

*The Paris Library* by Janet Skeslien Charles is a fascinating and entertaining novel. It is based on the true story of the heroic librarians of the American Library in Paris (ALP) and the resistance movement they formed against the German occupation during World War II. In 1939 Odile Souchet, a recent library school graduate, lands her dream job at the ALP. Her father, captain of a police precinct, only wants to see Odile married. Odile thrives in her position at the library and makes many close friendships. She falls in love with Paul, a police officer. As the war and occupation escalate the Nazi "Library Protector" (aka as the Book-Nazi) comes to inspect the library. He admonishes the ALP director that certain books can no longer be circulated, and certain people (Jews) may no longer enter the library. Several of the library's most loyal subscribers are Jewish. The librarians pledge that delivering books to their Jewish patrons will be their form of resistance. As tensions mount in Paris, Odile wonders who locally is fueling the Nazi's with information for their arrests. Is there an informant among them?

*The Paris Library's* plot moves between war torn Paris and small-town Montana in 1983. Lily is an unhappy Montana teenager and Odile is her very private neighbor. Odile, a widow, attends church weekly but speaks to know one. Lily seeks out Odile's company and forms a friendship with her that helps Lily survive her mother's death and trying high school years. This bond ultimately changes both of their lives. The women's stories are juxtaposed, but it is the power of words that ultimately connects them. "*The Paris Library* is a reminder that we must protect and appreciate what we have," Charles said. This novel provides a valuable lesson for us all.