



The Siren of Paris

David LeRoy

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Marc Tolbert, the French-born son of a prominent American Family, only dreamt of a new life in Paris as he sailed for France in 1939. Marc joins in the ex-pat scene as his new friend Dora introduces him to a circle that includes the famous Sylvia Beach, owner of the bookstore Shakespeare & Company; and he accepts a job with William Bullitt, US ambassador to France. At art school, he finds himself further enchanted by the alluring model Marie.

A year later, his fiancée goes south with her family, Americans scramble to escape Paris, and he is soon running with 10 Million other refugees from the advance of the German Army. After Marc is pulled from the sea on June 17th 1940, when the RMS Lancastria sinks, he decides to return to Paris in hopes of reconnecting with other trapped Americans, and his fiancée. His smuggling of Allied airman through the American Hospital to the Paris Resistance comes undone as a profound betrayal leads him into the hands of the Gestapo and onto Buchenwald.

"The Siren of Paris" mines the human dilemma of revenge versus forgiveness. The historical story, based upon true events and real people during World War Two is set inside of an allegorical journey of the soul of the departed seeking passage to eternal peace from the worst war ever known to man.

The Siren of Paris Details

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From Reader Review The Siren of Paris for online ebook

Lynette says

I was lost thru parts of the book. Some of the scenes going back were very confusing. I understand that he needed to review his life so he could forgive himself. The part that totally lost me was the end where a file was found 100 years later. I must have really got lost because I didn't understand the significance of this point. If someone could tell me what I missed , I would really appreciate it.

Rebecca Graf says

What makes a great book? How does an author know he did it right? I'll explain with David LeRoy's The Siren of Paris.

A French born American finds himself losing his girl and just not satisfied being a premed student. The allure of Paris calls to his artistic side. What better place to be than in Paris to study art? The only problem is the pesky rumors of Germany advancing. There is no way Hitler would go that far. To prove it, Marc dives into French life finding new friends, new love, and new styles in gas masks and bombed out apartments. Hitler would go that far and changed Marc's life forever.

David LeRoy set this book before and during Germany's occupation of France. The extensive research is obvious as one sits in an art class, watches the masses running from the bombers, and the dead floating in the sea. One would think they were there trying to save lives by pretending not to be part of the Resistance and dealing the ghosts that haunt your every waking moment.

The characters are well-developed with layers upon layers for the reader to dive through. Just when you have one pegged, another layer is revealed toward the soul. This is not a romance story. This is not a story of occupied France. This is the story of one man drawn to his country of birth and the people who have become his family while holding his own past against himself. It is the story of a soul's struggle to let go and move forward.

I applaud Mr. LeRoy's writing which is captivating. The book is wonderfully written and will keep you glued to the pages as you connect with the characters and become part of the dangerous world of secrets, love, and death.

Note: This book was provided as part of a promotional tour with no expectation of a positive review.

Historical Tapestry says

<http://historicaltapestry.blogspot.pt...>

Allie says

Marc Tolbert, a French Born American, journeys to Paris in 1939, escaping heartbreak and looking for his place in the world. Marc starts art school, falls in love with a fellow student and enjoys the company of the Parisians around him. Like other ex-pats, Marc believed that war with Germany will never occur, until he becomes involved with the US Embassy as a diplomat. Marc watches as Paris is abandoned, and waits to flee aboard the doomed Lancastria. Marc returns to Paris, hoping to help downed US Airmen escape. But the work is risky, with German Soldiers on every street corner. Marc is betrayed, and struggles to come to terms with the war, crimes, betrayal, and life.

This novel tells the story of WWII in a different manner that I am accustomed to. I have previously read WWII books told in a German or American perspective, but never occupied Paris. The brutality of the invasion was very realistic and detailed. The tension, hunger and apprehension is all palpable and real. The secondary characters are lively. It was interesting to see how all the characters reacted to the same invasion in varied and different ways. Some became victims of fear, some joined the resistance and some joined the Germans. I also appreciated how Leroy showed the guilt, sickness and numbness of Marc's captivity.

Laura says

A mild book about the French Resistance since the author did not go deep in the main question.

Additionally, I have nothing against the back and forward style into the plot but the author did not manage how to use properly this tool to the narrative without breaking the natural flowing of the reader.

