



Paris: A Love Story

By Kati Marton

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This is a memoir for anyone who has ever fallen in love in Paris, or with Paris.

PARIS: A LOVE STORY

is for anyone who has ever had their heart broken or their life upended.

In this remarkably honest and candid memoir, award-winning journalist and distinguished author Kati Marton narrates an impassioned and romantic story of love, loss, and life after loss. Paris is at the heart of this deeply moving account. At every stage of her life, Marton finds beauty and excitement in Paris, and now, after the sudden death of her husband, Richard Holbrooke, the city offers a chance for a fresh beginning. With intimate and nuanced portraits of Peter Jennings, the man to whom she was married for fifteen years and with whom she had two children, and Holbrooke, with whom she found enduring love, Marton paints a vivid account of an adventuresome life in the stream of history. Inspirational and deeply human, *Paris: A Love Story* will touch every generation.

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Paris: A Love Story By Kati Marton Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #296390 in eBooks
- Published on: 2012-08-14
- Released on: 2012-08-14
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Review

“A late-summer must-read... enthralling” —*Vogue*

“Like ... Didion, Joyce Carol Oates, and Abigail Thomas ... Marton defies the conventional wisdom that good writing is Wordsworthian emotion recollected in tranquility. ... The book, short and intimate, reads like the wind from the urgency of the opening scene.—**Susan Cheever, *Newsweek/The Daily Beast***

“A frank and fascinating memoir of loss, love and, ultimately, reconnection with her own self- truths.”
—**Fort-Worth Star-Telegram**

“Kati Marton has lived a thrilling and turbulent life. ... She fell in love with and married two famous men. ... She has been an eyewitness to history in all its cruelty. ... [I]n this memoir ... she grapples with an unexpected new stage of life: widowhood. ... A brisk and sometimes delicious read by a well-connected author.”—**The Washington Post**

“Marton shares her deep love for her family as well as her grief...striking both the author and the reader at odd moments with extraordinary force.” —**Shelf Awareness.com**

“A slim and touching memoir. ... Kati Marton is trying to create a future by recapturing the past... she pulls it off with a certain amount of flair and élan...There are lots of things to like about *Paris: A Love Story*.”
—**The Washington Times**

“It’s that stubborn determination to go on with a human, messy, unpredictable life that makes Marton’s memoir special.” —**Columbus Dispatch**

“Paris provides a backdrop for this absorbing memoir of love and painful loss, played out on the larger stage of world politics....On a first-name basis with the political movers and shakers on a global stage, Marton has observed world politics in the making and makes space for readers on her catbird seat.” —**Kirkus Reviews**

“Marton offers an intimate look at her adventurous life in a book that is part romance, part travelogue, and part memoir of journalism and diplomacy.” —**Booklist**

"Kati Marton is a writer of great clarity and grace. *Paris: A Love Story* is a revealing memoir about the contours of her own humanity, rendered with precision and honesty. It is a memorable story of love, loss and landscape that is as expansive as her remarkable life." —**Steve Coll, author of *Private Empire: ExxonMobil and American Power***

“A great read—the lightness of love, the drama of war and sudden death—with Paris in the background.”
—**Diane von Furstenberg**

“Kati Marton has written movingly about her love, loss, and the healing power of an elegant city. She takes readers on a journey, as she writes, to find a place where there is joy in remembered joy.” —**Diane Sawyer**

“I stayed up last night and read this book cover to cover. I can’t remember the last time I did that. It is wonderful—touching, romantic and honest—and oh, how it made me want to go to Paris!” —**Barbara**

Walters

"Like . . . Didion, Joyce Carol Oates. . . . The book, short and intimate, reads like the wind from the urgency of the opening scene." (Susan Cheever Newsweek/The Daily Beast)

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About the Author

Kati Marton is the author of *True Believer: Stalin's American Spy*; *Enemies of the People: My Family's Journey to America*, a National Book Critics Circle Award finalist; *The Great Escape: Nine Jews Who Fled Hitler and Changed the World*; *Hidden Power: Presidential Marriages That Shaped Our History*; *Wallenberg*; *The Polk Conspiracy*; and *A Death in Jerusalem*. She is an award-winning former NPR and ABC News correspondent. She lives in New York City.

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Paris: A Love Story

CHAPTER ONE

Like a human snowplow, I surge against the flow of chanting, banner-waving students pouring into the boulevard St.-Germain. I am determined to get to the Café de Flore before Richard does. My husband has

flown all night from Kabul on a military plane. I am merely crossing from the fifth into the sixth arrondissement. As he shuttles between Washington, Kabul, and Islamabad, we have little time together; minutes matter. But this is the Latin Quarter, and it is October, the season of student manifestations. Les manifs are a routine feature of my Parisian neighborhood, and I usually enjoy their high-spirited revolutionary theater. Not today. The students have blocked traffic on St.-Germain and prevented Richard's car from reaching our apartment on the rue des Écoles.

