



Paris: The Secret History

By Andrew Hussey

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If Adam Gopnik's *Paris to the Moon* described daily life in contemporary Paris, this book describes daily life in Paris throughout its history: a history of the city from the point of view of the Parisians themselves. Paris captures everyone's imaginations: It's a backdrop for Proust's fictional pederast, Robert Doisneau's photographic kiss, and Edith Piaf's serenaded soldier-lovers; a home as much to romance and love poems as to prostitution and opium dens. The many pieces of the city coexist, each one as real as the next. What's more, the conflicted identity of the city is visible everywhere-between cobblestones, in bars, on the *métro*.

In this lively and lucid volume, Andrew Hussey brings to life the urchins and artists who've left their marks on the city, filling in the gaps of a history that affected the disenfranchised as much as the nobility. *Paris: The Secret History* ranges across centuries, movements, and cultural and political beliefs, from Napoleon's overcrowded cemeteries to Balzac's nocturnal flight from his debts. For Hussey, Paris is a city whose long and conflicted history continues to thrive and change. The book's is a picaresque journey through royal palaces, brothels, and sidewalk cafés, uncovering the rich, exotic, and often lurid history of the world's most beloved city.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The 16th-century French wars of religion were less about Christian theology than about who ruled France; centuries later the French authorities, aided by , a significant number of ordinary citizens "willingly and enthusiastically" sent tens of thousands of Parisian Jews to their deaths during WWII. In his sprawling, eclectic, self-indulgent and entertaining unofficial antihistory of Paris, Hussey (*The Game of War: The Life and Death of Guy Debord*), head of French and comparative literature at the University of London in Paris, tells the story of Paris from the perspective of the city's marginal and subversive elements—insurrectionists, criminals, immigrants and sexual outsiders. Highlights include descriptions of the Pont-Neuf during the reigns of Henri IV and Louis XIII as a cultural epicenter, a hangout for con artists and prostitutes, and a cauldron of antigovernment, antiroyal and antireligious activity. Hussey also tells of the "sacred geometry" of Notre-Dame as vivified by Victor Hugo. Also noteworthy in this overstuffed, unrestrained effort are Hussey's critique of former French president Mitterrand as "a master of double-dealing and double-talk whose only real loyalty was to himself and his position in power," and Hussey's take on the 2005 riots instigated by violent black and Arab suburban youths. B&w illus. (*Jan.*)

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Review

" In his outrageously readable, impressively researched, shockingly violent alternative history of Paris, Andrew Hussey illuminates the city's gutters, stews, slaughters, riots, underbellies and crimes in the shadowy corners that Balzac relished. The result is, literally and figuratively, a fascinating riot of a book." -- Simon Sebag Montefiore

" Magnificent and entertaining...At every turn, on every corner, the idle traveller through the book finds something new." -- "London" Observer"

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About the Author

Andrew Hussey is a cultural historian and biographer. His previous book, a critically acclaimed biography of Guy Debord, was published in 2001. He is Lecturer in French studies at the University of Aberystwyth and divides his time between Ireland, Wales, and Paris.

Users Review

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Marlon Hood:

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