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Devouring love

by [Brooke Allen](#)

On *The Kiss* by Kathryn Harrison, *The Shadow Man* by Mary Gordon & *The Architect of Desire* by Suzannah Lessard

Just what does it say about the New York literati that the book that has made the single biggest splash this season is a thin, poorly written volume, chockablock with bathos and cheap melodrama, dealing with the author's incestuous affair with her father? Magazine editors and media pundits have fallen over one another in their rush to book Kathryn Harrison and either tout or fulminate against her new memoir, *The Kiss*.^[1] A single issue of *The New York Observer* contained three pieces on it, including a parody; the ever-topical *New Yorker* made a bid to publish an excerpt in its pages. (*New Yorker* readers were deprived of this treat when Random House pushed *The Kiss*'s publication inconveniently forward.) Kathryn Harrison and her husband, Colin, a writer and editor, have eagerly encouraged the feeding frenzy, Kathryn by giving soulful interviews and str ...

Brooke Allen's latest book is *Moral Minority: Our Skeptical Founding Fathers* (Ivan R Dee).

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