Marjo says

The Siren of Paris is a historical fiction novel inspired by the events of occupied France during World War II. David LeRoy's research of the German invasion and occupation in France is impressive and lucid throughout the book. The story revolves around the life and experiences of an American; opening with his days as a student in the USA and France to his internment as a political prisoner of war.

Marc's journey began before the outbreak of war in 1939. A broken relationship spurs him to leave the USA, abandon his medical studies, and voyage to the land of his birth, France. Marc forms many friendships on the transatlantic crossing destined for France. On his arrival in Paris and commencement at Art school, he realizes things are not as expected. The signs that war is looming becomes clear. Americans are encouraged to leave France but Marc chooses to stay. His life becomes convoluted as the war progresses. He works for the American Ambassador, meets Hitler, attempts to escape from France, and joins the resistance.

The Story tells of friendship, love, betrayal, guilt and forgiveness. The vivid imagery that David paints with his word captures the meaning of the war and experiences of the characters. LeRoy's story starts with Marc in death looking down on his own burial service watching the events of his life. As his past flashes by souls that emerge from French graveyards interrupt Marc. The ghosts represent all who died from the sinking of the RMS Lancastria on which Marc was attempting to make his escape from France.

The author has successfully employed flashback in time throughout the book. As the story progresses the reader can understand how Marc's past experiences are an important part of the present. Marc's recollections fall into place as the layers of his life experiences throughout the war unfold. I highly recommend the book as poignant, compelling, and provocative. The book provides an excellent historical chronicle of life during

World War II in France and the importance of the Resistance.

Author David LeRoy has drawn from his own background and interests in this his first novel. David has a bachelor of arts in philosophy and religion and studied art in France in 2010. During David's time in France he became interested in and researched the French Resistance of World War II. Through his research David discovered the Americans involvement with the Resistance and how difficult escape was during the war.

Julie says

I have a knot in my stomach as I'm writing this review because I have so many mixed feelings about this book. I feel it is my duty to reflect the strengths and flaws of this book accurately, so I'll try my best.

For starters, the premise was decent: French-born American Marc returns to Paris in 1939 to study art and subsequently gets stuck there during the German occupation. But his unique status as dual citizen allows him certain diplomatic perks, so he sticks it out for a while. When he finally gets the sense to leave, the ship he is on is bombed and sunk, thus leaving him stuck in France. So back to Paris he goes where he joins the resistance helping downed Allied airmen escape. Then he's betrayed (thus prison camp, witnessing horrible atrocities, standard WWII fare). The bones for a great story, right?

The flaws start on the back cover: "His new circle of ex-pats includes the famous Sylvia Beach, owner of the bookstore Shakespeare and Company..." Sylvia is mentioned like three times and only appears in one brief scene. It's misleading to readers like me who were hoping for a glimpse of this legendary book store during the 40's. In the first part of the book while Marc is travelling to France, we are introduced to all these characters who become his close friends in Paris. When everyone is forced to leave, we witness their various means of departure, and a good second quarter of the book is these people in transit. Then we never hear of them again. About a third of the way through the book, the author decides to change his narrative style and suddenly starts going back and forth between two different time periods. I found some of the transitions rather awkward.

Marc was an unreliable narrator, especially with his bizarre hallucinations and flashbacks to the sinking of his ship. Yes, there's a ton of symbolism, I get it, but I didn't feel it added much to the story as a whole. The atmosphere of a city under siege is conveyed well, and there were parts of Marc's experience that captivated me. Being a self-published book, perhaps it could have been improved with the deft hand of an editor. If you're interested in a more stylized portrayal of one man's experience during WWII, you might like it better than I did.

I received a complimentary copy of this book via Promo 101 Promotional Services.

Erin says

Find the enhanced version of this and other reviews at: <http://flashlightcommentary.blogspot...>

I have very mixed feelings regarding David LeRoy's *The Siren of Paris*. I think the premise is great, but as I

reader I found it a challenging piece to complete.

I'm gonna be upfront here, I had to reread several pages. I kept feeling as if I was missing something. I'm willing to admit I am somewhat distracted by the holiday season, the hustle and bustle of the festivities, but this was more than that. Though I am loath to admit it, I had genuine trouble following the plot over the intermittent timeline. It was an artistic approach, but confusing just the same. At least where this reader is concerned.

Another problem I had was the brevity in which the supporting cast appeared. Nigel and Dora for example, or even Sylvia. I wanted to see more of these individuals. LeRoy has a gift for creating believable cast members. I guess what I'm getting at is sour grapes in that I felt many of these characters were taken from me too soon.

