

MATT SEGUR

Genre: Page-turners
Locale: Chicago
Education: Northwestern
Mathematics '99
Day Job: Freelance

Ghostweed Press asked Matt Segur to prepare this brief explanatory note:

Nobody reads novels anymore. My peers read newspapers, magazines, comic books, and books of nonfiction. They read the fiction of Bulgakov, Camus, Faulkner, Hemingway, Kundera, Pynchon, Nabokov, and the so many other great voices of the past century and before. But they show almost no interest in the fiction of their contemporaries.

My peers are not apathetic or ignorant. They're ferocious critics of film, music, journalism, visual arts and cuisine. They're culture hawks, but they breeze past the bookstore's new release racks.

Too many novels seem to take their cue from TV drama, restricting themselves to the lives of *important people*: people who save lives, people who have suffered gravely, alcoholics child molesters and lawyers. As independent film and music sustain themselves with vibrant, relentlessly entertaining, and ever-more personal stories of everyday reality and everyday fantasy, the fiction section at my bookstore seems ever-more bent on differentiating the elect whose stories are worth telling from the masses who can only read those stories and dream. The singular exception is the resurgence of the memoir, and not coincidentally the memoir is the only mode of written storytelling showing signs of youth or vitality. But that change in the waters has not yet reached contemporary fiction.



I'd like to see more writers telling stories with the relevance, immediacy, personal conviction, and catchiness of independent rock and film and comics. That's what I want to read; I think that's what my peers want to read.

With that in mind, I set out as Faulkner did with *Sanctuary* to write "the most horrific tale I could imagine" that people would eat right up.

Soft Power is a mystery romance, a literary novel, and an allegory of alienation in contemporary Amer-

ica. It features courtship, murder, intuitive biology, amateur photography, arts and crafts, and the life and work of the mathematician Alan Turing. Like Dickens, it's a serial. Like *Harry Potter*, it may not be great, but it might at least get kids today reading.

"I hope you will buy it and tell your friends, and I hope they will buy it too."

Matt Segur, September 2002

"The best novelist you never heard of.

Soft Power begins as a well-turned murder mystery, but grows into a gentle, logical horror show that's as intellectually fertile as it is nightmarish."

—Ann Sterzinger,
The Chicago Reader

"Segur hits every note with a brilliant first novel about the spirits among us.

The beauty of the writing sneaks up on you."

—Evan M. Pulgino
The Collegian



SOFT POWER

November 2002
Paperback, 238 pages
ISBN 0-97182520-3
SRP \$14.00

Stanley Rollick is shy.
Audrey Livingston is angry.
Oliver Timbergen is black.
Simone Singh is jealous.
Nikola Tesla is dead.
Ada Tucker is recovering.
Catch Livingston is reluctant.
Daniel Livingston is afraid.
Nobody is in control.

A post-literature existential sociopolitical mystery serial fairy tale for one and all.

