



The Knockoff: A Novel

By Lucy Sykes, Jo Piazza

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When Imogen returns to work at *Glossy* after six months away, she can barely recognize her own magazine. Eve, fresh out of Harvard Business School, has fired “the gray hairs,” put the managing editor in a supply closet, stopped using the landlines, and hired a bevy of manicured and questionably attired underlings who text and tweet their way through meetings. Imogen, darling of the fashion world, may have Alexander Wang and Diane von Furstenberg on speed dial, but she can’t tell Facebook from Foursquare and once got her iPhone stuck in Japanese for two days. Under Eve’s reign, *Glossy* is rapidly becoming a digital sweatshop—hackathons rage all night, girls who sleep get fired, and “fun” means mandatory, company-wide coordinated dances to Beyoncé. Wildly out of her depth, Imogen faces a choice—pack up her Smythson notebooks and quit, or channel her inner geek and take on Eve to save both the magazine and her career. A glittering, uproarious, sharply drawn story filled with thinly veiled fashion personalities, *The Knockoff* is an insider’s look at the ever-changing world of fashion and a fabulous romp for our Internet-addicted age.

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Editorial Review

Review

Praise for Lucy Sykes and Jo Piazza's *The Knockoff*:

“*The Knockoff* by Lucy Sykes and Jo Piazza . . . describes the frantic process of taking a Vogue-like magazine from paper to app. . . [A] fizzy, girly, nicely executed bit of escapism. . . Has fun manipulating the generation gap facing Imogen. When she left, she was Queen. When she comes back, she's lost her front-row Fashion week seat to a—What? What are these?—fashion blogger! Naturally, Imogen regrows her claws. And the book does its share of meowing about the entitled young women who now flood the magazine offices, living large because they still live rent-free at their parents' apartments.”

—Janet Maslin, *The New York Times*

“This novel pits over-confident millennials against technologically incompetent Gen X'ers and adds fashion, drama and a pinch of humor to make for a soon-to-be classic, forever wedged between your copy of *The Devil Wears Prada* and Grace Coddington's memoir. Thank us later.”

— *The Hollywood Reporter*

“The summer's bitchiest beach read... *The Knockoff*, a snarky chick-lit novel about the changing landscape of fashion in the digital age that's found a place beside beach chairs, from Montauk to the Vineyard, this summer has struck a chord for those familiar with that world... A spin on the classic hero-villain plotline . . . relatable to both the tech savvy and the tech wary.” —*VanityFair.com*

“The ONLY Beach Read You Should Be Seen With This Summer: *The Knockoff* [is] a juicier version of *The Devil Wears Prada* meets Silicon Valley. Trust us—you won't be able to put it down. . . Fashion insiders will enjoy trying to figure out exactly who the real-life inspirations are for some of characters, but regardless of your industry, you will relate to Imogen's plight of trying to stay current in a constantly changing (and always open for business) digital world . . . This book is a prescription for how to stay relevant without forsaking your integrity—as cautionary tale for how to adapt in this rapidly changing world of technology. . . Sykes and Piazza cleverly satirize this recent marriage of the fashion and tech industries, and have managed to craft a strong plot.”

—Liz Matthews, *Town & Country*

“Jo Piazza and Lucy Sykes' compulsively readable corner office drama, *The Knockoff*, [is] summer's juiciest beach read.”

—*Elle.com*

“A behind-the-scenes send-up of the fashion industry and all the craziness that ensues. This year's *The Devil*

Wears Prada."

—*Vanity Fair*

"It's *The Devil Wears Prada* meets *All About Eve*—complete with a former boss who's a warmer, fuzzier version of *Prada*'s Miranda Priestly. Fast-paced and filled with sartorial wisdom, this debut from journalists Sykes and Piazza is a fun, often funny take on life in the sharp-elbowed world of fashion magazines."

—Book of the Week, *People*

"Next time you're thinking of diving into a *Scandal* marathon, consider picking up *The Knockoff* instead: Lucy Sykes and Jo Piazza's rollicking, fashion-industry-centric novel is just as sleek and satisfying as Olivia Pope's Gucci-stocked wardrobe. Sykes, who was the fashion director at *Marie Claire* magazine, and Piazza, a journalist and editor, offer an insider's look at the rapidly-changing, constantly-buzzing insanity of today's plugged-in fashion world. Don't cast this off as fluff: true, it's glossy and catty and shamelessly satirical, but *The Knockoff* remains reverent to the fashion industry, paying homage to the brilliant designers and editors and — let's face it — bloggers and street style stars who are today's real tastemakers."

