



## American Eve

By Paula Uruburu

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**American Eve** By Paula Uruburu

**The scandalous story of America's first supermodel, sex goddess, and modern celebrity—Evelyn Nesbit.**

By the time of her sixteenth birthday in 1900, Evelyn Nesbit was known to millions as the most photographed woman of her era, an iconic figure who set the standard for female beauty, and whose innocent sexuality was used to sell everything from chocolates to perfume. Women wanted to be her. Men just wanted her. But when Evelyn's life of fantasy became all too real and her insanely jealous millionaire husband, Harry K. Thaw, murdered her lover, New York City architect Stanford White, the most famous woman in the world became infamous as she found herself at the center of the "Crime of the Century" and a scandal that signaled the beginning of a national obsession with youth, beauty, celebrity, and sex.

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## **American Eve By Paula Uruburu Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### From Publishers Weekly

Uruburu, an associate professor of English at Hofstra who has consulted for the History Channel, examines the notorious life of model and chorus girl Evelyn Nesbit (1885?–1967), whose rise to stardom was as spectacular as her subsequent fall. Born in rural Pennsylvania, Florence Evelyn Nesbit was an exceedingly pretty infant who by 15 had achieved success as an actress and model in New York City, where her blend of sultry sexuality and unspoiled purity attracted the eye of famed architect and playboy Stanford White. But Pittsburgh heir and sexual sadist Harry K. Thaw wanted Nesbit for himself and vowed to expose White's immoral conduct with underage girls. Thaw went on to brutally rape and beat Nesbit, yet she agreed to marry him. Still consumed with jealousy, Thaw shot White to death in 1906, leading to a headline-grabbing trial. Uruburu's depiction of Nesbit's early life and career is richly detailed, but the book loses steam near the end and barely addresses Nesbit's post-trial tailspin into alcoholism. Still, readers will appreciate the parallels between Nesbit's *It Girl* status and our own celebrity-obsessed culture. Photos. (May 1)

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#### From [Booklist](#)

Americans have always been intrigued by sex and scandal. Even in seemingly more innocent eras, sexually fueled transgressions and crimes had the power to transfix the public. Uruburu recounts the salacious details of an early-twentieth-century crime that both shocked and gripped the collective public consciousness. A superstar by turn-of-the-century standards, Evelyn Nesbit, model, actress, and advertising creation, represented an idealized version of American womanhood. When her unbalanced millionaire husband shot and killed her lover, renowned New York architect and man-about-town Stanford White, the stage was set for a virtual media circus. All the decadent details revealed at the trial were devoured by a public just as hungry to see young, beautiful, and successful women crash and burn as they are today. Uruburu draws some valid comparisons between then and now in this tell-all biography of one of the first in a long line of tarnished "It Girls." --Margaret Flanagan

#### Review

aPaula Uruburu serves up an intriguing and meticulously researched slice of American history. Evelyn Nesbit typified the glorious excesses of the Gilded Age, and this story has everything: sex, deception, drama, and a lurid love triangle, all culminating in the crime of the century.a

--Karen Abbott, author of "Sin in the Second City: Madams, Ministers, Playboys, and the Battle for America's Soul"

aBy centering her book on the ever-fascinating figure of Evelyn Nesbit the stunningly beautiful chorine whose sexual charisma still burns through the Victorian photographs that adorn the book aUruburu has produced not only a tour de force of historical crime writing and an illuminating social history but a rollicking piece of storytelling: a work that brings to life an entire glittering era while maintaining a breathless narrative pace.a

--Harold Schecter, author of "The Devil's Gentleman: Privilege, Poison, and the Trial That Ushered in the Twentieth Century"

aOf all the famous beauties of a hundred years ago, Evelyn Nesbit is the only one who would still turn heads today. Paula Uruburu's triumph is to fix this very modern-looking girl in her proper time and place, and also to describe the New York of the early 1900s so vividly that we feel we, too, could be strolling towards the 21st Street apartment where the teen was seduced by Stanford White--or sitting in Madison Square Garden on the fatal evening that White was shot dead.a

--Mike Dash, author of "Satanas Circus: Murder, Vice, Police Corruption, and New York's Trial of the

Century"

aPaula Uruburu has given life to the tragic American story of the poor, beautiful nymph whose fate is so often entangled with extreme wealth and the powerful man. Evelyn Nesbit is like a Dreiser heroineaSister Carrie, Jenny Gerhardtalthough hers is a true story, harrowing in this writer's hands.a

--Martha McPhee, author of "LaAmerica" and "Gorgeous Lies"

aIn "American Eve," a fascinating evocation of a woman and her times, Paula Uruburu does more than just tell the story of Evelyn Nesbit. Sex, money, scandal, celebrity, doom--the whole cocktail of Americaas obsessions is served up here in this intriguing, addictive book.a

--Zachary Lazar, author of "Sway"

aWonderfully absorbing . . . A lurid tabloid story of yore brought to fresh life and relevance with remarkable insight, verve and wisdom. Old New York is laid bare in all its decadence and the cult of pubescent beauty traced to its source, all with worldliness, wit, humor, compassion, and suspense. The result is a real page-turner.a

--Philip Lopate, author of "Waterfront: A Walk Around Manhattan" and "Writing New York"

aTragic now when a century ago it seemed merely scandalous, the story of Evelyn Nesbit is a gripping cautionary tale for those who believe Paris Hilton, Britney Spears and Lindsay Lohan are the first of their kind. How is it that after a century of feminism, young beautiful women still crash and burn for an eager public? Using newly available family sources, Paula Uruburu tells Evelyn Nesbitas story in all its darkness and terror.a

--Honor Moore, author of "The Bishopas Daughter"

aIn "American Eve" a beautiful young woman, a lecherous prince of New York, and an unstable husband show us how the national sport of media-fed scandal began. Before the story ends, one man is dead, another is locked away, and PaulaUruburu has given us a look at an age of excess that looks remarkably like our own. It is page turning history at its best.a

--Michael DaAntonio, author of "Hershey: Milton S. Hershey's Extraordinary Life of Wealth, Empire, and Utopian Dreams"

aA real page turner.a

a"The New York Times"

aUruburuas smart, historically savvy narrative is as riveting as the juiciest gossip fest.a

a"O, The Oprah Magazine"

a"American Eve" colorfully recreates the nasty underbelly of the Gilded Age...Nesbitas tragedy underscores how dangerous desire can be.a

a"New York Post"

aA story that haunts the imagination.a

a"Los Angeles Times"

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