



Jong & The Restless

With her druggy debut novel, **MOLLY JONG-FAST** enters the family business. **BY CLARISSA CRUZ**

YOUR MOTHER IS ERICA JONG, a novelist best known for the racy 1973 feminist fantasy manifesto *Fear of Flying*.

Your father is Jonathan Fast, a former science-fiction author (*The Beast, Mortal Gods*), now a social worker. Your grandfather is Howard Fast, the best-selling author of *Spartacus*. What's a 21-year-old writer to do under the weight of her literary legacy? If you're Molly Jong-Fast, you cart it around lightly on your privileged shoulders.

"Even if my book's a total failure, it [gets] completely trashed, and everyone hates it," she says breathlessly, "at least I raised a tiny bit of consciousness about drugs." A pretty healthy outlook for someone who started writing her first novel, *Normal Girl*, at age 19. A sardonic, name-dropping romp through the Prada-and-Blahniked Manhattan trustafarian scene, the book

(due from Villard in June) chronicles a world where cocaine flows as freely as Cristal and aging socialites die tragically from high-voltage facials. The breezy tale stars Miranda, a drugged-out Upper East Side redhead who gets sent to rehab by her prominent mom.

"I loved playing with the cliché of children of famous people," says Jong-Fast, an Upper East Side redhead (middle name: Miranda), over bagels and french fries at a Manhattan deli. "And I loved that people would wonder if I did drugs." For the record, while the former NYU student says she interviewed addicts and "hung out in a lot of scummy places" to bring authenticity to the drug scenes, she categorizes *Normal Girl* as a social satire

that "feels" autobiographical—but isn't.

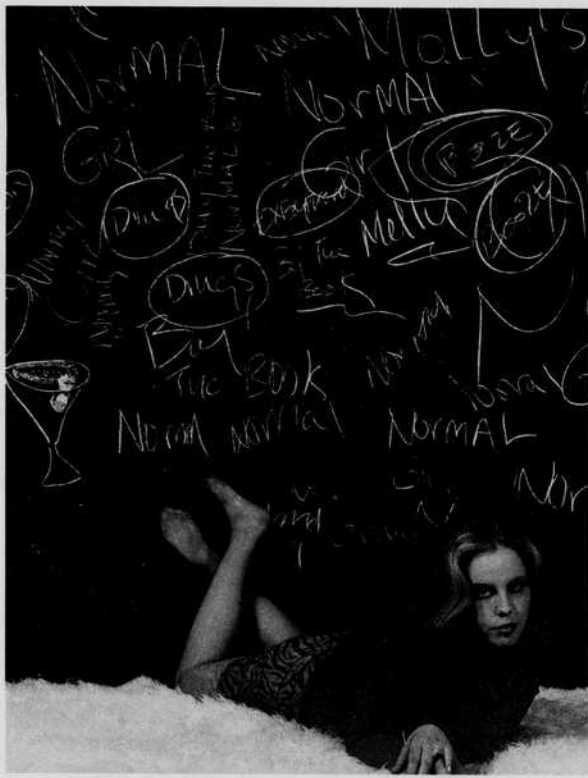
Even so, with lines like the one comparing children of glitterati to communism ("better in concept than in practice"), she's bound to invite speculation that she has serious mommy issues—not to mention rile up naysayers

who sniff that the young scribe nabbed a book deal with Villard on the strength of her pedigree. "The name really just opens the door," Erica Jong, 58, says proudly. "But it doesn't make anyone publish the book."

"There are people who are not going to be huge fans, and that's okay," Jong-Fast sighs. "If you write a book for the literary world, you're writing it for 15 people. I just hope others can relate to it."

Jong-Fast—who doesn't read her mother's books—says she wants to hone a literary voice that has "nothing to do with my parents." She is now at work on her second novel, about a young woman searching for love in New York City. "There are so many books about women who want to be in relationships, but women who say there are no men in Manhattan—that's total bulls---," declares the single and actively dating writer. "I say they don't want to meet men. That's why they're not finding any."

Maybe she's her mother's daughter after all. ●●●



CHALK ON THE WILD SIDE Jong-Fast erases doubt