—*Bustle*

"One of the most talked about reads of summer, *The Knockoff* hits a delicious nerve with fashionistas and feminists alike, and is a must read for anyone climbing New York's digital power pyramids . . . Get yourself a copy of *The Knockoff* and find a beach or rooftop to enjoy it on ASAP."

—*New York Natives*

"Drink prosecco while reading. Light and bubbly, just like the book. It's *Silicon Valley* meets *The Devil Wears Prada*, and a great read for the beach. Imagine if a young Vogue employee wanted to overthrow Anna Wintour, and turn the magazine into just an app. Warning: you will laugh out loud, so read in public at your own risk."

—*The Skimm*

"There's nothing better than a fun, guilty pleasure you can't put down or a book that keeps you planted in your beach chair until the sunlight fails and you rush home to keep reading under the porch light. Sykes and Piazza present the character of veteran fashion magazine editor Imogen Tate, who battles to save her career against her former assistant, a twenty-something who is trying to shrink the September issue into an app. You're hooked already, right?"

—*New York Daily News*

"Not since *The Devil Wears Prada* has the fashion world been so abuzz about a novel! Lucy Sykes' and Jo Piazza's *The Knockoff*, a romp about a fashion magazine editor who must learn to master social media or be *All About Eve*-d out of her job, counts Zac Posen among its many fans, as insiders play who's who with its thinly veiled characters."

—Best Beach Read, *Ok!*

“*The Knockoff*, by Lucy Sykes and Jo Piazza, tells the dishy tale of an assistant at a fashion magazine who gets too big for her britches and takes over. By transforming the chic glossy mag they work at into a digital app, the fashionista confuses popularity on social media with success — until the editor-in-chief shows up. Stacy London has shared her Like of the must-read workplace novel that you’ll enjoy reading, even on your day off!”

—“Hot Book”, *Star*

“*The Knockoff* [is] a just-released novel that has our entire office fighting over our copy. . . You’ll want it for Memorial Day weekend, *trust us.*”

—*People Style Watch*

“Don’t let the cover of Lucy Sykes’ and Jo Piazza’s new novel *The Knockoff* fool you into thinking this is a chick lit romp. It has the requisite strong heroine and mean girl villain, but it also raises questions about tensions -- or maybe outright loathing -- between generations as technology rules our world. . . Most delicious, and funny. . . Put this one in your beach bag before you pack your swimsuit.”

—*Pioneer Press*

“Fashion maven Sykes and journalist Piazza combine forces to create a winning romp of a tale that skewers a millennial, techie know-it-all who tries to undermine an ‘old guard’ print editor when a top fashion magazine is transformed into an interactive app. . . In this modernized *All About Eve* plotline, the maniacally driven Eve goes up against her too-kind boss in ways both large (stealing Imogen’s ideas) and small (insulting her lack of tech knowledge), leaving Imogen feeling out of step. Throughout, readers are constantly reminded of the ubiquity of technology and its potential pitfalls. This breezy, behind-the-scenes tale offers a fresh, modern take on a classic tale of rivalry.”

—*Publishers’ Weekly*

“Any good beach day requires an impossible-to-put down quick read—this novel by Lucy Sykes and Jo Piazza is hilarious and addicting.”

— Bobbi Brown, “Jersey Shore Essentials”

“A modern *All About Eve*, *The Knockoff* centers on the trials of the aging editor-in-chief of a fashion magazine whose rule is threatened when her hyperambitious, tech-obsessed millennial assistant stages a workplace coup. The book skewers millennials, bad bosses, and the fashion world’s bizarre rituals with equal glee.

—*One King’s Lane*

“If you want humor with style and heart [read] *The Knockoff* by Lucy Sykes and Jo Piazza. . . You’ll have a new appreciation for your office drama after meeting these nightmare colleagues.”