Hot and sweaty, I arrive at the terrace of the Flore. Richard is already there and, as usual these days, he is on the phone. As he is looking up, his smile momentarily lifts travel fatigue from his features. "You're late!" he says, a hand covering the phone. He hangs up, and we kiss. Then we exhale in unison from sheer relief that we are together—and in Paris! That is how it has been for the past two years. Days stolen from a devouring job.

Richard takes out his frayed wallet to pay for our citrons pressés. "See," he says, "it's still here," a faded Polaroid of the two of us in the Tuileries Garden taken in 1994, wearing matching expressions of goofy happiness. "And I still have this," he says, proudly extracting the torn corner of a phone message pad with my sister's Paris telephone number. In 1993, he tracked me down with that number. His amulette. "You are a ridiculously sentimental man," I tell him.

Holding hands, we navigate between the green street cleaning machines that are already vacuuming up the debris of the street protest, as we make our way to the rue des Écoles. We have one night together. He will fly to Brussels the next day for a conference he has called on Afghanistan and Pakistan.

On this balmy fall afternoon, we are not thinking about that. It always feels right to meet in the city where we began our life together. Paris is also roughly midway between Washington and the world's bleakest conflict zone, Richard's diplomatic beat. Climbing the narrow, creaky stairs to our pied-à-terre reminds us of other lives we have lived—and lives we planned still to live. In Paris, we wrap our little apartment around ourselves like a blanket, and keep the world outside, barely leaving our village tucked in the shadow of the Pantheon. Tonight we have to.

I am in Paris not only to see my husband but also to launch the French edition of my new book. My book party at the American Embassy is the next night, and it will be the first such event that Richard will not attend. On this, our only evening together, we are dining with Ambassador Charles Rivkin and his wife, Susan Tolson, the hosts of my book event.

Entering the Left Bank restaurant a few hours later, we smile at the sight of a giant poster of my book cover on the glass front door. Several diners acknowledge Richard's presence with discreet nods. He and I exchange looks of mutual pleasure and pride.

I recall a lurking feeling that things were going too well for us last year. My new book had the best reviews I ever had and I had been named a National Book Critics Circle finalist. Our children were leading productive lives, Lizzie working for the United Nations in Haiti, Chris writing his first book, Richard's sons, David and Anthony, grown, with beautiful children of their own. Richard had the toughest assignment of his career, but it was work he loved.

I am not a prayerful person. But I recall praying in mid-2010, Please God, don't let anything bad happen to us. This is my superstitious Hungarian side, that you are punished if you are too happy. When my late-night fears circled, my first thought was for my children. My husband was indestructible. He would always be there to pick up the pieces.

The distant war reaches out for Richard even during dinner. His phone rings and he leaves the table to talk. His soufflé—the restaurant’s specialty—is cold and flat when he returns. His phone rings again and he answers again. This time I scold him. “You are being rude.” He glowers at me and squeezes my hand hard. “You have no idea what’s going on,” he answers. “There is always something going on,” I protest. The ambassador notes Richard’s grip and shoots his wife a look. My husband catches himself. “Try this.” He offers me a forkful of his freshly remade cheese soufflé. A peace offering. I shake my head. “Oh please, it’s so good,” he coaxes me. I relent and he does not answer the next call.

Walking home from the rue de Sèvres, we stop in front of the beautiful Romanesque church of St.-Germain-des-Prés, which anchors this neighborhood. But his phone rings again and I am left to remember alone when I first learned about Romanesque churches from Richard, seventeen years ago, when we fell in love in this city.

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I get up early the next morning. He appears a few hours later, looking sheepish and like an unkempt boy. “You are so disciplined,” he says, finding me with my nose in a book, taking notes. “I have to be,” I answer. “I am not as quick as you. Come,” I say, patting the couch where I am sprawled. “Let’s read together.” Richard has two books in his briefcase, which have traveled back and forth to Afghanistan with him for months: Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* and John le Carré’s *Our Kind of Traitor*. “No, I’m going to buy you a new outfit for your book party,” he announces.

Both books are still on his nightstand in the rue des Écoles—unfinished.

Shopping in Paris is one of our rituals. It is the only place in the world Richard enjoys shopping. Our closets are full of Parisian purchases spanning the last decade and a half. In a chic Right Bank boutique, I parade several beautiful suits and dresses. Richard looks up from the phone and nods at the velvet suit I am modeling. “That color looks good on you,” he says. “C’est aubergine, monsieur,” the saleslady interjects. Richard has spotted some shoes of the same shade and, still on the phone, signals the lady to bring those, too. I decline the cashmere overcoat, the color of cream, that he drapes on my shoulder. “Let’s get a coffee,” I say, our time together nearly up.

