

IMAGINING BEYOND THE FRAME

Fiction Stories About ARTISTS & THEIR MASTERPIECES

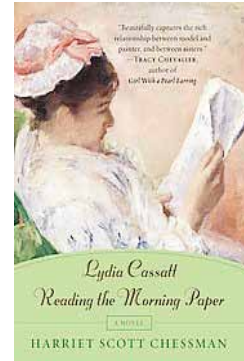
•The Nineteenth Century Edition•



compiled by Monica Williams

Bundrick, Sherman. *Sunflowers.*

Sunflowers is based on a true story. Rachel Courteau is a prostitute, forced into service by the death of her parents. Van Gogh sketches her in a garden and then comes to her place of work as her customer. They are both outsiders in this conservative small town community—Rachel for her profession, and Van Gogh because he is a Dutch artist. Their relationship becomes more involved, but Van Gogh is haunted by his own problems. Van Gogh becomes increasingly erratic and unable to deal with the pressures of his existence. Rachel can do little but stand by and watch.



Chessman, Harriet.
*Lydia Cassatt Reading
the Morning Paper.*

The title is taken from one of Mary Cassatt's paintings of her terminally ill sister Lydia. Lydia suffered from Bright's Disease, a chronic kidney condition, that took her life. Each chapter focuses on a particular painting of Lydia and her thoughts and conversation while posing. Mary Cassatt plays a prominent role, and Degas makes a cameo appearance as well. This novella may be

short in length, but covers a tremendous range of emotions.

Cowell, Stephanie.

Claude & Camille: A Novel of Monet.

As a young man, Claude Monet sees Camille Doncieux in passing. He never forgets her face, and when he finds her again in Paris in her uncle's bookshop he is entranced. She poses for a portrait, and they become lovers. Camille lives with Monet in his studio. Camille's wealthy family is appalled and tries to salvage her engagement to an older man who is willing to overlook her relationship with Monet, but Camille will not leave Monet. Their story is a fascinating one set against the changes of the nineteenth century art world made by Monet and his fellow Impressionists.

Diliberti, Gioia. *I am Madame X.*

John Singer Sargent's portrait *Madame X* created a scandal when it was first displayed. The woman who was *Madame X*, Virginie Gautreau, is the subject of this fictionalized biography. Born in New Orleans and raised on her grandmother's plantation, Virginie and her family flee to France. They become part of a fashionable social circle, and Virginie uses her striking looks to gain a husband. Set against the backdrop of Belle Epoque France, it is not only the story of a portrait, but one of its subject.

Figes, Eva.

Light.

Throughout his artistic career Monet was focused on painting light and its many effects. In this novella, Monet is an older man living at Giverny surrounded by his family and his beautiful gardens. He continues to follow the light, rising before dawn to capture its effects on the ponds of Giverny.

Finerman, Deborah. *Mademoiselle Victorine.*

Victorine Laurent runs away from her cruel aunts at age thirteen. She goes to Paris, and at age 17, meets the artist Eduard Manet. She becomes Manet's muse and poses for his most scandalous work, Luncheon in the Grass, where a nude Victorine sits surrounded by clothed men in a bucolic setting. Her notoriety brings her to the attention of the Duke de Leon, a powerful and wealthy politician with close ties to the Emperor Napoleon III. De Leon forbids her from posing for Manet and forces her to spy on Count von Bismark. Her scandalous behavior results in arrest on charges of treason. Manet provides the key to her rescue.

Richman, Alyson. *The Last Van Gogh.*

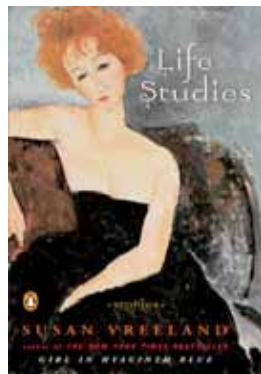
Vincent Van Gogh ended his short and tragic life while under the care of Doctor Gauchet in Auvers-sur-Oise. Doctor Gauchet has an unusual household where his mistress and her daughter reside along with his daughter Marguerite. Marguerite is forbidden to associate with the locals and lives a lonely life until Van Gogh arrives. Van Gogh asks to paint her portrait, and he and Marguerite explore their deepening attraction. The two become lovers, but Van Gogh struggles with his illnesses and financial setbacks. When Marguerite's affair with Van Gogh is discovered by her father it sets in motion tragic consequences.

Robards, Elizabeth. *With Violets.*

Berthe Morisot defied society's expected role of women and became a well known Impressionist. Her fame was not without struggle as the achievements of her male counterparts dwarfed her own successes. While copying masterworks in the Louvre, Berthe meets Edouard Manet and is instantly attracted to his handsome looks and great talent. Despite Manet's marriage the two embark on an affair, but it remains fraught with difficulty.

Vreeland, Susan. *Life Studies.*

A fascinating short story collection whose first section looks at the Impressionists from the perspective of those on the periphery of their lives including their families and servants. The second section focuses on how art greatly affects those who are not artists or those who are unfamiliar with its contents. Art is shown to be both a coping mechanism and a provider of hope in unexpected ways.

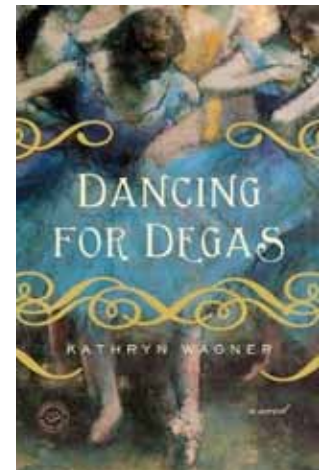


Vreeland, Susan. *Luncheon of the Boating Party.*

The Luncheon of the Boating Party is one of Renoir's most iconic paintings. It is populated with his friends and colleagues, fellow celebrants of "la vie moderne". While the book is a fictional exploration of the creation of this painting, the individuals who were the models were real people. Each of their stories intertwines with the creation of the work. Renoir is striving to create a painting that refutes art criticism made by Emile Zola drives the work's creation. Renoir's search for models, money, and supplies drives the first portion of the novel and then the work begins. A fascinating exploration of art, life, and those who not only make it, but are a part of it.

Wagner, Kathryn. *Dancing for Degas.*

Alexandrie hates her life in southern France. She wants to do more with her life. It is noticed that she is a gifted dancer, and she begins to train at a local ballet school. She auditions for the Paris Opera and becomes one of its "petit rats," or a beginning ballerina. She learns that the ballet world is not all beautiful dresses and graceful poses. It is more akin to a brothel, where the dancers serve as the playthings to the wealthy patrons. She draws the attention of the painter Degas, who often sits in on practices to sketch the girls. Alexandrie's and Degas' relationship becomes more complex than simply artist and subject. Alexandrie, however, is pursued by one of the patrons who wishes to make her his mistress. The ballet, for all its beauty, is a cruel world, where every move is part of a calculated decision, and love is not part of the equation.



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