

## The Great Man

Kate Christensen

Novel

In the loopy art-world novel since John Updike's notably loopy 2002 book *Seek My Face*, two competing biographers dig into the life of a painter who did only female nudes. The main action involves them sitting around talking to the women in the artist's life—his sister Maxine, for instance, a painter in her own right who “used her body as a source of light and heat, a high-speed muscle car that needed periodic pit stops to refuel and regenerate.” Right. You may discover some droll bits of drawing-room comedy in Christensen's fourth book, but that will involve venturing, machete in hand, through a jungle of overripe prose.

**C-**—Troy Patterson

## Dizzy City

Nicholas Griffin

Novel



**EW PICK**

After he's wounded on the front lines of WWI, English deserter Ben Cramb arrives in NYC armed only with the ingenuity of a budding con artist. Avuncular filmmaker Julius McAteer takes Ben under his wing and sics him on cattleman Henry Jergens, an ostensibly easy mark. But nothing is as it seems. The intricate crime drama plays out like a blindfolded chess match; Ben's postwar paranoia and a romance with a secretive actress only add to the delicious confusion. Griffin deftly shifts among three different narrators, parceling out unexpected revelations with the confident wink of an experienced hustler.

**A-**—David Greenwald

## Deluxe

Dana Thomas

Nonfiction



A Paris-based *Newsweek* writer casts an impressive net over fashion, exhaustively researching how haute couture transformed into a \$157 billion business for mass consumption. The narrative arc occasionally frustrates as she interrupts tales of attempted takeovers and designers' battles for pages on the crafting of an Hermès bag or Leslie Caron waxing wardrobe nostalgic. Despite the gloomy subtitle (“How Luxury Lost Its Luster”), Thomas' passion and egalitarianism stand out. As H&M marketing director Jörgen Andersson tells the author, “Luxury is more in your perception than what it says on the label.” Even Coco Chanel wouldn't argue with that. **B+**—RAW

# THE CHARTS

## HARDCOVER BEST-SELLERS

### 1 THE SECRET

Last May, *TIME* named Rhonda Byrne one of the world's 100 most influential people. After seven months in stores, her self-help book still tops the nonfiction list.



## NONFICTION TOP 10

		WEEKS ON LIST
1	<b>THE SECRET</b> Rhonda Byrne	31
2	<b>THE DANGEROUS BOOK FOR BOYS</b> Conn and Hal Iggulden	14
3	<b>THE WEIGHT LOSS CURE “THEY” DON'T WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT</b> Kevin Trudeau	9
4	<b>LONE SURVIVOR</b> Marcus Luttrell and Patrick Robinson	8
5	<b>IT'S ALL ABOUT HIM</b> Denise Jackson and Ellen Vaughn ➔ <i>This memoir by the wife of country star Alan Jackson includes an exclusive CD with two of his original songs, one inspired by the book. The first print run totaled 165,000 copies.</i>	1
6	<b>CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS—CHANGE YOUR LIFE</b> Wayne W. Dyer	1
7	<b>QUIET STRENGTH</b> Tony Dungy and Nathan Whitaker	4
8	<b>GOD IS NOT GREAT</b> Christopher Hitchens ➔ <i>On the heels of faith-questioning best-sellers by Richard Dawkins and Sam Harris, Hitchens' ode to atheism has exploded with 346,000 copies in print after 13 trips to press.</i>	14
9	<b>YOU: ON A DIET</b> Michael F. Roizen, M.D., and Mehmet C. Oz, M.D.	29
10	<b>A LONG WAY GONE</b> Ishmael Beah	25

## FICTION TOP 10

		WEEKS ON LIST
1	<b>HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS</b> J. K. Rowling	3
2	<b>A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS</b> Khaled Hosseini	11
3	<b>THE QUICKIE</b> James Patterson and Michael Ledwidge	5
4	<b>THE SECRET SERVANT</b> Daniel Silva	2
5	<b>HIGH NOON</b> Nora Roberts	4
6	<b>THE TIN ROOF BLOWDOWN</b> James Lee Burke	3
7	<b>LEAN MEAN THIRTEEN</b> Janet Evanovich	7
8	<b>BEYOND REACH</b> Karin Slaughter ➔ <i>Slaughter's latest Southern-fried thriller set in Grant County, Ga., boasts 100,000 copies following five print runs.</i>	1
9	<b>UP CLOSE AND DANGEROUS</b> Linda Howard	3
10	<b>FIRST AMONG SEQUELS</b> Jasper Fforde	2

SOURCE: PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, WEEK OF JULY 31—AUG. 6, 2007

## Guest Critic

# A BOOK YOU HAVE TO READ

Sara Gruen recommends *Sin in the Second City*



Sara Gruen  
Author of  
*Water for Elephants*

**Sin in the Second City**  
Karen Abbott



I recommend *Sin in the Second City* by Karen Abbott, the true story of the Everleigh Club, America's most famous brothel, which operated in Chicago in the early 1900s. The club's madams were Ada and Minna Everleigh, sisters with mysterious pasts who furnished their bordello with a \$15,000 gold piano, mirrored floors, and a fountain with a jet that squirted perfume into the air. Theodore Dreiser, John Barrymore, and visiting royalty were entertained by stunning courtesans who would discuss politics, recite Longfellow, or devour raw meat, depending on the client's preferences. The Everleigh sisters redefined the “sporting life” and soon had a nationwide waiting list of applicants. Their success created such jealousy within Chicago's Levee district that the other madams went so far as to try to frame them for murder, among other things. Abbott's writing is exquisite and her reporting first-rate, making this forgotten slice of American history come alive. It reads like the very best fiction, but the tale of the Everleigh Club is too fantastical to make up.

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