

***The Paris Daughter*** is an exceptional novel by Kristin Harmel. Elise and Juliette are American women who have made Paris their home. They meet in 1939 when Elise is pregnant with her first child and Juliette, who has two sons, is also pregnant. Elise is a sculptor, and her husband is a successful, well-known painter. Juliette and her husband own a lovely bookstore where they live with their family above the shop. Elise's daughter Mathilde and Juliette's daughter Lucie are born a week apart.

One of Juliette's favorite customers is Ruth Levy, a Jewish widow with two children. Ruth moved to France from Germany when she married her late French husband. She lives in fear and has been warning Juliette about Hitler's plans for the Jews since learning about Kristallnacht. Ruth receives the answer to her prayers. The Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE) will take Ruth's children and place them in a "safe" home. Ruth summons her courage and, with the help of the OSE, sends her children away. She prays that they will all be reunited one day. As World War II advances into France, Elise's husband disappears, and it's feared that he has been captured. He is a known communist and is involved in the resistance movement. Elise is given false documents and is told that for their own safety she must leave Paris without Mathilde. To protect Mathilde, she entrusts her with Juliette and promises to return for her. Mathilde becomes the fourth child in Juliette's family. Mathilde and Lucie are inseparable and are difficult to tell apart. Unfortunately, no one is safe in wartime. Juliette experiences unimaginable loss when her bookstore is bombed. After the war, Elise is greeted only with rubble when she returns to the bookstore for Mathilde. There is no sign of Juliette or her family. Elise finds the strength to search for answers while rebuilding her life and helping others.

***The Paris Daughter's*** plot is the perfect combination of a thought-provoking story and page turning suspense. Kristin Harmel has created a masterpiece.