



My Summer With George

Marilyn French

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In 1977, Marilyn French inspired a generation of feminists with *The Women's Room*. Twenty years later she still refuses to go quietly, play with the grandchildren, and prune the roses, as women of a certain advanced age are supposed to. Instead, she has written a romantic novel, and true to her youthful vigor, it is a subversive one. French joins Doris Lessing in believing that the libido can survive old age in women as in men. At the beginning of the novel, the heroine has cast aside her self-image as a desirable woman, as society expects; but then she meets a dashing editor in his 50s, and snap--she is consumed by erotic longing. She is able to analyze intelligently the whole disturbing situation with her knowing women friends, even while she enjoys a delicious summer of romance.

My Summer With George Details

Date :

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Janet Harrison says

I loved Marilyn French's early books, so was happy to find one I hadn't read at a local bookstore. Unfortunately, I didn't get much past the first chapter. One of my pet peeves is predictable rich people dinner parties full of name-dropping. What a disappointment.

Carrie says

Not what I expected from this author. I picked it up because I was looking for *The Women's Room* and it was not available. I stuck with it thinking that it would conclude with something insightful or surprising, but I found neither.

Janet says

I loved Marilyn French's early books, so was happy to find one I hadn't read at a local bookstore. Unfortunately, I didn't get much past the first chapter. One of my pet peeves is predictable rich people dinner parties full of name-dropping. What a disappointment.

Zoë says

Picked this book up without knowing much about it—turns out it's not really a young person's book. I don't think anyone who is younger than 50 would enjoy this book no matter what: it's about a sixty-something-year-old woman, romance writer Hermione Beldame, who is discovering how she feels about love, desire, and sexuality related to her age. However, not too far in I started to think that even people Hermione's age, who can relate to her, would like this—mostly because all the characters are so unlikable. Hermione is one of the most pretentious, irritating narrators I have ever had the displeasure of reading: you really want to reach into the pages and smack her soundly across the face. Then there's George, who Hermione falls in love with for some reason I can't fathom. He shows pretty much no interest in her, yet even coupled with the fact that he hates women (something he announces with a sort of pride), Hermione is head over heels for this jerk. It's just too unbelievable.

Then Hermione's revelations about herself are squished into the last two or three pages; it was very rushed and so the reader never gets to see any facets added to Hermione's character. She unfortunately stays a haughty, holier-than-thou New Yorker. Ugh.

Very disappointing on the whole.

Ilona says

How does a woman get to be in her sixties and still respond to attraction and lust like a brainless, hormone-addled 14-year-old? I'd call this woefully discouraging were I not a sexually confident woman in my fifties, who knows from direct experience that many of us manage our libido with a tad more skill than the rather pathetic Hermione. It's not that she lacks intelligence, but that she seems completely unable to apply that intelligence to a sexual/emotional situation.

Hermione is quite clear about what causes her initial attraction to George, and while I found her reasons far less than compelling -- in fact, they would have had me fleeing instantly -- this is her story, not mine. As her 'summer' unfolds, however, I became increasingly incredulous that she would continue to find him attractive. He's inconsistent, disrespectful, belittling, and, though she is eaten up with lust for him, he is eaten up only by ambivalence.

In short, he's an ass, and her continued panting after him, with next to no encouragement from him, borders on farce. (Though it's exceedingly low-brow for the erudite Hermione (and, really for this book) I am amused to note she would have been well served had one of her friends lent her a copy of "He's Not That Into You".)

When she continues in unabated lust and adolescent yearning for his time and attention *after he's told her he hates women*, I was a heartbeat away from tossing the book aside in exasperation.

Why did I give it even as many as three stars, then? In part because it's well-written. I may not appreciate the plot and the conclusions about sexuality, lust, and romantic love that are drawn, but I can appreciate a well-crafted book. Why, after all, did I respond so strongly to the story? Because Hermione, her situation, her life, and her friends, were presented so very well. Even more than that, however, the book was saved for me by the secondary plot thread, the gradual unveiling of Hermione's most interesting life.

So, while I was appalled at the main plot, and truly just wanted to give the silly woman a good shake, I did enjoy discovering her history.

An interesting book, and one I would recommend, to certain people, with certain caveats.

Heather Ormsby says

Through a mostly imaginary summer romance, a woman in her 60's rediscovers youthful feelings of romance. I wasn't at all impressed with her crush, but I did enjoy the story of how she survived poverty, moved to New York and became a romance novelist.

Marilyn says

Being of similar age as the protagonist, I thought this would be a wonderful read, filled with joy and new-found love etc. Wrong! It is hard to explain where the book went wrong; possibly the entire premise of older women are still lovable and can find "love ever after" in a younger man. Disappointing.

