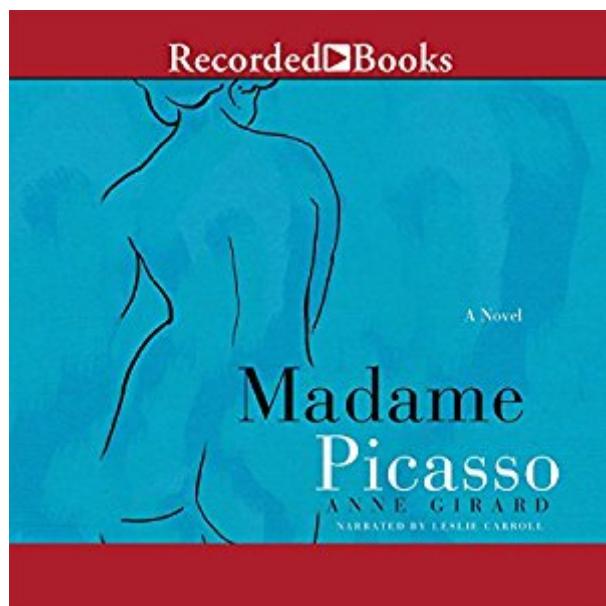


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# Madame Picasso



## **Synopsis**

The mesmerizing and untold story of Eva Gouel, the unforgettable woman who stole the heart of the greatest artist of our time. When Eva Gouel moves to Paris from the countryside, she is full of ambition and dreams of stardom. Though young and inexperienced, she manages to find work as a costumer at the famous Moulin Rouge, and it is here that she first catches the attention of Pablo Picasso, a rising star in the art world. A brilliant but eccentric artist, Picasso sets his sights on Eva, and Eva can't help but be drawn into his web. But what starts as a torrid affair soon evolves into what will become the first great love of Picasso's life. With sparkling insight and passion, Madame Picasso introduces us to a dazzling heroine, taking us from the salon of Gertrude Stein to the glamorous Moulin Rouge and inside the studio and heart of one of the most enigmatic and iconic artists of the 20th century.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Picasso (1881-1973) has the reputation of having had quite a few women in his life. Two of them are in this historical novel, Fernande Olivier (artist model), a complex and wounded woman, married to an abusive husband, and Eva Gouel (1885-1915), or Marcelle Humbert, as she renamed herself when arriving in Paris, fleeing her family and trying to make a living as a seamstress at Le Moulin Rouge. Eva and Pablo ended up loving each other deeply. Working hard at getting her way around a new world for her, learning all about art and business, she became a real support and muse to him. But fate was not tender, and well, you will have to read it for yourself, but here is why I really

enjoyed it a lot. Madame Picasso is set during the glorious Parisian years before World War I, so rich with poets, painters, artists, singers, actors. Remember the movie *Midnight In Paris*? That's exactly that period. You will meet Sarah Bernhardt, Mistinguett (unfortunately not as famous in the US as in France), Maurice Chevalier, Apollinaire, Georges Braque, the art dealer Kahnweiler, Ubaldo Oppi, Denain, Kees Van Dongen, Matisse, Max Jacob. Lots of these people know each other through Gertrude Stein's Salons, where Picasso and Eva went very often and found solace near the free spirited Gertrude and the woman she was living with. And there are famous historical events in the background as well: the *Mona Lisa* is stolen, in the circle close to Picasso, the *Titanic* sinks, WWI begins, Max Jacob converts to Christianity, a big event in the artistic world of the time.

Although I have read several of the books published about the mistresses and wives of famous people, and enjoyed the crafted development of their characters, this one simply did not connect with me, for some reason. It wasn't that the story was not interesting; I think it was just too long, too repetitive and lacked enough substance to hold my interest. Also, I listened to an audio version from One-Click, and the speed could not be adjusted. The reader breathed too heavily at times, over emoted, over pronounced each word, drawing out each syllable, and spoke so slowly, it was like waiting for a butterfly to emerge from a cocoon. Unfortunately, I never saw the butterfly. Her portrayal of the characters was not distinct enough in tone of voice, so there was little discernible difference from one to another. Male and female characters, in particular, sounded alike. That said, if you like these kinds of books and you read the print version, it might be more satisfying. At least then, you could skip pages more easily, when it got redundant. I think the author created a fairytale love affair from a few notes and letters that she was able to acquire, especially from the correspondence that existed between Eva Gouel, Alice B. Toklas and Gertrude Stein. There is no doubt that she worked hard on the narrative as the number of pages prove, but there is little truly known about the main character, Marcel Umbert, and her time in Paris. Her real name was Eva Gouel, born in 1885, died in 1915. There is little written or known about her life either. What we learn from this book is that she and Pablo Picasso were an item for a period of time, and she may have been his muse, and sometimes, his model, but was well loved or, at least, very much appreciated by him.

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