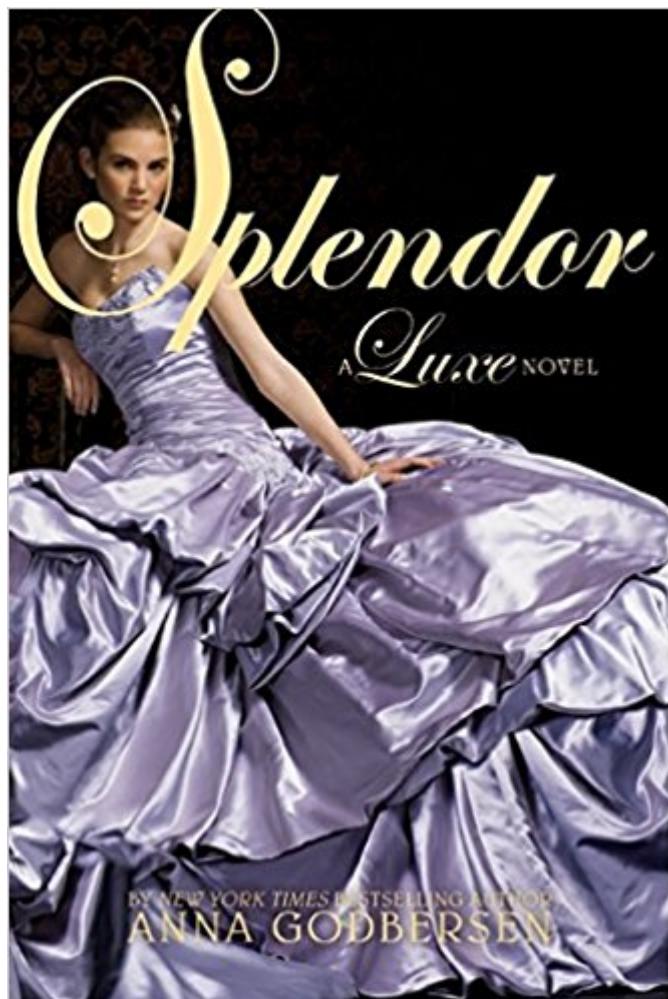


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Splendor (Luxe)



Synopsis

Gossip Girl meets the Gilded Age in this delicious and compelling novel, the fourth and final book in the New York Times bestselling series from author Anna Godbersen. In the dramatic conclusion to the New York Times bestselling Luxe series, Manhattan's most dazzling socialites chase dreams, cling to promises, and tempt fate. Only one question remains: Will they fade away or will they shine ever brighter? New beginnings. Shocking revelations. Unexpected endings. This is Manhattan, 1899. As spring turns into summer, Elizabeth relishes her new role as a young wife, while her sister, Diana, searches for adventure abroad. But when a surprising clue about their father's death comes to light, the Holland girls wonder at what cost a life of splendor comes. Carolina Broad, society's newest darling fans a flame from her past, oblivious to how it might burn her future. Penelope Schoonmaker is finally Manhattan royalty—but when a real prince visits the city, she covets a title that comes with a crown. Her husband, Henry, bravely went to war, only to discover that his father's rule extends well beyond New York's shores and that fighting for love may prove a losing battle. "Mystery, romance, jealousy, betrayal, humor, and gorgeous, historically accurate details. I couldn't put The Luxe down!" • Cecily von Ziegesar, author of the #1 New York Times bestselling Gossip Girl series

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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relishes her new role as a young wife, while her sister, Diana, searches for adventure abroad. But when a surprising clue about their father's death comes to light, the Holland girls wonder at what cost a life of splendor comes. In the dramatic conclusion to the New York Times bestselling Luxe series, Manhattan's most dazzling socialites chase dreams, cling to promises, and tempt fate. Only one question remains: Will they fade away or will they shine ever brighter?

Anna Godbersen was born in Berkeley, California, and educated at Barnard College. She currently lives in Brooklyn, New York, where she is at work on the sequel to *The Lucky Ones*.