On the rue de Rivoli, we squeeze into a crowded café terrace, Richard looking for shade, me for a sunny spot. “I’m sorry I can’t stay for your book party,” he says. “That’s the end of your perfect attendance record for four books,” I answer. “But you know I came just to be with you,” he says. “It won’t always be like this,” he promises. The black embassy car is at the curb; the driver is holding the door open. We kiss. It is our last time together in Paris.

From the café on the rue de Rivoli it is a short stroll to the W. H. Smith bookstore, where I now head. On the front table I see Bob Woodward’s new book, *Obama’s Wars*. I buy a copy and head back out into the October sunshine. At the Tuileries Garden, across the street, I pull up a wrought-iron chair and flip to the index. Holbrooke, R.: a great many listings. I turn to the one that also lists me. A wave of anger and disbelief washes over me as I read. According to Woodward, the president soured on Richard when my husband asked him to call him Richard, not Dick, at the ceremony appointing him special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. “For Kati,” Richard explained, “who is in the audience, and who doesn’t like ‘Dick.’”

How could the president—who once requested that his friends not call him “Barry”—hold this against Richard? I am too agitated to sit for another minute in the sunny gardens. Embarrassed that I made such a big deal of my preference for Richard over Dick, a fact I made clear to him the minute we met, in 1985. Angry

that such a trivial matter would turn the president against the man he just assigned his toughest foreign policy job. And then, as I head toward the Seine and home, I am overwhelmed by love for a man who would use his precious one-on-one with the commander in chief to ask a favor, for his wife! No wonder he never mentioned the Woodward book, nor brought a copy home. He was trying to protect me—as always. I have an urge to run after the limousine speeding him now to a military base outside Paris—to tell him I love him, one more time.

• • •

Aside from my superstitious fear that things were going too well for us, there were no signs, no portents of tragedy looming. He played tennis over Thanksgiving weekend in Southampton. We did a marathon of movies, his favorite pastime. But if I believed in signs, there was one. As Richard packed to return to Washington on that Sunday, he searched frantically for his wallet. We looked in all the usual places, emptied all pockets in his closet, and moved the bed and chest of drawers. No sign. Oh well, he said, it'll turn up. It always has.

I returned to New York, Richard to Washington. Every time he called, he asked if his wallet had turned up. There was no money in it. He had already canceled his credit cards and replaced his security passes. Still, he was agitated that it had not turned up, as it always had in the past. Why are you so upset? I finally asked him. "It's the picture of us in the Tuileries, and your sister's telephone number," he said. "I've had them since 1994." The wallet has still not turned up. Like Richard, it disappeared.

He disappeared. That is how it seems to me. I had assumed that death would be a gradual transition, a passage after long illness, and sad, unhurried good-byes. Not a midlife thunderclap.

One and a half hours before his collapse we were making our Christmas plans on the phone. We were finally getting away. I made him laugh when I described an incident in the news about an overzealous Homeland Security agent at LaGuardia, accused of groping by a diplomat we did not particularly like. An international incident was in the making—though compared to the life-and-death issues on which Richard spent every waking hour, a minor one. "Oh, it feels so good to laugh," Richard said. Just one more week, I said. "Well, don't bother coming to Washington this weekend," he said. "I'll be at the White House for the president's year-end review. Got to go meet with David Axelrod at the White House, then Hillary at State. Love you."

Love you, too.

When he called an hour and a half later I barely recognized his voice. "I feel a pain I have never felt," he said from the ambulance, en route to the George Washington University Hospital emergency room. This voice of deep pain was not one I had ever heard. "I have no feeling in my legs," he said. There was fear in my husband's voice. "I am on my way!" I shouted over the siren's wail. Those were my last words to Richard.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jules Thompson:

What do you with regards to book? It is not important together with you? Or just adding material when you need something to explain what the one you have problem? How about your spare time? Or are you busy person? If you don't have spare time to try and do others business, it is make one feel bored faster. And you have spare time? What did you do? Everybody has many questions above. They have to answer that question

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Lillian Thrasher:

Paris: A Love Story can be one of your basic books that are good idea. Many of us recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nevertheless delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort to set every word into satisfaction arrangement in writing Paris: A Love Story but doesn't forget the main point, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource info that maybe you can be among it. This great information can easily drawn you into new stage of crucial imagining.

Kathryn Hill:

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April Baker:

As a scholar exactly feel bored for you to reading. If their teacher questioned them to go to the library or to make summary for some publication, they are complained. Just minor students that has reading's internal or real their hobby. They just do what the trainer want, like asked to go to the library. They go to there but nothing reading significantly. Any students feel that examining is not important, boring and also can't see colorful photos on there. Yeah, it is for being complicated. Book is very important for you personally. As we know that on this era, many ways to get whatever we want. Likewise word says, ways to reach Chinese's country. Therefore this Paris: A Love Story can make you experience more interested to read.

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