



## Escape from Paris

*Carolyn G. Hart*

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Romantic suspense amid the chaos of a world at war. The year is 1940. As England braces for invasion and the German army overruns Europe, two American sisters in Paris risk their lives to save a downed British airman from Nazi arrest. Linda Rossiter and Eleanor Masson soon realize the price they may pay when they read this ominous public notice: "All persons harbouring English soldiers must deliver same to the nearest Kommandantur not later than 20 October 1940. Those persons who continue to harbour Englishmen after this date without having notified the authorities will be shot." On Christmas Eve, the Gestapo sets a trap, and death is only a step behind the two American women.

## Escape from Paris Details

Date : Published January 1st 1982 by St. Martin's Press

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Author : Carolyn G. Hart

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## From Reader Review Escape from Paris for online ebook

### Kristen Elise says

I received an ARC of Carolyn Hart's *Escape From Paris* from Seventh Street Books in exchange for my honest review. Admittedly, I was initially intrigued by the setting but was slightly turned off by the "romantic suspense" reference on the back cover (just a personal matter of taste; I'm not a huge romance fan.) Having now read the novel, I can't say whether fans of romantic suspense would be disappointed. But I can say with confidence that I was more than a little pleasantly surprised.

The romantic aspect is certainly there, but in my opinion, it is a background element. In the foreground is the precarious position of two American women in Nazi-Occupied Paris. Through Linda Rossiter and Eleanor Masson, Hart brings to life the faces of World War II that rarely receive the same attention as those of persecuted Jews. Instead, we see the plights of the French, English and American non-Jews who are caught in the middle of the Nazi agenda. Unlike their Jewish friends and neighbors, these Parisians are given the choice to simply abide by the laws and restrictions imposed upon them by the Nazis and wait for a resolution to the conflict. This would certainly be their safest option, but their personal outrages and senses of moral obligation are powerful enough to overrule their fears. As the sisters increasingly entangle themselves into the Resistance movement against the Nazi regime, they find their own lives in even greater danger than those the Nazis are fighting to snuff out.

In addition to a collection of well-rounded characters, Hart reveals a Paris that sharply contrasts with the romantic City of Lights. The Paris of 1940 is a chilling landscape of ubiquitous swastikas and goose-stepping soldiers. Her citizens are poverty-stricken, oppressed and terrified. As Hart weaves the tale of the American sisters, she effectively incorporates very specific historical examples to bring this frightening alternate city to life.

*Escape From Paris* was originally released as a much shorter novel. In order to publish this work, Hart was required to cut out 40,000 words. With its re-release in June, we will see it for the first time as it was originally intended. As a lucky ARC reader in advance of publication, I can't imagine this novel so truncated, and am glad that the extended version was my first introduction to Carolyn Hart. Every single one of those 40,000 words, as well as the other 55,000, contributed to building the tension. I literally had knots in my stomach. This novel has made me a Carolyn Hart fan.

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### Ceelee Sunshine says

Carolyn Hart has been a favorite mystery author of mine for years. I love the *Death on Demand* series, enjoy the *Henrie O* series and the "Ghost" series. I was surprised to discover she also has a number of stand alone novels. Most of them were written in the 80s and 90s but some have been re-issued like the book I just read *ESCAPE FROM PARIS* which was written in 1982. The story is familiar to readers who like historical novels especially set during WWII or those who have read non-fiction accounts such as *AN AMERICAN HEROINE* or *THE HIDING PLACE* and Ann Frank's diary. The setting is German occupied Paris in the late 1930s and concern two sisters, both Americans living in the city while Eleanor awaits the news of her husband fighting in the war. Linda takes her sister's round at the hospital and gets involved with rescuing an English pilot and getting him and others out of the country to safety and back to England. The Gestapo are everywhere and even your neighbor can turn you in on suspicion of harboring an English soldier. The story is quite good for being a basically predictable tale. There is a lot of suspense and the reader becomes totally immersed in the mission and can feel the panic and despair and understand the hardships faced by the people

of France. It is heartbreaking at times, frightening at times and full of anger at times. The only reason I didn't give it a 5 star rating is I felt it was a little too predictable and there were some strings dangling when I finished the book. This book is perfect for a young adult reader or anyone who has not read much about the topic and time period. I highly recommend AMERICAN GEROINE for those who might want a more realistic perspective. Her story is similar to Eleanor's being American married to a Frenchman and helping in the Resistance

movement. On a lighter note if you ever watch the British comedy "Allo Allo" you will not be able to read this book without thinking of this show and wonder if the English pilots might end up being disguised as onion sellers. :) Ok I am a little wacky in my humor but I do love that show and it is good to laugh or I would just cry at the treatment of those poor people in France and throughout Europe and England.