Umi says

Lagi buku keren Marylin French tentang perempuan matang, setengah baya yang 'jatuh cinta' dan mengalami berbagai peristiwa. Dalam novelnya Marilyn selalu dengan cantik menggambarkan persahabatan dan cinta.

Faith says

My Summer with George is a book I found in my mom's bookcase... and it wasn't really what I had expected it to be, for the better and for the worse.

It is about Hermione Beldame, a successful romance writer, who lives a luxurious life in NYC, but who's love life is, well problematic, her being both divorced and widowed twice... Now she is around 60 years old, but the best parts of the book are the glimpses into her past, which wasn't all that glamorous her coming from a poor background.

Well, I don't really know if I liked the book or not. SOMEHOW it was just a big nothingness that ended up nowhere... But one thing is clear: I will never read any more romances...! They are just mass-produced crap. How could I even think that I would read though all of Danielle Steels production or even touch anything by Nora Roberts was it set in Baltimore or not. But actually I wonder what kind of writer Marilyn French herself is...? Is she some kind of romance writer also? I'm probably not going to find out.

Sara says

First of all - That Hermoine would be so attracted to George is just unbelievable. The character of George comes off as unsumphathetic in every way, and you end up disliking Hermoine because she keeps on pursuing him.

Secondly - There is no need to tire us with endless accounts of the Manhattan and Hampton homes, the hired help, the parties, the restaurants... OK we get it: Hermoine is a rich self-made woman! Rather than an assertion of independence it comes off as bragging.

I was dissappointed with this book and would not recommend it to anyone.

Sarahliz says

This made me wonder if I'm misremembering the caliber of the women's room or if this just wasn't anywhere near as good. The last 20 pages finally made me not hate every single one of the characters.

Courtney says

I can understand exploring the tight hold the belief in fairytale romance has on women, even feminists who, as French says, invent themselves. Yet George never rises beyond the level of an asshole and instead remains unbelievable as the object of any woman's fantasy (would he have seemed desirable to older readers twenty years ago?). As a result, Hermione seems idiotic and the book feels like a political platform for French and her second wave beliefs. While I also share these beliefs, I wondered if there was a way to go into the lives of the characters further (or eliminating the names of all the minor characters) and show me why some things are still a struggle for Hermione, even though she had already lived through a lot of BS and grew from those experiences. All of this makes me wonder if political beliefs are a way to cushion us from truly understanding someone else. Instead of hearing more about Hermione, for example, I heard more about her beliefs. I think I do this with my life and this type of shorthand leaves me just scraping the surface of myself, which is what I thought with this book: it was compelling, yet shallow.

Sarah Sammis says

My Summer with George should have been an enjoyable read. Marilyn French writes well, creates interesting characters and believable situations. Her insights into the process of writing were fascinating. Unfortunately the character giving the advice was otherwise so selfish and insecure that I couldn't care for her.

Hermione, the romance writer protagonist, has made a good life for herself. One summer she meets up with a nice man about her age named George. He's thinking of moving to New York to follow a job offer. Unfortunately Hermione doesn't know how to compromise or how to trust. She spends the entire book clinging on to George, waiting for every word, being horribly disappointed if he can't make an appointment, and so forth.

As Hermione pines over her newest love she reveals secrets of past marriages and affairs. These flashbacks undermine Hermione's credibility as a sympathetic protagonist. She comes off instead as immature and silly. So when things ultimately don't work out for Hermione, I could only side with George.

Carol Rizzardi says

When a woman of a certain age, as the New York Times calls us, meets a man who is charming and attentive yet brusque and aloof, she reexamines her life and loves. Lots of NY and Long Island color. I enjoyed it, but I'm no sure someone in their 20s or 30s would.

Kolumbina says

Absolutely fantastic. What a talented writer! But not a book for everyone. In "My summer with George" Marilyn French describes her own life at age of 60 when she met a men at some party. She was obsessed with him, had dreams about him, pictured him touching and kissing her... And he was a very ordinary men,

asked her occasionally for lunch or movies. She allowed herself to be mistreated, was waiting for his phone calls which were rare or didn't happen at all.

I think a lot of women would find themselves in her story. How many women allow themselves to be badly treated only for the reason to be with somebody.

The book has also the other story which is also shocking (and very unique) and it is the story of her family; mother and siblings. I really liked her mother very much. What a women! Unfortunately she died too soon. Does anybody need a man or a husband after such mom? Especially at the age of 60? After all the memories, thoughts and life experiences?

In a way have understanding for Marilyn French, it was after her miraculous recovery from cancer on pancreas.

"My summer with George" is my third book by the writer and will definitely read everything she published.