—Best Books of Summer, *Glamour*

“The glamorous world of fashion is met with a tech invasion in this satirical novel by fashion editor Sykes and editor/journalist Piazza. The fashion industry is notoriously cutthroat; *The Devil Wears Prada* taught us all about the nasty power struggles. In this story, though, the ‘devil’ comes not in a dictatorial fashion editor but instead in the form of technology and the millennials who wield it with the goal of taking over the world, one click or “like” or Tweet at a time.”

—*Kirkus*

“A wonderfully wicked tale of digital-age upheaval in the fashion world . . . The story is set at *Glossy* mag, famous for its gorgeous, enormous September issue (ahem, ahem) . . . This delightful book gives an inside look at the ever-changing fashion world—with laugh-out-loud wit and undeniable style.”

—*Birchbox*

“This is what it's really like working at a glossy, New York fashion magazine. Makes *The Devil Wears Prada* look like *My Little Pony*.”

—Toby Young, bestselling author of *How to Lose Friends and Alienate People*

“In the interest of full disclosure I must reveal that Lucy is my MUCH older twin (by over half an hour). So I am biased. But even if Lucy weren't my sister, I would still say that *The Knockoff* is a bang-on, absolutely of-the-moment, super-trendy, amazingly witty take on the world of online and magazine fashion. “

—Plum Sykes, bestselling author of *Bergdorf Blondes*

“Sykes and Piazza brilliantly satirize and skewer the freakiest aspects of today's changing fashion landscape with all its blogtastic insanity. Bravo girls!”

—Simon Doonan, Creative Ambassador for Barneys New York and author of *The Asylum: True Tales of Madness from a Life in Fashion*

“Lucy Sykes and Jo Piazza have created a heroine not only for the 21st century, but for grownups everywhere. With keen writing about both the fashion and digital worlds, *The Knockoff* reminds us that no one is safe from the wily, ambitious up-and-comer—and that sometimes it's better to beat her than join her!”
—Stacy London, bestselling author of *The Truth About Style* and co-host of *What Not To Wear*

“*The Knockoff* is a hilarious and clever novel that's like a face-off between *The Devil Wears Prada* and *The*

Social Network. It is addictive, non-stop fun that kept me up all night cursing at the deliciously deranged antics, madly guessing at which fashion insiders were being parodied, and relishing every chic, conniving moment.”

--Kevin Kwan, bestselling author of *Crazy Rich Asians*

About the Author

Lucy Sykes has worked in the fashion world as a stylist, fashion editor, and fashion director. For six years Lucy was the fashion director at *Marie Claire* magazine, and was most recently fashion director for Rent the Runway. Her own children’s clothing line, Lucy Sykes New York, was sold in more than a hundred department stores worldwide, including Saks Fifth Avenue, Barneys, Bergdorf Goodman, and Nordstrom. Together with her twin sister Plum, Lucy moved from London to New York City in 1997, where she now lives with her husband and two children.

Jo Piazza is the managing editor of Yahoo Travel and a regular contributor to the *Wall Street Journal*. Her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *New York* magazine, *Glamour*, *Gotham*, the Daily Beast, and *Slate*. She is the author of *Celebrity, Inc.: How Famous People Make Money* and a novel, *Love Rehab: A Novel in 12 Steps* and *If Nuns Ruled the World: Ten Sisters on a Mission*. She lives in New York City with her giant dog.

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CHAPTER ONE

August 2015

At first, Imogen didn’t recognize the girl twirling around in her chair taking a picture of her own magenta Tory Burch flats and matching fingernails. One hand clutched her white-and-gold iPhone, while the other extended toward her shoes, manicured fingers splayed in front of the screen.

Imogen smoothed her fine blond hair behind her ears and gave a confident click with her right heel so the girl, now pouting into the phone’s camera to take a selfie, would know she wasn’t alone in the corner office.

“Oh.” Eve Morton, Imogen’s former assistant, snapped to attention, startled. The phone clattered to the floor. A note of surprise rose in Eve’s husky voice as she glanced over Imogen’s shoulder to see if anyone else was behind her. “You’re back?” The girl’s coltish legs covered the space between them in a few seconds before she wrapped Imogen in a hug that felt too familiar. Eve looked different now. Her auburn curls were blown out, some sort of keratin treatment most likely. The shiny pin-straight hair framed a flawlessly made-up face with a slightly newer, cuter nose than Imogen remembered.

Why was Eve was sitting at the desk of the editor in chief? Imogen’s desk.

