



Vanity Fair's How a Book is Born: The Making of The Art of Fielding

Graydon Carter, Keith Gessen

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The highly anticipated novel *The Art of Fielding*, by Chad Harbach, has just been published. But what is the riveting story behind the story—and what does it take to make a bestseller these days? As author and n+1 co-founder Keith Gessen reveals in this 17,000-word e-book (expanded from the article appearing in the October issue of *Vanity Fair*), the passage from MFA classroom to national book tour is its own treacherous, absorbing—and wildly unpredictable—adventure. Harbach, Gessen’s friend and colleague, was a struggling writer who toiled relentlessly for ten years on *The Art of Fielding*, before it eventually hauled in a \$650,000 advance. At each step of the way several vivid characters fought tooth and nail to ensure the book’s survival, including Chris Parris-Lamb, Harbach’s passionate young agent; Michael Pietsch, a renowned editor at the publishing house Little, Brown; and Keith Hayes, the book’s tireless designer. In this e-book of sweeping scope and fascinating, behind-the-scenes detail, Gessen pulls back the curtain on the insular, fiercely political, and cutthroat literary world of Manhattan—a place where the “Big Six” publishing houses, owned by multinational conglomerates, reign supreme, while smaller houses are left to fend for themselves. Gessen exposes the modern-day book business for what it is: a largely uncertain enterprise—but rife with courageous, enthusiastic individuals—struggling to redefine itself in the face of its own digital revolution.

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Lamont Williams:

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