

Confessional bloggers: the women whose sexploits reached thousands of readers

compiled by Jessica Hopkins

The Hotel Pierre is the sort of upscale Manhattan establishment where liveried waiters try to make the guests feel uncouth for leaving invisible fingerprints on the crockery. This is where Stephanie Klein spent her honeymoon, she tells me as soon as our drinks are being poured. The honeymoon was a short, discreet affair. But while this fact and the detail about the venue are new to me, I am already well familiar with the story of her marriage. I know that it was a disaster, that it ended in divorce, heartbreak, singleton angst, dating hell and one-night-stands with strange men who use spray-on cooking oil as a sex aid. ('You use it to fry bacon,' she said, 'you don't spray it on your dick!')

Other things I know about Stephanie Klein before we have met: her attitude to oral sex, how she wet the bed until the age of 11, an abortion she had a couple of years ago and her ongoing battle with diarrhoea. She doesn't need to tell me any of these things because I've read about them already on *Greek Tragedy*, her blog.

Stephanie Klein's intimate life is public property. But not because she got so famous that people invaded her privacy. Instead, she invaded her own privacy, which made her famous. She posted relationship autopsies and morning-after confessionals online and thousands of people started reading them. Then she packaged them up as a book – *Straight Up and Dirty*, which is soon to become a TV show.

Now she calls herself a memoirist. Her former mother-in-law, meanwhile, calls her a whore.

'I laughed when I heard that. It's so typical. I don't get offended by it. I know I didn't have sex with all these people.' Stephanie Klein widens her eyes to italicise the word 'sex'. 'But even if I had, so what?'

Her voice has that special New Yorker elasticity. It goes up high, clipped and squeaky for surprise – 'what!' Then down low, slow and guttural for disbelief – 'no way!' It is sassy flirting with whiney.

The men in question – are the ones Klein didn't necessarily have sex with – are people she dated to get over her marriage to Gabe, a doctor, a narcissist, a liar, a cheater and a mummy's boy. The mother-in-law is Romina, an Ice Queen control-freak who disapproved of Klein from the start and meddled destructively in her marriage. Klein is afraid of bumping into Romina now that her book is out.

Stephanie and Gabe got engaged at 21, married at 24 and divorced three years later. It turned out he had been seeing another woman. He promised to end the affair. He lied. So she left, terminated the baby she was carrying and, with haste that she now regrets, set off on the hunt for another man.

'I got into it way too fast because I was afraid of being alone, of what people would think, of dying an old maid... I had an abortion in November and I was dating in December,' Klein winces at the memory. 'It was like I needed it for my self-esteem, I needed to find someone.'

For self-esteem, as for pretty much everything else, the place to shop these days is the internet. Klein registered on dating websites and, on the advice of her therapist (this is New York, remember) started seeing guys three at a time. She also posted a list of random facts about herself ▶



STEPHANIE KLEIN
GREEK TRAGEDY

Who: Stephanie Klein, a 30-year-old former designer who is now making a living from writing about her life. Unlike her peers, Klein never used a pseudonym despite writing about deeply personal things.

What: After her marriage failed, Klein hit the dating scene with a vengeance in an effort to get her ex out of her system. From January 2004 she detailed first dates and one-night stands, soon having upwards of

200,000 visitors a month to her site. **Extract:** 'You cupped my bare foot in your hands, my toes near your mouth, as you rubbed my sole, pressing thumbs, kneading the ends of me. I responded to your warmth, "this foot massage just ain't gonna cut it, as lovely as it is. I need to orgasm."' **Now:** Remarrying and expecting twins. Turning her book into a TV show.

Read more: www.stephanieklein.blogs.com

JESSICA CUTLER ▶
THE WASHINGTONIENNE

Who: Jessica Cutler. The 28-year-old former US Congress staff assistant caused more than a stir on Capitol Hill when she wrote a blog detailing her (often paid for) exploits with older men, including a married high-level Republican.

What: The Washingtonienne lasted just under a fortnight in May 2004 before it appeared on Washington gossip blog Wonkette. Cutler was promptly sacked from her job for 'unacceptable use of Senate computers'. She is now being sued by Robert Steinbuch, who featured heavily in the blog, for invasion of privacy.

Extract: 'I'm sure I am not the only one who makes money on the side like this. If you investigated every Staff Ass on the Hill, I am sure you would find out some freaky shit. No way can anybody live on such a low salary. I am convinced that the Congressional offices are full of dealers and hos.'

Now: Published a book and now faces the prospect of legal proceedings.

Read more: www.washingtonienne.archive.blogspot.com



ZOE MARGOLIS ▲
GIRL WITH A ONE-TRACK MIND

Who: Zoe Margolis, a 33-year-old sex-crazed film assistant from London. Margolis wrote under the pseudonym Abby Lee until she was rather cruelly ousted last month by the people syndicating her book.

What: Call it a New Year's resolution if you will, 'Girl...' came to life on 1 January 2004. She just couldn't stop thinking about sex, or having it for that matter, so decided to share her exploits with the two million of us who couldn't stop reading about it.

Extract: 'With your arms around me

and your soft lips against mine, I soon began to feel myself losing control. I had to fight off the throbbing sensation between my legs as you held me tightly; I tried to ignore how hard my nipples felt, pressed up against your chest; and I had to stop myself from letting my hands wander to your arse so that you wouldn't know just how much I wanted you at that moment.'

Now: Won't work in film again but the book's selling well, so it's not all bad. **Read more:** www.girlwithaonetrackmind.blogspot.com



CATHERINE SANDERSON ▲
LA PETITE ANGLAISE

Who: Catherine Sanderson, above, a 33-year-old (now single) mother, living (now alone) in Paris.

What: Anglaise started her blog in the summer of 2004 musing on her life as a British woman living and working in Paris. She charted how she became bored of her relationship with long-term partner Mr Frog (father of her toddler daughter Tadpole), started an affair with one of her readers, left Mr Frog and was dumped by 'Jim'. Then got sacked from her job as a secretary once her boss discovered what she'd really been writing about at work.

Extract: 'I had never been unfaithful before. I had very black and white ideas of what was right and wrong, and any sort of cloak and dagger behaviour was most definitely wrong in my book. Nor had I experienced a modern electronic courtship, punctuated by rapid fire exchange of texts and emails. But over the next week the feeling that something momentous was happening intensified with every shred of contact. I had to see him again, and soon, whatever the consequences.'

Now: Still in Paris, she's now taking her former employees to a tribunal. **Read more:** www.petiteanglaise.com

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BELLE DE JOUR

Who: Your guess is as good as ours. Belle is a London call girl whose online diaries have been published as a book, with another out soon. Unlike some of her fellow confessionals, she has, so far, managed to remain anonymous.

What: Belle came to life in October 2003 when she started writing about her new job. It's not been an easy ride though, she's been accused of being a middle-aged man, because surely no woman exists who can enjoy sex that much yet still discuss the merits of Samuel Pepys' diaries afterwards?

Extract: 'Regarding orgasms at work. I don't. I don't equate number of orgasms with the level of enjoyment of sex, nor good sex with the ability to produce an orgasm. At the age of 19, I realised that sex was about the quality of your enjoyment and that doesn't always mean coming. Let's be honest, this is a customer service position, not a self-fulfillment odyssey. They're paying for their orgasm, not mine (although I wouldn't turn down such an offer).'

Now: Her second book is out this month but the blog's turning domestic. **Read more:** www.belledejour-uk.blogspot.com