



## **French Girl with Mother**

*Norman Ollestad*

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*French Girl with Mother* is a provocative, propulsive thriller that marries the spirit of James Salter with a hint of Patricia Highsmith and the velocity of *The Art Forger*.

Nathan is a young artist traveling across Europe in search of the emotional fire that has been missing from his work. He's been deemed by his mentors and critics to be technically skillful but uninspired criticisms he fears to be true. On a Paris street, he witnesses the volatile breakup of a young French woman and her beau. Nathan pursues a meeting with the woman, and it very quickly becomes evident that her provocative charisma and scathing beauty just may conjure the electricity he has been seeking for his work. So when the woman invites him to her parents crumbling, centuries-old chateau in the country to allow him to sketch her, he accepts, knowing that this proposition is both ill advised and thrilling.

Once enveloped by this isolated estate, a door opens to a world for which Nathan is not prepared a world heralded by the arrival of the young woman's family: her mother, a volatile, voracious former ballerina; her father, a mysterious businessman with secrets of his own; and her uncle, who might be trafficking in art forgeries.

*French Girl with Mother* is a sexy, page turning novel that also examines provocative questions about art and its inspirations. Who is the muse? Who is the artist? And, most important, whose power will win out?

## French Girl with Mother Details

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Author : Norman Ollestad

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# From Reader Review French Girl with Mother for online ebook

## Safae says

what on earth was this book?

Oh my god , this book has exhausted me so much that i fell asleep while reading it multiple times even at day , I have no idea what's the author's excuse for this , like really what does this book add to my knowledge or life? I like to be an optimist and think every book adds up something , but this ? nada

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## Maria Z says

No plot. Why did I pick it up?

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## Autumn Kovach says

I can't believe I got to the last five chapters and just stopped. I just wanted to be done. It was a quick read so obviously not a chore to get through but I became disappointed by the end. Will his muse actually end up with him? Probably not. Will he get in trouble for murdering her father? Probably. Will he actually achieve fame for his own work after assisting to copy original art to sell illegally. Doubt it. Do I even care to know the answers to all these things? No! It was a good book to get me through my reading slump but overall, I would not recommend.

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## Lauren says

This book was so good! So captivated through out the book, especially the ending. Beautiful language and I visualized the beautiful scenery described. Untraditional story line but nothing I can't handle.

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## Jerrie (redwritinghood) says

DNF. Run, don't just walk away from this juvenile, soft porn wanna-be, sloppy book. Example quote 1: "Ever so faintly, I discerned a sour taste in her mouth as she stared at me with an implied superiority." (What?) Example quote 2: "She wanted to be taken. No matter what, she seemed to implore. No matter my mood or mixed signals, you need to cut through all the noise and ground me." (Um, I think that's called rape.) No thanks and bye-bye.

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## Kathy says

Terrible, ridiculous, awful. That's my review in a nutshell. Nathan is a so-called artist, 30 years old, who acts

like he's 12. He meets a French teenager whom he proceeds to follow everywhere. He decides that she is his one and only inspiration for creating some new great paintings--that is, until he meets her weird mommy and decides the both of them are his key to fame and greatness. The author apparently has no idea how the actual art world works. Nor does he have any insight into actual real human beings. Don't waste your time with this piece of drivel.

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## **Marjorie says**

Nathan is a struggling artist who is able to paint a technically perfect reproduction of other artists' work but he's been unable to find the emotional element needed to create masterpieces of his own. Then he meets a young uninhibited French girl, Anais, who may be just the muse that he needs. He feels there's a dangerous element to a relationship with Anais but he can't resist the pull to sketch her so he accepts her invitation to stay at her parents' home. Upon meeting and getting to know her parents, he's drawn into a web of sexual competition and illegal acts.

I thought the first half of this book was so beautifully written. The author does an excellent job of letting the reader experience the acceleration of menace behind this dysfunctional family and concern for Nathan as he gets more and more deeply involved. While I can't say that I really liked any of the characters very much, even Nathan, I had to keep reading to see where it would all go. I feel that the book loses some of its raw beauty in the second half of the book, which degenerates a bit into an art forgery thriller, though there is still the desire to know whether Nathan will choose love of his art or his love of Anais.

This book was given to me by the publisher through Edelweiss in return for an honest review.

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## **Kasa Cotugno says**

Early in Norman Ollestad's eagerly awaited first novel *Nathan*, the narrator/protagonist, is told he's had "Too much college, not enough life." Meaning that even though he's a talented artist who exhibits vast reservoirs of technique in his work, that work lacks the spark that would make it great. Nathan then finds himself plunged into more "life" than he'd bargained for. At loose ends, lugging his skis around Paris without many Euros in his pocket or prospects on the horizon, he meets Anaïs, a provocative, exciting woman, the likes of whom he's never encountered, and the story really takes off, never slowing down. Even when Nathan finds himself growing contemplative on art, the importance of its role in his life.

At a recent author visit, Ollestad mentioned that part of the inspiration for this novel was the connection between Hemingway and Cézanne, but revealed that his artist of choice was Egon Schiele, which the reader will recognize as the plot unspools. There is a great deal of exploration of art and artists' influences, but there is also an exciting element that could only have been written by an author who has experienced first-hand some of the physical challenges Nathan finds himself up against. Ollestad first crossed my radar in 2009 with *Crazy for the Storm*, his breathtaking memoir, followed by his short work *Gravity*. Always a risk-taker, he has become more cautious given his life experience. Here's hoping this is the first novel of many to come.

