"IT'S addictive," Meredith Balossini said. "There's compassion. There's want. There's misery."

Ms. Balossini, 28, an executive secretary from Prospect Park, N.J., wasn't describing a hot summer beach read but a blog about the trysts, triumphs and heartaches of a young New York City woman named Stephanie Klein.

Since Jan. 20, 2004, Ms. Klein, a 29-year-old art director with freckles and long red curls like Botticelli's Venus, has been blogging about the intimate details of her life, from her affinity for rainy days and grilled cheese sandwiches to her sexual escapades, including one that involved a stranger and a can of Pam cooking spray.

Today the blog has an international readership with fans who recognize Ms. Klein when they see her gallivanting around Manhattan and the Hamptons, and who find parallels to their own lives in her candid, freewheeling stories.

According to Technorati, which ranks blogs based on "net attention," or the number of people who are linking to them, Ms. Klein's blog has a rank of 2,132, meaning that of the world's more than 13 million blogs, there are only 2,000 or so with more inbound links than hers.

"That would put her in the top 1 percent of all bloggers," said David L. Sifry, the founder and chief executive officer of Technorati. (The top 100-ranked blogs tend to offer news and political commentary; single-subject or niche blogs like Ms. Klein's, even the most popular, are generally further down the list.)

Ms. Klein's blog is a voyeur's playground, with many photos of Ms. Klein, her friends and the
swanky places they go. But the allure is muted by accounts of Ms. Klein's childhood summers at fat camp, the husband she says cheated on her when she was pregnant, her subsequent abortion and her ongoing quest for love. Nothing, it seems, is too private not to share with readers.

And that is exactly how they like it. While most of the millions of daily-life blogs have only a handful of regular readers, generally the author's friends, Ms. Klein's legions of followers seem as absorbed in her escapades as if she were a television character, the Carrie Bradshaw of New York bloggers.

"I have to read it every day," Ms. Balossini said. "I have to know she's O.K. and that good things are happening for her. I want good things for her."

Ms. Klein's celebrity has lately outgrown the Web, leading to a book and television deal. Her memoir, "Straight Up and Dirty," is to be published by ReganBooks, Judith Regan's HarperCollins imprint, in April 2006, and NBC is developing the book into a half-hour comedy series produced by Ms. Regan. Ms. Klein is also working on a second book about her fat-camp experiences. (Her trademark candor did not extend to the exact advance for her books, but she allowed that Publishers Marketplace, an industry publication, had described it as a "major deal," meaning $501,000 or more.)

Her blog, called Greek Tragedy (www.stephanieklein.blogs.com), takes its name in part from Ms. Klein's heritage (she is a quarter Greek) and from a humiliating experience at Barnard College in which, she said, she was the only woman in her class not invited to join a sorority.

The title is tongue in cheek because while many of the entries are about rejection, an undercurrent of hope runs through them -- something fans cling to when licking their own wounds. "I want to be able to not just cry over cliches but rise above it with triumph just as you've done," one reader wrote in a post on the blog.

"I don't miss anything she writes," said Todd Moser, 43, of Plantation, Fla. "I've been hooked for nine months."

"Here's a girl that's got everything, I mean everything," he added. "And yet she struggles to find the guy. Us single people, we all struggle with that. We can all relate to that."

Even though Ms. Klein's love life is chronicled only online, she is regularly recognized by strangers in New York, she says. "I get so many e-mails from people saying, 'Saw you on a date last night; that guy looked like a goof,'" Ms. Klein said on a recent sweltering afternoon, swigging from a bottle of Poland Spring in a corporate cafeteria in Midtown. Contrary to the brash tone of many of her blog entries, in person she has a gentle manner and a sugary girlish voice.

Sometimes, she added, fans make comments to her during a date.

"It is a strange feeling when you're on a date and your waitress is like, 'I love you,'" Ms. Klein said. Once, she continued, a waitress recognized her from her blog and then proceeded to speak to her escort. 'I wouldn't let her go,' the waitress advised.
In addition to the solidarity readers feel with Ms. Klein's emotional ups and downs, many say Greek Tragedy offers a glimpse of a glamorous-seeming urban life. Just as "Sex and the City" attracted viewers outside New York who felt hip by proxy while watching, Ms. Klein's blog offers its own vicarious pleasures.

"It's like following your favorite character in a book," said Emily Marsh, 25, of Corinth, Miss. "She does things that some people don't have the opportunity to do. She can go to the Hamptons, and she can go shopping. I mean, I walk down the street, and I see my neighbor and that's about it."

Anna Myers, 28, a teacher from Richmond, Va., reads Greek Tragedy daily. "I think it's because I'm a little bit fascinated with New York, and she's single," Ms. Myers said. "She very much creates a real world scenario. I feel like blogs are the reality television of the Internet."

On the blog, which Ms. Klein updates nearly every day, in between writing books and holding down a full-time job, she describes her Hamptons share house, her $55 tank tops and her photography, some of which hangs in the Hotel Gansevoort in the meatpacking district. Her racy anecdotes (including a recent one about a woman who forcibly kissed her outside a Carvel store) are a draw for many readers, perhaps because her candor extends to all topics.

"When you're honest," Ms. Klein said, "you can't be boring."

About her husband, whom she is divorcing and whose real name she does not use, identifying him as "Gabe," Ms. Klein wrote:

Growing up, I was the fat girl. When the bottle landed on me during spin the bottle, the boys chanted, "Do over." I didn't get to choose boys. Gabe was the scholar and athlete of the year growing up, and he chose me. His wanting me made me feel special. His cheating on me was worse than being told God dislikes you.

Calls to Ms. Klein's husband for his perspective on their breakup were not returned.

On a warm summer night, Ms. Klein and four or five friends met for drinks at Angelo and Maxie's steakhouse on Park Avenue South, where at one point Ms. Klein broke away from the group to chat up a stranger in a crisp white button-down. The women soon headed north to Sushi Samba. When some of Ms. Klein's friends visited the ladies room, they returned five minutes later to find their seats at the table taken by three men.

They spent several hours flirting and sipping cocktails with strawberries and kiwis in them. Then Ms. Klein went home to blog about it.

"I want to eat," she wrote, "but I've just come from a trendy sushi dinner that cost too much for me to still be hungry."

Ms. Klein's hunger was exacerbated by the television food program "Nigella Bites," which she wrote "might as well be porn" with its finger sucking and close-ups of honey.

"Mostly I'm into the hamburger," she wrote. "The man part, it's on its way. Sometimes, patience pays off. I'm all about the souffle."

URL: http://www.nytimes.com

CORRECTION-DATE: July 31, 2005

CORRECTION:

An article last Sunday about Stephanie Klein, who writes a blog about her dating life, referred imprecisely to sororities that did not invite her to join when she was at Barnard College. The sororities are recognized by its affiliated university, Columbia; Barnard does not have sororities.

GRAPHIC: Photos: IN HER ELEMENT -- Stephanie Klein, author of a much-read, diarylike blog that has spun off a book and publishing deal, gathering material at the bar at Angelo and Maxie's in New York. (Photo by Christopher Smith for The New York Times)(pg. 1) SNAPSHOTS -- Stephanie Klein's Web site is illustrated with photos of her, her friends, her dog and newspaper mentions of her publication deal. (pg. 2)

LOAD-DATE: July 24, 2005