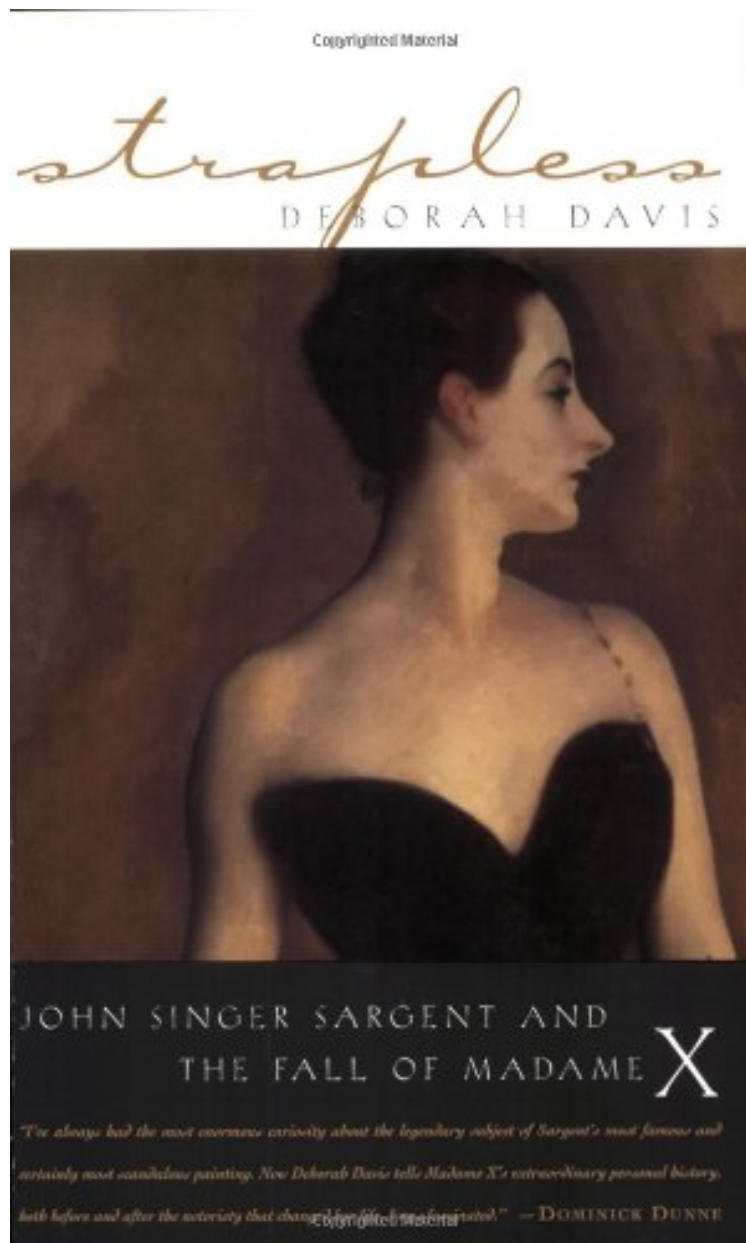


(Mobile book) Strapless: John Singer Sargent and the Fall of Madame X

## Strapless: John Singer Sargent and the Fall of Madame X

Deborah Davis

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**Deborah Davis : Strapless: John Singer Sargent and the Fall of Madame X** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Strapless: John Singer Sargent and the Fall of Madame X:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I really enjoyed this easy to read bookBy readerbalooI really enjoyed

