



## Inside Out Girl

By Tish Cohen  
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### Introduction

*Inside Out Girl* is the story of Rachel, a single, working mother of two, who begins dating a man with a learning disabled daughter, much to her children's chagrin.

Rachel's life is anything but calm. She's a single mother of two and publisher of a sinking Parenting magazine left to her by her father. Although she tries to be easy going, she's constantly aware of the statistical dangers lurking around every corner just waiting to damage herself and her children. So it is out of character to say the least when she pulls over on the side of a busy highway to help a man and his quirky daughter change their tire.

The quirky young girl, Olivia, actually has an NLD (non-verbal learning disorder) and is the most made-fun-of child in Rachel's children's school, known as the "inside out girl" since she often shows up to school with her clothes on wrong. So it is to her son and daughter's dismay when Rachel begins dating the inside out girl's widowed father, Len. But when Len learns he has a brain tumor and short time left to live, he's desperate to find a suitable parent for his wild, special, and accident-prone little girl. Along the way, Rachel unravels a mystery from her own past and learns to love and respect every aspect of her children's lives, including her daughter's crush on the girl next door.

### Questions for Discussion

1. Rachel Berman gave up an infant when she was very young. Would committing a similar act, either by choice or by not, change the way you parent subsequent children? Would you tell your children about their missing sibling?
2. Do you believe a teenager who gives up her baby for adoption is incredibly selfless or selfish? If you were in Rachel's position as a teen, faced to do the same, do you think you might regret giving up the infant or would you feel you offered the child a better life?
3. Rachel's teenage daughter Janie eventually reveals herself to be a lesbian. If a child of yours were to tell you he or she was gay, how would you feel? What, if anything, would change in your parent-child relationship?
4. This story is populated by children. If Rachel had never had children, how would her relationship with Piper differ? How would it differ if Piper had never been penniless?
5. Bullying is a central theme of the book. If you were the parent of a child involved in bullying another, how would you react? And as you reprimand your child for his or her actions, would the slightest part of you be secretly relieved your child was in the position of power vs. weakness?
6. As a result of giving up her firstborn, Rachel is petrified of losing her remaining children. What role does Dustin play in changing his mother? Have you ever felt overly protective of your own kids? If so, did anything in your past provoke this?
7. Len's parents must relinquish the proposed guardianship of Olivia to Rachel. Do you think they would be accepting of this? As a grandparent, would you?

### About the Author

After industrially achieving a four-year Bachelor's Degree in Business, Tish Cohen promptly stuffed it in a drawer to pursue what came to her naturally—writing. Since then, she has edited an online women's magazine and contributed articles to some of Canada's largest newspapers such as *The Globe and Mail* and *The National Post* and is the author of *Town House* (Harper Perennial, May 2007).