Splendor brings Anna Godbersen's Luxe series to a close, and what a tremendous ending it is! All the loose threads are tied up, but not always so neatly; the four main young women find that life doesn't always give you what you thought you wanted, but you've got to make peace with yourself no matter what. *Splendor* is told in alternating chapters that focus on each of the young women and takes them through the trials that will ultimately lead them to that peace, whatever it is. The book opens with Diana Holland having traveled (alone in 1900!) to Havana in search of love Henry Schoonmaker, who has joined the army in order to escape his shrew of a wife, Penelope. While the young lovers are reunited, Penelope herself starts to realize that maybe she was too hasty in marrying Henry, and sets her eye on a Bavarian prince who is looking lustfully back at her. Meanwhile, both Elizabeth Holland and Carolina Broad have achieved contentment: Elizabeth has married her father's business partner in order to give her unborn child a name, and Carolina's past as a maid is firmly behind her as she falls in love with the handsome Leland. Of course none of this flows smoothly, and all of the young women are subjected to tragedies of varying degrees. In this final installment, Ms. Godbersen does the remarkable: she allows her characters to achieve a sense of maturity without being preachy or giving them fairy tale endings. The deceit that all of them have practiced is dealt with, but there is no moral high ground. Instead, I felt they were all so identifiable, because let's face it: pretty young women do have faults and some conquer those faults while others do not. It's all about what you are willing to live with. Ms. Godbersen filled *Splendor* with fashion and romance, betrayal and reconciliation, and it could not have been a more fitting ending to this series. My one problem with the storyline applies to Diana, and it is only because of her previous infatuation that I have a hard time believing she wasn't up to the task. However, I could still see her achieving something far more exciting with her life, so even though I found her decision out of character, I can let it go, and even give kudos to Ms. Godbersen for not being pat in wrapping up my favorite storyline of the four. I would actually rate *Splendor* 4.5 stars, but my enjoyment of the

series as a whole prompts me to round up to the full five. Truly an enjoyable ride.

It's been a tumultuous year for some of New York's most fashionable young ladies. To hide her delicate condition, Elizabeth Holland has married her father's business partner for security and protection from scandal. Her sister Diana has cut her hair and quit New York to go after her love, Henry, who was forced into an unhappy marriage with the duplicitous Penelope Hayes. Meanwhile, Carolina Broad is steadily moving towards her happily ever after...if the truth about her humble origins can stay hidden. But if there's anything that these ladies have learned, it's that life doesn't go the way you plan, and getting everything you wanted isn't the same thing as happily ever after. Like Godbersen's previous books, *Splendor* has glamour, drama, and intrigue, but really feels more like an extended conclusion than an actual story. Elizabeth seems to take a more passive role in the book, and compared to her previous escapades, her journey from learning the truth about her husband's death and her current marriage to when she actually takes control of her own life is a little anti-climatic. Readers who love to hate Penelope will be indignant at her behavior but will be happy to see her finally get what's coming to her, even if her fate isn't at all what they expected. Lina struggles with the truth, but readers will be pleased when she finally succumbs to it and reconciles with her sister. Her happy ending is also unexpected, but a good one. Diana continues to stand out in this book as an adventurous, smart, and fiercely independent young lady. She's truly a woman of a new era, unyielding when it comes to her ideals and strong when it comes to life's challenges. *Splendor* is a novel about growing up, suffering the consequences of your actions, figuring out the truth, and taking control of your life. It's unexpected but very appropriate ending will please fans of the series. **Cover Comments:** As always these covers are just magnificent! I love the dresses, the colors, everything!

I fell in love with this series from the very beginning. Each book cover represents one of the four young ladies whose lives are intertwined among the most of elite of New York high society in the late 1800's. With chapters in each book alternating between each of their perspectives, readers soon find out the secret desires of each of heroines and what lengths they will go to attain what they want. In order to really enjoy *Splendor* you will have to have read the three other books which is an excellent idea anyway because they are great books. *Splendor* is a wrap up of the entire series with an epilogue at the very end that gives even a little bit more info on the future of Diana, Penelope, Elizabeth and Carolina. Okay, yes as with three other books in the series I really like this book and basically finished it in one day...but this book is an excellent example of how readers may differ from

the author in what they would like to see happen to their favorite characters. I don't want to say too much because I don't like to post spoilers but I'll just say that the ending wasn't what I was really expecting or wanted. But, that being said I can see that the author did stay true to each character and the conclusion to the series is probably a more realistic ending. Are you intrigued? Good! With the setting being in New York during the late 1800's and dealing with city's high society and all the rules and restrictions that go along with it, this book does have a slight and much lighter resemblance to the classic *The Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton.

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