get this book from the library since I wanted to read a travel story written by a black woman. I've read "Go Girl: The Black Woman's Book of Travel & Adventure" and thought this book would be in the same vein of the stories in that collection. Unfortunately it wasn't. I can relate to what Lori Tharps went through in school, being too "white" for the black kids yet too "black" for the white kids. I can relate to dealing with white kids and their privilege blinding them to racial issues. I can understand crying in grade school, crying in middle school and even high school, but when she was

still crying over issues in college, I just wanted to say "suck it up, woman!" For someone who claims she loves to travel, she seemed to be slightly xenophobic. In Morocco she didn't seem excited about learning Arabic nor did she want to eat the foods there. While she seemed more interested in practicing Spanish in Spain, she seemed very finicky over the foods there. If she wanted to eat foods she was used to, then she should've stayed in the States. As a black woman, I know that race issues can't be erased like (snap) that, but I felt that Tharps was trying to find race issues everywhere. When her classmates, even a fellow black study abroad student, seemed to be having a good time overseas, it was obvious that most of the issues were her own creations and undoings. There are some parts that made me laugh, such as the musty guy she dated (simply so she could say she dated someone black) and the "dinner" Antonio attempted to cook for her (though it was dumb to use him like that if she wasn't interested in him), and I liked reading about Manuel (he seems like a good catch), but the good parts were overpowered by the whining and drama.

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