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What It Takes

by Daisy Maryles -- *Publishers Weekly*, 2/25/2002

Several times a month, we get a phone call or e-mail asking how many books you need to sell to get on the national bestseller list. There is no definitive answer—the number changes constantly, depending on the time of the year (you need higher volume in the competitive fall season than you do in the latter half of winter); who else is in the running (for the first month or so after a new John Grisham hardcover, #1 is unattainable); and what position you are aiming for on the charts. The latest Grisham, *The Summons*, enjoyed sales of about 110,000 in its first week at the three national chains (Barnes & Noble, Waldenbooks and Borders); it sold more than 90,000 copies at the same three retailers during its second week on top. Contrast that with the only new hardcover fiction to land among the top 15 this week—Barbara Taylor Bradford's *Three Weeks in Paris*, #14 on the *PW* list, with 126,000 copies in print. Its sales at the three national chains totaled about 3,200. Clearly, both books sold a lot of copies in all kinds of retail venues, and #14 is very good, given that many other new and recently published fiction titles were also vying for a spot. Bradford regularly lands on our charts—she has already written 17 bestselling novels, 10 of which have been made into TV movies or miniseries. Doubleday's promotion included a national TV satellite tour and author appearances in metro New York, her home region.

With reporting by Dick Donahue

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