On the other hand, I liked the material that LeRoy incorporated into the story. There is a lot here, particularly when it came to life in occupied France and the perpetual fear and danger in which the members of the resistance lived. I've seen plenty of movies and documentaries, but this is really the first fiction I've come across to incorporate these topics and I must say I was impressed by LeRoy's efforts.

I read a blurb for this book which referred to the story as thought-provoking while praising its examination of revenge versus forgiveness. The Siren of Paris wasn't the easiest of books to read, but it certainly met my expectations in terms of concept as set forth in that description. It is a toss up really, though I recommend the title, I can't say it is for every reader.

Annette says

Novel begins early summer 1939.

Marc Tolbert was born in France, but raised in America. As a young man in his early twenties he left his parents, sister, and the American life for Paris, France. His family had hoped he'd become a medical doctor. Marc wanted to be an artist. He attended art schools in Paris. He met Marie, a model-poser for art classes. Their relationship developed. Later Marc went to work at a government office in Paris. While Marc is living out his dream in Paris, Nazi Germany is moving across Europe: Austria, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Denmark, Poland, Belgium, and then France. Although he attempts a dramatic escape, Marc stays in his beloved Paris.

The Siren of Paris moves back and forth in time, from 1967 to 1939, then back and forth through the years of World War II. Most of the story is during the war years.

Positive Points:

I was given a panoramic view of the citizens of Paris desperately trying to leave the Nazi German invaders. This included the many American's (30,000) who'd made Paris their home. The anxious conversations amongst Parisian's are "what will happen to them" or "can there be peace." Reality settles in just as the invaders reach the outskirts of Paris and the bombings can be heard, then the citizens panic.

While Paris and France is under occupation. Nazi Germany imposes their murderous evil regime. The scope of which many could hardly fathom until "they" were knocking on their door. The fear and anguish of loved ones abused or murdered, the strict adherence to curfew and food rations is addressed through story.

Parisian's that were apart of the resistance gave me an insight into what their role was in winning the war

against Nazi Germany. With a bitter pungency they were willing to lay down their lives for freedom.

Marc is a typical young man full of bravado. He will be tested both physically and emotionally. I was drawn to his character, not because I was particularly smitten with him, but felt invested in his outcome---I cared, I had to know how it would all end.

I was not entirely surprised by Marc's love interest Marie. I was pleased with her depiction, meaning she was palpable to me, I saw her outward choices and her well-placed mask. I also saw how she came to make the choices she made. She is a strong character and could have over-shadowed Marc's---she may need her own book.

I felt the ending tied everything in well. No loose threads.

Negative Points:

In the beginning of Marc's life in Paris he develops a few friends: David, Nigel, and Dora. The Siren of Paris follows their attempts at escaping France after Nazi Germany invaded. I'd thought that these characters had been given in order to add to the rest of Marc's story, but they disappear from the pages early-on. I don't believe they should have been followed as much as they are not a big investment.

The shuffling back and forth of the time periods is not graceful. It needs a bit of sprucing-up. The first time I was taken back, or maybe forward---I got lost. Afterwards I was more prepared.

I would have liked to see more viewpoint or drama from a Nazi German. They are the villains. I saw some dialogue and story between Marc and an officer. I would like to see more in the story behind the Nazi uniform. I don't want the story to tell me about their evil, I want it to show me evil.

This is a self-published book. Some reviewers brought this point up. I've read and reviewed several self-published books and enjoy doing so.

Thank you to David LeRoy and Promo 101 Promotional Services for my free review copy in exchange for an honest review.

Sara says

I received this book from the author from an honest review. I was interested in this book because it is historical fiction about war times, and I love the books I have read in the past about WWI and WWII. They are some of my favorite, even though they can be very gut wrenching and emotional.

The Siren of Paris starts off in 1967 at a funeral for Marc, where he is there experiencing it. Then it goes back in time to June 18, 1939, where Marc realizes he will have to watch his life during the war and the last 30 years over again through a sort of flashback. Then we learn of Marc's life when he made the decision to attend art school in Paris and meets his friends Dora, Nigel, and David on the journey there. And then his friends Allen and his girlfriend Maria while in Paris. The story is about mostly Marc, but also all of his friends and their feelings and struggles as the war begins and hits France. One character completely shocked me, and discusted me. All of it leading to an ultimate betrayal. No wonder nobody trusted anyone else at the time. You just never knew who was on your side.

