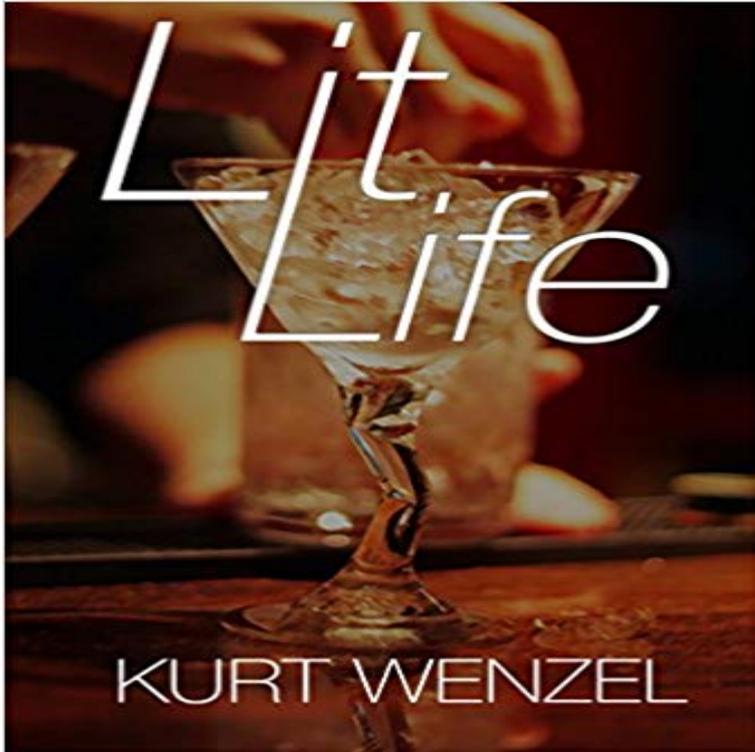


Lit Life: A Novel



Which is worth more celebrity or credibility? Set in Manhattan and the Hamptons, *Lit Life* identifies and deconstructs this dilemma as it takes the reader on a hilarious tour through the world of two eccentric writers. Kyle Clayton, a once hot, now not young author and provocateur with a serious case of writers block, navigates New York nightlife in an inebriated haze until he meets his literary hero, the dyspeptic and obscure novelist Richard Whitehurst, who is smitten with the notion of Kyle's former fame. Richard is suffering his own form of breakdown because of the looming collapse of his marriage, not to mention years of public ambivalence toward his work. As the two writers' lives collide, they find in each other the crutch they've each been seeking and, perhaps, the salvation that has eluded them both. Kurt Wenzel's taut, coruscating prose and intimate, precisely rendered take on the literary scene make this the most brilliantly realized novel about the publishing world since Martin Amis's *The Information*.

From *Publishers Weekly*: In his debut novel, a sardonic take on the New York publishing world, Wenzel wryly dissects the troubled writing lives of two authors, one a talented newcomer sidetracked by fame and the other a disillusioned veteran. Kyle Clayton, a young writer whose first novel brought him literary stardom, is now a drunken failure, creatively spent. Lionized by the Gen-X set, Clayton faces increasing pressure from his publisher to either produce or pay back the huge advance for his contracted second novel, due four years earlier. Meanwhile, Richard Whitehurst, termed the most underrated writer in America, fights to keep his career and life together after his new novel, a magnum opus 10 years in the making, falls short of expectations, gleaning positive reviews but selling only a few copies. While Richard struggles with depression and a sexless marriage, Kyle plots an

escape from his emotionally draining relationship with an aging patron, who refuses to give him the loan that will free him from her control. Following a highly anticipated meeting at a literary party, Kyle agrees to a summer stay at Richards Hamptons house, where the spectacle of the Whitehurst familys deterioration forces him to mature and take stock of his own life as a man and writer. Against a solid backdrop of the glittering New York literary world, Wenzels stinging barbs frequently hit their targets, making astute statements about the hazards of the writing life without sacrificing anything in plot or characterization. Wenzel also gives the reader a final treat in a wild, harrowing wrap-up, ensuring that this novel will stand out from the summer pack. This book should interest anyone who loves books or the behind-the scenes intrigue of the publishing business.

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