Imogen racked her brain to find any reason Eve would be in this building at all so early in the morning. She no longer worked here. She had been Imogen’s assistant two years ago and hadn’t been back since.

Eve had been an extraordinarily competent assistant and for all intents and purposes, a friend, but this was an irritating distraction on her first day back at work. All Imogen wanted was to get settled before the rest of the staff arrived, call down for a cappuccino and have someone help her wade through the inevitable swamp of her email

“Eve? Darling, why are you here? I thought you were off at Harvard Business School?” Imogen sidestepped

her to settle into her chair. Sinking into the leather seat after so much time away felt good.

The girl folded her long legs beneath her instead of crossing them when she sat across from Imogen. “I finished in January actually. I went to a start-up incubator in Palo Alto for a few months. Then I came back here in July.”

What was a start-up incubator? Imogen wondered. She imagined it had something to do with chicken, but didn’t have the inclination or the interest to ask.

“Back to New York? That’s lovely. I’m sure some monstrous investment bank has snatched you up now that you have an MBA,” Imogen replied evenly, pressing the power button on her computer.

Eve threw her head back with a throaty laugh that surprised Imogen in its maturity and depth. Her old laugh was sweet and lilting. This laugh belonged to a stranger. “No. I came back to New York and back to Glossy! I sent my resume to Mr. Worthington in January. We talked just before you went off on sick leave. In July I moved back to New York and I came here. I mean .?.?. it’s like a dream job. He told me he was going to tell you. I didn’t even think you would be in until your usual time .?.?. about ten. I figured you would have a meeting with Worthington and he could fill you in on my new role.”

Old assistant. New role. Eve, twenty-six years old, her eyes heavy with aubergine liner and naked ambition, sitting in Imogen’s office.

Imogen had communicated with Carter Worthington, the publisher and her boss, exactly two times during her six-month hiatus from work. For the first time since she walked through the doors of Glossy that morning, she took a hard look around the floor and noticed small differences. Most of the lights were still dim, accentuating the buttery morning sun pouring in through the windows beyond the elevator bank. But the traditionally sparse-by-design floor felt more crowded. When she left, the floor had contained roomy cubicles with low partitions, each desk having enough space for a keyboard and a computer monitor. Now the partitions were gone and a snug collection of tables formed a continuous row across the room with laptops so close they kissed one another like dominos preparing to topple. Her favorite photograph, Mario Testino’s close-up of Kate Moss’s face, was missing from the wall. In its place was a broad whiteboard drawn over with numbered lists and doodles in every color of marker. Elsewhere on the soft gray walls were signs printed in cursive letters and matted in pretty juvenile colors: “Taking risks gives you energy!” “What would you do if you weren’t afraid?” “What would Beyonce do?” “Good, Great, Gorgeous, GLOSSY!” Inside Imogen’s office one major thing was missing: her cork inspiration board, usually covered over with scraps of magazines, tear sheets from shoots, pieces of fabric, old photographs and anything else that caught her fancy and inspired her. Who the hell thought they could remove my board?

An irrational anxiety swelled in Imogen’s stomach. Something was different and whatever was different felt wrong. All she could think was, Get out of my office, but instead, after a tiny pause, she asked politely, “What exactly is your new job here, Eve?” At that moment she noticed that a large ballerina-pink beanbag chair occupied the corner of the room.

“I’m in charge of digital content for Glossy-dot-com.” Eve smiled briefly, but unconvincingly, as she picked at her nail polish.

Imogen maintained her poker face and breathed an internal sigh of relief. Okay. Eve was only in charge of Internet content. For a second she’d panicked and thought Eve was there in some kind of senior role that she hadn’t been told about. Of course it was 2015 and of course the magazine had a website and sure all of that

meant something. But the website was just a necessary appendage of the actual pages of the magazine, used mainly as a dumping ground for favors for advertisers and leftover stories. Right? The girl was in charge of something relatively inconsequential. Still, why hadn't anyone consulted Imogen before they hired her old assistant for a new position? It was poor form.

Eve rushed on. "I can't wait to talk about all the new changes. The site has never been stronger. I just think you're going to love the relaunch."

A headache threatened to spring from the base of Imogen's skull. "I think it is great that they finally gave the website a redesign. And I really am happy that you're back. I would love to have lunch with you once I'm all caught up." She nodded, hoping the girl would just blog off already so that Imogen could start her day.