My favorite line from the book was what Dora told Marc. "You need freedom. That is why you are coming to Paris. Freedom...." At first she had said it was love, but then changed her mind to this, and it ended up

being my favorite because a war was soon to interrupt all their lives.

I am not going to write more about the book, because you can get that from the preview. What I will say is that David Leroy has written a very informative and thought provoking book! It switches between a few characters and their experiences, but we are given dates and locations so that we are not lost. I loved learning about war times from people in the city, because usually the books I have read are about signing up for the war and being a soldier. This gave insight into a different side of it for me.

I highly recommend this book to all history buffs and lovers of historical fiction. Thank you, David Leroy for this opportunity for such a well done book.

Serena says

In *The Siren of Paris* by David LeRoy, Marc is tempted by the siren call of Paris to return to the place of his birth, a place he does not remember but has the enticements of all he desires: love and art. Set in the time before Paris is invaded by Germans during WWII, LeRoy does well in depicting by turns the fear and the indifference Parisians and expats felt when Germany began to advance across Europe. Once France begins to realize that negotiations with Germany will amount to nothing and Germany begins to take more territory, the fears become overwhelming for many, and there is an anxiousness that pervades the novel's pages, especially as Marc's friends panic about returning to the United States and England.

With that said, there are quite a few missed opportunities in the beginning of this novel when Marc is on a diplomatic mission with Mr. Wells (at the behest of William Bullitt, US ambassador to France) and they meet with not only Mussolini, but also Ribbentrop, who goes on a diatribe for 2 hours, and you don't get any of the conversations! Instead, LeRoy spends several pages on news reel footage in the local theater afterward when Marc returns and is on a date with Marie. Missed opportunities like these set off alarm bells that more research could have been done to learn what might have been said by these high-ranking officials conquering Europe. It also begs the question of whether this story was as well thought out as it could have been, especially given that the transitions between moments in time and locations are often left out and the reader feels adrift until they get their bearings again as to where they are, what day, and whom they encounter.

Read the full review: <http://savvyverseandwit.com/2012/09/t...>

Mom says

A 4.5 star....Great WWII novel.

Gaele says

Bought prior to offer to review..

“regardless, we become our choices we make over time”

Ultimately, this book is a wonderfully crafted dramatic saga told from the perspective of Marc Tolbert,

Parisian born American who responds to the Siren call of Paris to study art in 1939. We are introduced to the litany of stories that will follow in the book by the count of souls that attend his funeral: souls that he has adopted as his cross to bear from the war.

From that viewpoint, we start to see who Marc is and how he came to have so many people; living and dead, to say goodbye. Told in small pieces, we see Marc making dangerous choices: returning to Paris, refusing to leave when war is imminent, joining a small cell of the Resistance, being desperate for a love connection and ignoring the signs of capture. Told as flashbacks and dream sequences, interspersed with of the moment commentary, this story is laden with information and tension making it a must read page turner.

Historically detailed and exquisitely described the settings come into clear focus. They are cleanly and seamlessly integrated into the story, reading much like a postcard snippet from a long awaited vacation. That technique, the overlay of the beautiful with the horrific, the mundane details in the midst of great activity give a further strength and impact to the story being detailed.

I will admit – I am addicted to Paris, and I understand her Siren’s call. But when I read of this book, I purchased it for a far different reason. I have an uncle in Paris, who went to work with the Resistance when he was just 17 and a son of a prominent family there. His name provided entrée into circles and places that many who led the double lives were unable to attain. And yet, I was nearly 20 when he started to share some of those stories with us, my cousins and I. He was a man who was haunted by those he knew who were gone, by the atrocities he saw in his beloved city, and the anger he felt to those who collaborated and were left untainted after the war. I bought the story specifically to read to help me to understand better what he may have felt. And I can only hope that he too, has attained the peace Marc was able to discover in the last pages.

This book had me in tears, with a knot in my stomach: a poignant treatise on the horrors of war be you soldier or shopkeeper, old or young. I highly recommend this to anyone who wants to learn of the journey of forgiveness and faith, choices and fate, and above all the ability of the human spirit to endure.

