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Edouard Manet's paintings have long been recognized for being visually compelling and uniquely recalcitrant. While critics have noted the presence of family members and intimates in paintings such as *Le Dejeuner sur l'herbe*, Nancy Locke takes an unprecedented look at the significance of the artist's family relationships for his art. Locke argues that a kind of mythology of the family, or Freudian family romance, frequently structures Manet's compositional decisions and choice of models. By looking at the representation of the family as a volatile mechanism for the development of sexuality and of repression, conflict, and desire, Locke brings powerful new interpretations to some of Manet's most complex works.

Locke considers, for example, the impact of a father-son drama rooted in a closely guarded family secret: the adultery of Manet père and the status of Leon Leenhoff. Her nuanced exploration of the implications of this story—that Manet in fact married his father's mistress—makes us look afresh at even well-known paintings such as *Olympia*. This book sheds new light on Manet's infamous interest in gypsies, street musicians, and itinerants as Locke analyzes the activities of Manet's father as a civil judge. She also reexamines the close friendship between Manet and the Impressionist painter Berthe Morisot, who married Manet's brother. Morisot becomes the subject of a series of meditations on the elusiveness of the self, the transience of identity, and conflicting concerns with appearances and respectability. *Manet and the Family Romance* offers an entirely new set of arguments about the cultural forces that shaped these alluring paintings.