Perhaps cracking a joke would speed the process along. "As long as the redesign has nothing to do with my magazine and"--she hoped to make a point--"as long as they haven't given away my office."

Eve blinked in confusion, eyelash extensions flickering like hummingbird wings.

"I think you need to talk to Carter, Imogen." It was strange to hear a vaguely authoritative tone in Eve's twenty-six-year-old voice, and odder still for her to address their boss, Carter Worthington, by his first name. All at once, Imogen could feel her heart begin to beat faster again. She had been right the first time. Eve was not just working on the website. Imogen worried for a moment that Eve, who had once been so good at anticipating her every need, could read her mind right now. She stood.

"I actually have a meeting with him anyway," Imogen lied. "First thing this morning. I should head up there now."

Shifting her weight from one heel onto the other, she turned to walk away from Eve, past several young women she didn't recognize who were starting to trickle in. Her hand shook. Her face revealed nothing but a static smile as she pressed the elevator button for the lobby. In a building this large you had to go back down to go farther up.

Gus, at the lobby coffee stand, practically leaped over the counter, doing a two-step in her direction as she hurried between the building's two elevator banks.

"I thought you never be coming back!" he exclaimed, smelling sweetly of cinnamon and steamed milk. His sandy mustache bounced with each syllable. "How has that magazine survived for six months without an editor in chief? They must have missed you so, so much!" He squeezed her hand with care. Of course he knew why she had been gone. They had tried to keep it out of the press, but these days there wasn't much you could hide from the gossip columns.

In February, half a year earlier, Imogen was diagnosed with stage II breast cancer in her left breast, the same disease that had taken her grandmother and two aunts. In March she'd opted for a double mastectomy and reconstruction to both eradicate the cancer and prevent it from spreading. She'd spent the next six months in chemo and recovery.

"Here I am." Imogen forced herself to deliver a warm smile. This was all too much before nine a.m. But at least Gus carried with him kindness and the promise of caffeine. He led her over to the coffee counter and, without having to say anything, busied himself making her drink, topping the foam off with an affectionate heart. He waved her away as she pulled four crisp dollar bills out of her wallet and pushed the cup into her

hand.

“My treat. A very special day! If I known this was going to be your first day back I would have had the missus make you something special .?.?. some of her baklava .?.?. with the honey that you like. You be here tomorrow? She make it tonight. I bring it to you tomorrow. With the honey.” She nodded and thanked him, savoring the jolt of caffeine as she made her way to the elevator. Workers streamed into the lobby now. A handsome middle-aged man with salt-and-pepper hair and a pocket square in his immaculate suit gave Imogen’s legs an approving glance as he joined her in the lift.

On the ride up, her head still swimming, Imogen remembered clearly the moment Eve Morton walked into her life five years earlier. She had only just been promoted to be the editor in chief of Glossy and was exhausted from weeks of interviewing candidates to be her assistant. Human Resources sent her practically the entire senior class of Le Rosey (that Swiss finishing school where rich Americans sent their spoiled children to meet other rich Americans), all of them bored and privileged. None of them had the kind of ineffable drive Imogen knew would make them hungry enough to excel at Glossy. Imogen understood better than anyone how important it was for someone to be hungry for a job like this one. She had once been an assistant herself, to her very first boss and mentor, Molly Watson, editor in chief of Moda magazine, the most inspiring person Imogen had known in her entire life.

The day Eve Morton walked into the Glossy offices for the first time she was a single class shy of graduating from New York University. Wearing a rumpled trench coat, she’d been sopping wet, hair strung around her face, giving her the appearance of a bedraggled kitten. Outside it was the kind of rainy April day that transforms even hardened New Yorkers into timid tourists in their own city, reluctant to venture out without the promise of a car ready to whisk them off to their next destination.

While tall and broad, Eve was mousy and shy. Yet there was a gleam in her eye that sparkled all the more as she pulled out her laptop to reveal a PowerPoint presentation with slides featuring magazine pages from the early nineties to the present.

