

The Girl on Paper



A Gallic Book

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For my mother

*What is the point of books, if not to bring us
closer to real life, if not to make us all
the more eager to live it?*
Henry Miller

Prologue

*Wanting to meet an author because you like his work is
like wanting to meet a duck because you like pâté*
Margaret Atwood

(USA Today, 6 February 2008)

ANGEL TRILOGY CAPTIVATES AMERICA

The tale of a doomed love affair between a young woman and her guardian angel has proved to be the literary sensation of the year. Here, the true story behind the phenomenon.

No one at Doubleday really believed in it. Yet the first novel of 33-year-old unknown Tom Boyd (original print run just 10,000 copies) has become one of the biggest bestsellers of the year in just a few months. *In the Company of Angels*, the first volume of what is to be a trilogy of novels, has topped the bestseller lists for twenty-eight weeks. With sales of over 3 million copies in the United States, the novel is about to be translated and distributed in more than forty countries.

Set in a Los Angeles where romance meets fantasy, the novel tells the story of the forbidden love between Delilah, a young medical student, and Raphael, the guardian angel who has been watching over her since she was a child. But the supernatural

framework is really just an excuse for the author to explore more emotive subjects such as rape, incest, organ donation and mental illness. Just like Harry Potter and the Twilight series, *In the Company of Angels* has found a receptive audience for its rich mythology. Boyd's most committed readers have formed a community with its own moral codes and its own theories. Hundreds of websites dedicated to Tom Boyd's fictional characters have already been set up. Known to be quiet and unassuming, the author is a teacher from the MacArthur Park neighborhood. Before he unexpectedly found fame, Boyd taught English to troubled teenagers at the local high school, where just fifteen years ago he himself was a pupil.

Following the success of his first novel, Boyd has quit teaching after signing a \$2 million contract with Doubleday for the two remaining books in the trilogy.

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(Gramophone, 1 June 2008)

FRENCH PIANIST AURORE VALANCOURT RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS AVERY FISHER PRIZE

On Saturday, the renowned 30-year-old pianist Aurore Valancourt was awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Prize. This highly sought-after honor comes with a monetary award of \$75,000 and is given to a musician for his or her outstanding achievement in music.

Born in Paris on July 7, 1977, Aurore Valancourt is

considered to be one of the most talented musicians of her generation.

A piano virtuoso

Valancourt received her classical training at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, and was discovered in 1997 by the conductor André Grévin, who invited her to go on tour with him. This marked the beginning of her international career. She started performing regularly with some of the world's leading orchestras, but quickly became disillusioned with the elitism of the system. Without warning, Valancourt abruptly withdrew from the public eye in January 2003. She then embarked on a two-year round-the-world motorcycle tour which ended in Sawai Madhopur, India. Valancourt spent several months there, surrounded by the lakes and cliffs of the nearby national park.

In 2005, Valancourt relocated to Manhattan where she returned to the stage and the recording studio, but also became a passionate environmental activist. This brought her even more media attention and her fame spread beyond the music world.

Taking advantage of her natural good looks, Valancourt began to appear on the pages of fashion magazines (a glamorous spread in *Vanity Fair*, a slightly more revealing one in *Sports Illustrated*...) and became the face of a well-known brand of lingerie. This publicity turned Valancourt into the world's highest-paid classical musician.