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## ?Misericordia? ~ The Serendipity Aegis ~ ?????? ✿\*♥♥ says

The main protagonist came across as really immature. The problem is, this quality seems to have seeped into the book and permeated it altogether.

I get the young artist's struggle for fire to put into his works. Then again, the guy was 11 years the senior of a 19-year-old gal, which gives us 30. This guy meets a girl who takes him home. The plot, where is it?

Q:

Everyone who'd come to the Soho gallery—the collectors, the art enthusiasts, even my mother and father—noticed the New York Times art critic entering the gallery. He approached my six pieces, Venice Beach Homeless Portraits, and sighed with tedium, letting his head drop slightly to one side, before stepping away to view the other artists' work in the group show.

The entire room was embarrassed for me and no one would look at me. (c) **Gosh! Of course, people were gather to look at this guy's works, no less! Self-obsessed.**

Q:

The sun, aglow behind one dark cloud, cast warm hues beyond the isolated shower overhead. As with each failed exhibition in the past, hope began to chirp and pipe. What I really needed was something wild and rampant, I tried to assure myself, something that would jump off the paper and grab the buyers by the throat.(c) **Uh-huh, a throat-crushing painting. Real thriller!**

Q:

You're ridiculous, I admonished myself. There's no one to blame, no one to take it out on but yourself. You're peeing in alleyways and have only a few hundred euros to your name because of the choices you've made. Live with it. (c)

Q:

Time after time, I'd watched people stare into their phones instead of at the painting on a museum wall, instead of the tree-lined road, a cloudburst sky, that beggar singing opera on the banks of the Arno, or a tortured beauty alone in a café. (c)

Q:

The exquisite balance of circles and angles that made up her face, exaggerated enough to have crisp, delineated forms without going overboard, were punctuated by an unruly blaze behind her eyes, an ever-brewing storm. (c)

Q:

When I grabbed my skis and tilted them onto my shoulder, I gave them a kiss. (c) **Ouch!!**

Q:

"I was showing him a real part of me . . . in bed . . . but he rejected it. Didn't want to see it." (c)

Q:

"I remember fishing on a really choppy day, and I asked him why Grandma never came out. She hates boats and the smell of fish, he told me. He must've seen the startled look on my face, as he made his living fishing and always smelled of fish. But we enjoy each other's sense of humor and I love her music and I think she likes my wild stories about the sea," he explained. We give each other what the other is missing." (c)

Q:

I was alone with a beautiful young woman in the French countryside. ... Was she a gold mine? Or a maze that ends in a cul-de-sac or at a cliff? I didn't know, of course. The only way to find out was to stay on her carousel and see where it led.(c)**We got ourselves a hilarious dilemma: a gal, is she a mine, a cliff, a cul-de-sac? All of them on a carousel!**

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## **Kacey says**

I started this novel with the incorrect thought that the main character was a woman- a thought that echoed Long after it was clearly pushed aside by the repeated iteration of his name.

Dream like first half, jarring but semi-successful shift to thriller in the last third.

I did find myself thinking “figure drawing doesn’t work like that,” but just because I’ve never sexually objectified my subjects doesn’t mean an artist wouldn’t, especially in a more intimate environment.

Still I found myself making little adjustments to my mental image that did not fit what was on the page- Oh, this isn’t about a woman, darn, oh that’s an alarming age gap, but the narrator is fantastically immature so I’m pretending he’s younger and she’s a little older, good. Oh, this sex scene doesn’t really work for me, hmmm (skips ahead).

When I felt the shift to breakneck thriller happening I wanted to pause, go to sleep, and perhaps dream about the river and setting of the first third, but this novel is such a quick compelling read I went ahead and plowed through.

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## **Nicole Beaudry says**

Juvenile main character, absurd supporting cast, cliches littering the book, and a tenuous (at best) plot seemingly used to paste faux-erotic wish-fulfillment sex scenes together.

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## **Peter Learn says**

It kept my attention despite its shortcomings. The plot was interesting as we're the characters. Some parts made no sense. Why didn't Nathan check his painting in the stall? Anaise was a little one dimensional. The ending was dragged out when you knew what was going to happen. The reader of this audio book was poorly chosen.

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## **Pamela Stewart-sargent says**

Norman's book French Girl With Mother is an awesome read! I read it three times and bought many copies for gifts. Also, enjoy, Crazy For the Storm, Norman Ollestad writes like no other!

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## **Montessahall Montessahall says**

Hedonistic, weird story. The writing is overwrought with details that don't add to the story. It was a real chore just to finish the book.

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## Debbie Boucher says

Before writing this review, I went to Amazon to see what others had said, and because *French Girl with Mother* is so hot off the press, there were very few, most of which gave the novel five stars. So I read the one by the reader that gave it four stars, who was sent the book for free in exchange for an honest review, and that helped me feel comfortable with what I believe is an honest rating. The prose is beautiful and spare, something I admire. The plot is tight and no detail is left unaccounted for, another hallmark of good writing. I loved *Crazy for the Storm*, Ollestad's memoir from 2009, and was eager to read this novel, so I couldn't help wondering if the protagonist, a struggling visual artist, was a metaphor for what Ollestad has gone through these past seven years. It's not easy being an artist, and Ollestad portrays that so well. My hesitation in recommending this book is that it will not appeal to everyone. The explicit sexual nature and themes explored will put some off. However, if you liked *Gone Girl* or *Girl on the Train*, you will enjoy this story. As long as you don't need to love the characters, you will find them interesting and will always wonder, What will they do next?

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