“I’ve read every magazine you have worked on,” she let spill from her slightly lopsided, but not altogether unpretty, mouth. “This is the most exciting moment of my entire life, just sitting here in this office. You’re seriously one of the best magazine editors in the world. I think I have read every single story about you, too. I just love all the parties you throw with the designers during Fashion Week and the way you expressly asked not to be seated near Kim Kardashian at the London shows. I love all the changes you’ve made to Glossy. You’re the reason I want to work in magazines.”

Imogen wasn’t immune to flattery, but she did have a finely tuned bullshit detector. Still, she didn’t think she had ever met anyone who had read every single issue of Glossy for the past three years, Harper’s Bazaar for the two years before that and Elle for two prior. She wasn’t even sure if she could say with a straight face that she herself had read all of those issues cover to cover. Imogen peered at the girl with a measure of incredulity, the edge of her J.Crew skirt still dripping onto the white hardwood floors of her office.

“Well, thank you, but you seem much too young to have been reading my magazines for that long.”

“Oh, I’ve been reading fashion books since I could read. When you shot the couture collections on window-washing scaffolding seventy floors above Times Square, I mean, I literally died.”

Eve was referring to a shoot later described in the press as “Do or Die,” where Imogen envisioned the models in place of window washers, with photographers as spectators on different floors. Iconic supermodels

dangled like insects from ledges, their hemlines catching expertly on the breeze. The magazine's insurance premiums skyrocketed. That didn't stop Imogen from taking over an entire subway station for the following month's shoot, and a supermarket in Queens for the one after. They'd brought in Chanel-branded ham for that one.

"When I saw that--it completely altered the course of my whole life," Eve said, bringing Imogen back to the present with words she didn't entirely believe could be true.

"I did? It did? My God, how?"

"I couldn't get those images out of my mind. They stuck with me. It was an out-of-this-world experience. The clothes came alive for me then. From that moment I knew there was one thing that I was meant to do in the entire world. From that moment I knew I was destined to come to New York, where these magazines were made. I applied to New York University and FIT. I was accepted to both and I chose NYU so I could design my own major focusing on marketing, management and the history of fashion. From then on all I ever wanted was to come here and work with you. The innovations you have made in fashion magazines have been the most exciting thing to happen to editorial content in decades."

Eve's shoulders finally shrugged a bit as if a weight had been lifted now that she had delivered a monologue practiced many times in front of a dorm-room mirror covered in fingerprints and Windex smudges.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Richard Williams:

Does one one of the book lovers? If yes, do you ever feeling doubt if you find yourself in the book store? Attempt to pick one book that you find out the inside because don't ascertain book by its handle may doesn't work this is difficult job because you are scared that the inside maybe not seeing that fantastic as in the outside appearance likes. Maybe you answer can be The Knockoff: A Novel why because the amazing cover that make you consider with regards to the content will not disappoint anyone. The inside or content is fantastic as the outside or maybe cover. Your reading sixth sense will directly make suggestions to pick up this book.

Curtis Miller:

Are you kind of occupied person, only have 10 or even 15 minute in your moment to upgrading your mind expertise or thinking skill possibly analytical thinking? Then you have problem with the book when compared with can satisfy your limited time to read it because this time you only find book that need more time to be go through. The Knockoff: A Novel can be your answer since it can be read by you actually who have those short extra time problems.

Kathe Waller:

Do you like reading a guide? Confuse to looking for your chosen book? Or your book was rare? Why so many concern for the book? But any kind of people feel that they enjoy regarding reading. Some people likes

reading, not only science book but in addition novel and The Knockoff: A Novel or maybe others sources were given understanding for you. After you know how the good a book, you feel wish to read more and more. Science book was created for teacher as well as students especially. Those textbooks are helping them to increase their knowledge. In different case, beside science guide, any other book likes The Knockoff: A Novel to make your spare time far more colorful. Many types of book like this one.

Sunny Lopez:

As a university student exactly feel bored to be able to reading. If their teacher requested them to go to the library as well as to make summary for some book, they are complained. Just very little students that has reading's spirit or real their hobby. They just do what the teacher want, like asked to go to the library. They go to at this time there but nothing reading significantly. Any students feel that studying is not important, boring along with can't see colorful photos on there. Yeah, it is being complicated. Book is very important for you personally. As we know that on this time, many ways to get whatever we want. Likewise word says, many ways to reach Chinese's country. So , this The Knockoff: A Novel can make you truly feel more interested to read.

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