Audra (Unabridged Chick) says

I accepted this book without realizing it was self-published. I have mixed feelings about self-pubbed books: unless it's got great bones and wonderful story, I find I miss the polish that comes from a traditional publisher. (I will say, however, my top ten reads of 2011 and 2010 both included a self-published novel, so I'm not a total snob, I swear!)

In this case, LeRoy's historical novel set during the Nazi occupation of Paris certainly brought it in terms of plot and research. There was non-stop action. While reading, I was strongly reminded of M.L. Malcolm's novels -- which I hated but others love -- in terms of the relentless plot and the very tell-not-show style of writing LeRoy employs. (Unlike Malcolm, however, LeRoy uses dialogue to move things along, with mixed results, I think.) In terms of editing and formatting, the book was fine, and I didn't notice the kind of egregious mistakes that make self-pubbed books frustrating.

I ended up not finishing the book, stopping about 160 pages in when I found I wasn't really connected with out hero, Marc. First, the narrative style of the book didn't quite work for me -- within a single chapter, the story would jump back-and-forth between years, flashing between one story arc and another. I think it was

meant to build some tension but I found it distracting -- with so much plot, I needed a linear development to help me absorb the action as well as find Marc's transformation from young American art student to war-wearied vet.

Secondly, I wasn't wild about LeRoy's dependence on networking to move Marc's story (even though I suppose that's actually how this kind of thing happens): by page twelve, Marc, an American ex-med student heading to art school in Paris, meets a woman on his transatlantic cruise who introduces him to Sylvia Beach. Through his father, he meets (and gets a job with) the US ambassador to France. The introductions project Marc into both the avant-garde art world and the international diplomatic table. (He meets both Mussolini and Hitler.)

Still, there are some unique historical events highlighted in this novel, like the destruction of the RMS Lancastria (Britain's worst ever maritime disaster), which I found fascinating. The novel reads fast, partially because of the breakneck development of the plot -- the occupation of Paris, the smuggling of Allied soldiers to safety -- and I don't think one needs to have a strong background with this era to appreciate the story.

Reader who like M.L. Malcolm's sort of splashy focus on history might like this book -- there's love, pathos, betrayal, angst, and romance -- and many other readers have nothing but raves for this book, so take my comments with a grain of salt.

brandy oliver says

This book is such a meticulously crafted travel back in time, and certainly will not be a book that is forgotten. This is one you will want an actual copy of, so you can come back to it, and read again and again, it is detailed and researched so well, I got lost so many times in this story, and honestly, didn't want to come back some of the time.

I am kind of at a loss of words for this review, I am more than impressed with David LeRoy's debut novel, and I am more than anxious to read any news of another book coming soon.

If you enjoy history books, this will definitely exceed all of your expectations! Reading it is more like a very vivid dream, then just a book, and I found myself checking how many pages were left several times, not because I wanted it to be over, but because of the exact opposite. I was horribly sad when it ended. That being said, I would not recommend starting this book when you have a to do list, errands or anything else that will interrupt this painfully amazing journey back in time. Otherwise, you will keep people and your list waiting.

Marc Tolbert, is the main character in this novel, you get to know him beginning with his funeral.

In 1939, Marc was 20 years old, and was on his way to medical school until he decided to go back to Paris, to attend art school. 1939 of course, was a most terrifying time, and Marc chooses to ignore all of the signs that the world, including Paris, (France) are on the brink of a devastating world war. The author goes into explicit detail, bringing all of the actual historical events and figures into play, as we relive his past with him. As disgusting as a time as this is, David LeRoy, manages to carefully articulate a story of spirituality with this book. He doesn't leave anything out of this story, and there will be times you will cringe at the events taking place on the pages, and yet, at the same time, you will be re living a time in history, as though you were really there or at the least, watching a movie.

You will be with Marc, as he tries to escape France, spends time in concentration camps, and witnesses the people and children trying to leave the country. Of course he also falls in love in this story, and with that, comes betrayal.

When Marc dies, he doesn't get to pass into eternal peace, until he answers one question successfully. This is of course a very emotional book, and again, I can't stress enough how brilliant of a job this author did with captivating the reader, pulling the reader in from page 1.

You will find it a tad bit hard to just let go of this book, and I feel I must stress that this book may not be for everyone. (Although, David LeRoy is able to use his creativity and imagination to turn something so grotesque, into a story that will draw in many different types of readers.)

** I received a copy of this book in return for my honest review **
