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“*Chick Lit and Postfeminism* is a bold and fascinating exploration of ‘the most culturally visible form of postfeminist fiction’—chick lit. Demanding and sometimes dizzying in its range of readings, the book moors the genre in the commodified context of women’s lives in the twenty-first century, refashioning our understanding of this irreverent, ubiquitous, and (contrary to popular belief) important genre of fiction.”

—Mary Bly (Eloisa James), Fordham University, *New York Times* best-selling author

Chick Lit and Postfeminism

“Fiction that Sells”—How Chick Lit Evolved from an Avant-Garde Literary Movement to a Subset of Popular Fiction

Originally a euphemism for Princeton University’s Female Literary Tradition course in the 1980s, “chick lit” mutated from a movement in American women’s avant-garde fiction in the 1990s to become, by the turn of the century, a humorous and hugely popular subset of women’s literature, journalism, and advice materials.

In **CHICK LIT AND POSTFEMINISM** (February 2011; UVA Press), Stephanie Harzewski offers one of the first in-depth looks at this underanalyzed body of postmodern fiction. Examining such best sellers as *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, *The Devil Wears Prada*, and *Sex and the City*, Harzewski looks at chick lit through different genres and theoretical lenses to provide a historical narrative of the conditions in publishing, consumer culture, and courtship that have coalesced to produce this genre that she terms an “often veiled comic memoir.”

Harzewski draws on texts from both literary history and popular media: chick lit novels themselves, journalism, online discussion forums, author Web sites and interviews, industry advertisements, and women’s lifestyle periodicals. In the process, she successfully demonstrates how chick lit and the critical study of it yield important social observations on upheavals in Anglo-American marriage and education patterns, heterosexual rituals, feminism, and postmodern values.

Stephanie Harzewski is Lecturer in the Department of English at the University of New Hampshire.