



## Sin in the Second City: Madams, Ministers, Playboys, and the Battle for America's Soul

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Not everyone appreciated the sisters’ attempts to elevate the industry. Rival Levee madams hatched numerous schemes to ruin the Everleighs, including an attempt to frame them for the death of department store heir Marshall Field, Jr. But the sisters’ most daunting foes were the Progressive Era reformers, who sent the entire country into a frenzy with lurid tales of “white slavery”—the allegedly rampant practice of kidnapping young girls and forcing them into brothels. This furor shaped America’s sexual culture and had repercussions all the way to the White House, including the formation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

With a cast of characters that includes Jack Johnson, John Barrymore, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., William Howard Taft, “Hinky Dink” Kenna, and Al Capone, *Sin in the Second City* is Karen Abbott’s colorful, nuanced portrait of the iconic Everleigh sisters, their world-famous Club, and the perennial clash between our nation’s hedonistic impulses and Puritanical roots. Culminating in a dramatic last stand between brothel keepers and crusading reformers, *Sin in the Second City* offers a vivid snapshot of America’s journey from Victorian-era propriety to twentieth-century modernity.

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— **Sara Gruen, author of *Water for Elephants***

“A detailed and intimate portrait of the Ritz of brothels, the famed Everleigh Club of turn-of-the-century Chicago. Sisters Minna and Ada attracted the elites of the world to such glamorous chambers as the Room of 1,000 Mirrors, complete with a reflective floor. And isn’t Minna’s advice to her resident prostitutes worthy advice for us all: “Give, but give interestingly and with mystery.””

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“*Sin in the Second City* is a masterful history lesson, a harrowing biography, and - best of all - a superfun read. The Everleigh story closely follows the turns of American history like a little sister. I can’t recommend this book loudly enough.”

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“This is a story of debauchery and corruption, but it is also a story of sisterhood, and unerring devotion. Meticulously researched, and beautifully crafted, *Sin in the Second City* is an utterly captivating piece of history.”

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

At the dawn of the 20th century, there was no more famous-or notorious-brothel in America than the Everleigh Club in Chicago. Run by two sisters with an all-American talent for self-invention, the club set new standards for opulence as well as harlots' rights. Abbott's scintillating tale of prostitution and scandal, however, is not well-served by this plodding audio rendition. Bean emerges as a narrator with a curious double standard: for the madams, aldermen and other colorful characters who populated the Levee red light district a century ago, she creates unique voices full of dialect, humor and pathos. For the reformers who sought to shut down the whorehouses, though, her vocal creativity falls flat; the same schoolmarmish voice is used for every religious or legal reformer in Chicago. It's a shame that the audio book couldn't utilize the more than three dozen sumptuous photographs and illustrations that grace the print edition, showing the club in all its gaudy Victorian splendor and providing mugs of the Levee's many legendary figures. Simultaneous release with the Random House hardcover (Reviews, Apr. 16).

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From [Booklist](#)

Chicago, the saying goes, ain't ready for reform. It certainly wasn't in 1899, when sisters Ada and Minna "Everleigh" (real name: Simms) opened their brothel. As Abbott's jaunty history relates, their whorehouse was not a tawdry bang barn for johns with a nickel but a glitzy palace of paid pleasure for plutocrats. Ada and Minna's Everleigh Club prospered, protected by payoffs to Chicago's legendary political crooks "Bathhouse" Coughlin and "Hinky Dink" Kenna, but the bordello's brazenness mobilized moralists alarmed by vice, so-called white slavery in particular. An entertaining read, by turns bawdy and sad, as when a courtesan ends up dead, Abbott's account extends beyond local history because the campaign against Ada and Minna had lasting national effects: the closure of urban red-light districts and the passage of the federal Mann Act concerning prostitution. Abbott adroitly evokes the cathouse atmosphere, but it is the rapier-sharp character sketches of the cast that best show off her authorial skills and will keep readers continually bemused as they learn about the lives and times of two madams. Taylor, Gilbert

Review

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**Arthur Haynes:**

The experience that you get from Sin in the Second City: Madams, Ministers, Playboys, and the Battle for America's Soul is a more deep you looking the information that hide in the words the more you get serious about reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to comprehend but Sin in the Second City: Madams, Ministers, Playboys, and the Battle for America's Soul giving you joy feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in particular way that can be understood by simply anyone who read the idea because the author of this guide is well-known enough. This particular book also makes your own personal vocabulary increase well. It is therefore easy to understand then can go with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We recommend you for having that Sin in the Second City: Madams, Ministers, Playboys, and the Battle for America's Soul instantly.

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