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### **Elli says**

This is actually a re-released older book. This author has become a very successful novelist in her own right. It sounds like her childhood was similar to mine in being a WW II child. I was 4 in 1940, and I still remember Dad being so surprised to hear the Pearl Harbor news that he drove off the road. We lived through rationing and victory gardens. But Linda and Eleanor were in Paris. Linda was the younger sister who had an income coming in from successful financially parents, but chose to spend time with her sister who married a Frenchman and became involved in the underground. What I really didn't know or realize was how much we, and even more the English were disliked because they were blamed for not keeping their promise to help France in time of war, namely the first world war, and alot of people were for Petain and his ideas of peace. They didn't like the Germans any better, but they were just tired of the whole mess, and alot of fathers, sons, and relatives were killed, they felt unnecessarily in the war. I give it a 3 star rating because it was slow at times, more than perhaps it should have been.

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### **Bonnie says**

I don't know if you could say I really enjoyed this book since I was so worried about the heroines, two sisters who helped downed British airmen escape from occupied France. It was really suspenseful and gave a very good picture of life in occupied Paris. As one reviewer commented, I couldn't help but wonder if I could possibly be so brave and unselfish. Frankly I doubt it.

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### **ND says**

eh

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### **Christine says**

I feel really bad for this book. It was trying so hard to be something special, and killed itself in the process. The characters are flat and not really endearing in any way; the plot is forced and disappointingly predictable.

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### **Hali Jacobs says**

The German army invades Europe in 1940. The characters are harboring English soldiers and in danger of getting caught; yet they continue to assist them. This story describes what they went through during that time.

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### **Conni Harness says**

Really Good Read -- another view of the WWII and insaneness of the world at that time. Worth the history read. Ending was fairly resolving. Page numbering of the book is wrong. The book was 286 pages and not 191 as Good Reads seems to think.

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### **Lynn Lerch says**

I absolutely loved this read. Carolyn Hart keeps you turning pages. It isn't a long book but you won't be able to put it down until you are finished with it. Linda and her sister are from Pasadena CA. The year is 1940 and the place is Paris with the city occupied by the Nazis and the Gestapo. Linda has come to visit her sister and nephew and stayed on. Her brother in law Andre is missing in battle. She goes on an errand for her sister to visit a hospital. While there she is asked by a wounded RAF member for help to escape. She smuggles him out in her car trunk and takes him home to her sister's apartment. That is the beginning of them helping RAF members and Americans out of France. It is a very dangerous thing to do and it escalates. I wish Carolyn Hart would write more of this type of mystery. She makes one feel like you are really there. A great book.

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### **Leslie Angel says**

Carolyn Hart has a good heart. Think this one's a YA, still enjoyed it. Some interesting tidbits about resistance in Paris in WW2.

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### **Donis Casey says**

Carolyn Hart is best known for her fabulous traditional mysteries, but what is not as widely known is that she wrote a series of standalone thrillers and suspense novels before her first Annie Darling novel, *Death on Demand*, was published. Carolyn calls *Escape from Paris* her favorite of the early works, since it reflects the impact of World War II upon her as a child. When the book was first published, the manuscript was cut from 95 thousand words to 55 thousand, which needless to say took a lot out of the story. Now, in 2012, Carolyn and Ocone Spirit Press have reissued *Escape From Paris* in its original, unabridged form.

And quite a story it is, too. First sentence: *Escape From Paris is the story of a year of war, the year that France fell to the Germans and England awaited invasion.* It is also the story of people around the world, touched by war. The book begins with a series of vignettes, glimpses into the lives of people around the world. I've always admired the writers who have the ability to create a realistic world, one which draws the reader in and lets her live in that time and place for a while, to smell the dust, the cooking, the perfume, the

stench, to feel the cold, the heat, the fear, the grime, the hunger, weariness. To experience what a person in that situation might experience, and wonder- what would I do if this happened to me? I read an interview with Barbara Kingsolver in which she said that the difference between fiction and factual reporting is that nonfiction tells you that there was a plane crash and forty people died. Fiction has you relive the experience of being in a plane crash in which forty people died. What would it be like to open the newspaper one morning and read that the government had declared all people of your ethnicity were henceforth banned from holding government jobs and were being given two weeks to resign. How long would it take for you to believe your eyes, especially if nothing like this had ever happened in your lifetime. Would you realize that this was the beginning or the end?