this easy to read book. The author's style is informative but not too academic and she keeps the actions going by just describing the many interesting characters that inhabited the Parisian art scene at this time. Although she never uses the word, the book is an interesting commentary on the sexism that women have suffered through the centuries. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone interested in this painting, John Singer Sargent or women, men and scandals of a not too distant era. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Professional Beauty and the Wonderful Painter By Milinda S. Paquette Always a devoted fan of John Singer Sargent and enthralled by Madame X from the moment I first saw the painting, I devoured Strapless. I believe Deborah Davis did her research and I wish there was more to know about Amelie Avegno as both Sargent and the painting Madame X certainly have eclipsed the original woman. Sargent captured her in what I consider to be his best work, which is saying something considering he was prolific and left a mesmerizing look into the Gilded Age and those privileged few who inhabited that world. Amelie's life began in Louisiana, the daughter of the Proud South and a product of the plantation system, guided by her very strong grandmother and mother. The haunting photograph of Amelie and her sister, Valentine, during the Civil War shows the long arms and tiny waist as well as the Avegno nose which would be her trademarks later. Her life as an expatriate in Paris during a truly fascinating time period is intriguing while her ambitious mother set about marketing her daughter for a good marriage. Amelie embodied the modern woman of Paris but sadly, being a Professional Beauty has a short shelf life which doomed her to a miserably empty existence. I think the chapter, Dancing on a Volcano, dealing with the peculiarities of the citizens of Paris who found viewing corpses in the morgue as entertainment yet were shocked by Sargent's painting is very well done. Ms. Davis explains how confounding the duplicity of this was. There were plenty of "traditional" nudes of women on display but people chose to be shocked and horrified by Sargent's depiction of Amelie as she really was, with that shoulder strap casually slipped down and her proud arrogance. One is left wondering how differently things might have turned out if he had sent the copy with the strap on her shoulder to the Salon instead, would everyone have been as outraged? Honestly, I wish there were more details into this woman's life, but she lives on in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, beguiling and elusive, a testimony to the unwise strategy of basing one's entire existence on one's beauty when we all grow old. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good backstory to a masterpiece By Bookwoody I never knew the portrait was originally called Portrait of Madame X. I always thought that was how people referred to it because of its femme fatale attitude. This is an engaging back story to the painting of this iconic portrait. The author worked in Hollywood as a story developer and it shows. She takes what is essentially very little hard information and paints a vivid picture of the lives involved in this masterpiece and the era which produced it. The story development comes through in an overabundance of phrases like "One can imagine that she was among the guests at the grand ball." and "He might have felt..." Loaded with storytelling license that sometimes goes too far, it's still good to know the background of one of America's greatest portraitists and the woman whose reputation he ruined with his most famous work.

The subject of John Singer Sargent's most famous painting was twenty-three-year-old New Orleans Creole Virginie Gautreau, who moved to Paris and quickly became the "it girl" of her day. A relative unknown at the time, Sargent won the commission to paint her; the two must have recognized in each other a like-minded hunger for fame. Unveiled at the 1884 Paris Salon, Gautreau's portrait generated the attention she craved-but it led to infamy rather than stardom. Sargent had painted one strap of Gautreau's dress dangling from her shoulder, suggesting either the prelude to or the aftermath of sex. Her reputation irreparably damaged, Gautreau retired from public life, destroying all the mirrors in her home. Drawing on documents from private collections and other previously unexamined materials, and featuring a cast of characters including Oscar Wilde and Richard Wagner, Strapless is a tale of art and celebrity, obsession and betrayal.

"Readers will enjoy this brisk, sometimes breathless account of the creation of the work the artist once called his best...A fascinating commentary on the evanescence of fame and beauty." --Kirkus s "An entertaining, observant novel about the gorgeous, enigmatic Madame X." --from Bustle.com's roundup of "11 Novels Every Art History-Lover Should Pick Up" "A stunner about a stunner." The Philadelphia Inquirer "The book's pace is lively and its breadth impressive." Houston Chronicle About the Author Deborah Davis is the author of Party of the Century: The Fabulous Story of Truman Capote and his Black and White Ball (Wiley, April 2006), and Strapless: John Singer Sargent and the Fall of Madame X (Tarcher/Putnam, 2003). Her most recent book is The Secret Lives Of Frames: One Hundred Years of Art and Artistry (Filapacchi, 2007).