

APPENDICES

Danielle Steel's Biography and Her Literary Works

Steel was born on August 14, 1947, in New York City, the only child of John Schuelein-Steel, a member of Munich's wealthy Lowenbrau beer family, and Norma Schuelein-Steel, an international beauty from Portugal. Steel's parents divorced when she was seven or eight years old. Afterwards, she was raised by relatives and servants in Paris and New York. She graduated from the Lycee Francais when she was not quite fifteen and in 1963 entered New York's Parsons School of Design. However, she soon abandoned her dream of becoming "the new Chanel" when the pressure to succeed caused her to develop a stomach ulcer. She then enrolled at New York University, where she studied until 1967. When she was eighteen, Steel married her first husband, a French banker with homes in New York, San Francisco, and Paris. Within a few years, she became bored with her jet-setting lifestyle and, against her husband's wishes, decided to find a job. In 1968, she was hired as vice president of public relations and new business for Supergirls, a Manhattan public relations and advertising agency. A few years later the five-woman firm began to falter and Steel was looking to the future.

One of her clients, then the editor of *Ladies' Home Journal*, suggested she try writing, so Steel isolated herself at her home in San Francisco and wrote her first book, *Going Home*. Published by Dell paperbacks in 1973, the novel had

moderate sales. Around the same time, Steel's marriage broke up, and she turned to writing in earnest. However, she composed five more novels that were rejected before *Passion's Promise* was published by Dell in 1977. During these years she also wrote advertising copy as well as poems about love and motherhood that appeared in women's magazines. Some of these poems were included in the abridged edition of her only volume of poetry, *Love Poems: Danielle Steel* (1981), which came out in 1984. After *Passion's Promise*, Dell published three more of Steel's romances: *The Promise* (1978), a novelization of a screenplay by Garry Michael White, *Now and Forever* (1978), which was adapted for a film released by Inter Planetary Pictures in 1983, and *Season of Passion* (1979). Sales of *The Promise*, Steel's first big success, reached two million copies in 1979, and in the same year she signed a six-figure contract with Dell.

Steel set a grueling pace for herself, composing two to three novels a year, and in the early 1980s several more best-selling paperbacks appeared. In addition, Dell's affiliate, Delacorte, began publishing Steel's books in hardcover. *Thurston House* (1983) was the last of her novels to originate as a paperback. Steel tailors her work habits to meet family considerations. In 1981 she married John Traina, a shipping executive who, like herself, had two children. The couple has since produced five children together. Steel works in concentrated marathon sessions, which affords her blocks of time she can devote to her large family. Unlike many of her heroines, Steel shies away from the limelight, refusing to do promotional tours, and lives a relatively quiet life that is frequently far from glamorous. When writing, she has been known to work eighteen-hour days, typing away on a 1948

metal-body Olympia in a flannel nightgown.

Though she is an extremely wealthy woman - she recently signed a sixty-million-dollar contract with Delacorte - Steel shows no signs of relaxing her frantic pace. In 1994 she published three more novels, *Accident*, *The Gift*, and *Wings*, and since 1989, she has produced two series of books for children, the "Max and Martha" series and the "Freddie" series. Steel's romances feature both contemporary and historical settings, and their exotic and exciting locales offer readers fast-paced escape from the routine of daily life. They typically focus on a glamorous, well-to-do heroine who proves that women can "have it all": love, family, and career. However, Steel's characters are beset by obstacles on their road to fulfillment; often they are confronted with the task of rebuilding their life after an emotionally crippling tragedy. Sometimes Steel's heroines have one or more unlucky romances before they find lasting love, but all their relationships with men lead them to increased self-awareness, which, in many cases, helps them to establish successful careers.

In *Kaleidoscope* (1987) and *No Greater Love* (1991) Steel turns her attention to the love shared by siblings. In a few of her novels, Steel shifts her focus to male characters. *Fine Things* (1987), for example, is about a department store executive, Bernard Fine, whose beloved wife dies from cancer a few years after their marriage, and *Daddy* (1989) describes the emotional recovery of Oliver Watson after his wife of eighteen years abandons him and their three children. *Secrets* (1985), another uncharacteristic novel, has six major characters, all of whom work on the set of a television soap opera.

Steel's fans have also been able to enjoy her stories in the form of television movies. In 1986 *Crossings* was presented as an ABC miniseries starring Cheryl Ladd, Jane Seymour, and Christopher Plummer; NBC made television movies from *Kaleidoscope* and *Fine Things* in 1990, and aired *Palomino* (1981), *Changes* (1983), and *Daddy* in 1991; a miniseries called *Danielle Steel's "Zoya,"* with Melissa Gilbert and Bruce Boxleitner. Several of Steel's other novels, including *Thurston House* and *Wanderlust* (1986), have also been optioned for television films and miniseries.