EFPP is largely the story of Linda Rossiter, a young American woman living in Paris at the time of the German occupation. After her parents were killed in a plane crash, Linda has gone to Paris to visit her sister Eleanor. As Americans whose country is not yet caught up in World War II, Linda and Eleanor could still leave France for the United States. But Eleanor's husband, Andre, a French soldier, has been missing since Dunkirk, and Eleanor has no intention of leaving at least until she can discover his fate. Besides, Eleanor is the mother of a thirteen-year-old French citizen, Robert, whom the Germans might not be so willing to let go. Eleanor urges Linda to leave while she can, but in spite of her desperate fear of the Germans, Linda refuses to go without her sister.

Eleanor visits hospitals daily, taking Red Cross packages to wounded Allied soldiers and Airmen, hoping to hear some word of Andre. On the one day she is too ill to make the trip, Eleanor convinces Linda to go in her stead, and in spite of her dislike of illness and wounds, Linda agrees

The hospital for captured combatants is just as horrifying as Linda fears, but she cannot help but feel such compassion for the wounded soldiers that when one particularly nervy RAF pilot, who has recovered enough to be facing transfer to a POW camp, approaches her with an escape plan, Linda simply cannot find it in herself to refuse. She manages to sneak the pilot out of the hospital in the trunk of her car and takes him to Eleanor's apartment. She fears that Eleanor will be appalled that she has put her and her son in such peril, but much to her surprise, Eleanor jumps at the chance to help the pilot. For several weeks she and Eleanor hide him in the basement of their apartment building, trying to figure out some way to get him across the line and out of occupied France. In spite of the fact that the poster was everywhere:

ALL PERSONS HARBORING ENGLISH SOLDIERS MUST DELIVER SAME TO THE NEAREST KOMMANDANTUR NOT LATER THAN 20 OCTOBER 1940. THOSE PERSONS WHO CONTINUE TO HARBOUR ENGLISHMEN AFTER THIS DATE WITHOUT HAVING NOTIFIED THE AUTHORITIES WILL BE SHOT.

What would you do? Would you have taken the risk and smuggled out the pilot in the first place? What would you do with him once you had him? Who would you approach for help? How would you know who to trust?

The extraordinary thing about this novel is that Linda and her compatriots are not in the least extraordinary. They are cold, hungry, uncertain, and scared for themselves and for their families. They are doing the best they can in an unbelievably difficult and dangerous situation. As Linda and her sister and young nephew become part of the escape line, a stop in the route that smuggles British soldiers over the line into unoccupied France and across the border into Spain, the tension becomes palpable. The odds go even higher when Linda falls in love with Jonathan, a wounded pilot who is forced to recuperate in the safe house until he is fit to travel. When he finally goes, Linda and Eleanor will not know if he made it, not for months, maybe never.

Linda's world was so sharply drawn and realistic that I did not know if she or Eleanor or Robert or any of the heroic underground figures would make it. And some of them did not.

I'll tell you one thing, this book made me wonder how brave I would be under the same circumstance.

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### **D. Starr says**

WWII War-time Paris  
Historical Fiction

American sisters living in Paris become involved in smuggling people out of France and away from the Nazis.

No sex  
No strong language  
Disturbing suggestions of possible violence

Very well written. Recommended to anyone who enjoys history or wants to gain insight about what it was like living in war-torn Europe in the 1940's. Lessons learned then apply to every generation.

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### **Virginia says**

Some reviews have listed this as a romance novel. Nothing could be further from the truth. This is an historical novel, set in Paris during the German occupation of WWII before the US joined the war. Yes, two characters fall in love, but it is hardly a novel for the romance category.

This novel tells the story of two American sister living in Paris during the Nazi occupation. One is married to a French soldier who went missing at Dunkirk. They become involved, accidentally, with the secret evacuation of English pilots shot down over France. I would not that this is high art, but it is an engrossing and readable story with many moments of tension and excitement.

The characters are, regrettably, a bit stereotypical - the honorable and saintly priest, the worried and skittish sister, the foolishly fearless teen, the cruel and horrible Nazi SS officer, the pathetic French collaborators, and the handsome pilot. This, however, does not detract from the story itself although the ending was somewhat predictable. Because of those two faults, I gave it only three stars.

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### **Kay says**

Set in Paris during WWII we learn about life in a Paris occupied by the Germans. Two sisters start helping downed airmen escape. This is a story about overcoming fear and doing your best in very stressful times.

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### **Brooke Holman says**

Such a wonderful book

