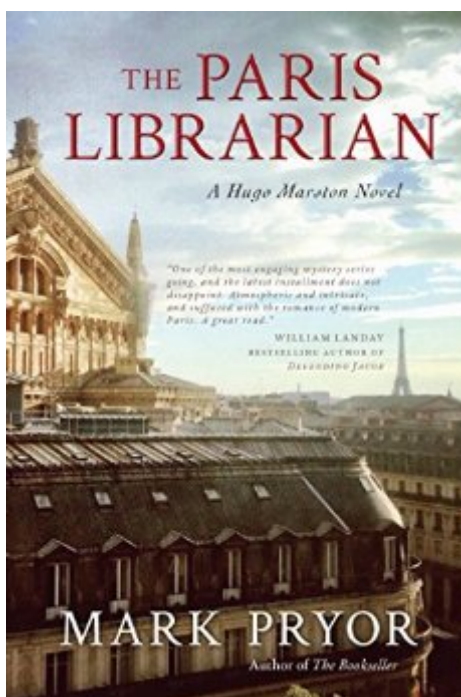


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The Paris Librarian: A Hugo Marston Novel (Hugo Marston Novels)



Synopsis

Hugo Marston's friend Paul Rogers dies unexpectedly in a locked room at the American Library in Paris. The police conclude that Rogers died of natural causes, but Hugo is certain mischief is afoot. As he pokes around the library, Hugo discovers that rumors are swirling around some recently donated letters from American actress Isabelle Severin. The reason: they may indicate that the actress had aided the Resistance in frequent trips to France toward the end of World War II. Even more dramatic is the legend that the Severin collection also contains a dagger, one she used to kill an SS officer in 1944. Hugo delves deeper into the stacks at the American library and finally realizes that the history of this case isn't what anyone suspected. But to prove he's right, Hugo must return to the scene of a decades-old crime. From the Trade Paperback edition.

Book Information

File Size: 1478 KB

Print Length: 270 pages

Publisher: Seventh Street Books (August 9, 2016)

Publication Date: August 9, 2016

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B0180SLMC8

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #12,172 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #70 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > International Mystery & Crime #74 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > International Mystery & Crime #2413 in Books > Literature & Fiction > United States

Customer Reviews

The head of the American Library in Paris is found in a locked room dead of an apparent heart attack. The library has just been given a cache of personal papers that may contain explosive information. Hugo Marston, head of security at the American embassy with connections in the French police force wonders if the two events are linked. Soon, new and surprising events raise

more doubts. The plot is complicated and intriguing. At a time when most fictional detectives seem to need medication, Hugo's polite and controlled behavior is a pleasant relief. Still, the author does not want his protagonist to be a faceless bureaucrat and tries, with limited success, to make him passionate by being avid book collector. The problem is the after a few interesting passages, collecting is forgotten. No real collector behaves this way. Mr. Pryor also creates unnecessary complications simply to demonstrate that Hugo is never guilty of a politically incorrect thought. This is tiresome and unbelievable. Nevertheless, these minor problems do not prevent this book from being highly enjoyable.

Having read all the Hugo Marston books and really enjoying them I can say that this is definitely the weakest in the series. The plot is slow-moving, murky and lacking any action. Usually the author, Mark Pryor, does a great job of weaving a tale of intrigue that keeps you guessing but this tale seems to continue to move forward based solely upon the happenstance of Marston stumbling into random things and magically being able to piece it all together at the very end in a very unconvincing way. It's very clear the author loves Paris and seemed to want to write a bit of a love letter to the city of Paris without marring it by some gruesome murder or crime. This was so odd because those who are familiar with this series know the author doesn't hesitate to plunge you into nasty aspects of murderer's minds or creepy events. The interactions with various characters were so shallow and were a major distraction from the narrative as a whole. With the allusion to a connected past with Tom and Hugo it seems pretty clear that this book was a set-up for something else and perhaps would have been better served as a novella instead of trying to stretch it into a full-length book. If you are new to the series, this isn't the place to start; check out the first book in the series and work your way through to this one. If you are familiar with Hugo Marston this book might fall a little flat for you so reader beware!

Lately I've been choosing mysteries and thrillers based on interesting locations. This one came along just as I'd returned from a dream trip to Paris where we stayed in the 7th arrondissement, which is coincidentally the location of the American Library that features in *The Paris Librarian*. And I'm always up for a mystery involving a library or other book-related themes and locations. As hoped, I enjoyed reminiscing over the familiar streets near the Eiffel Tower and the Champs du Mars, our metro stop Ecole Militaire, and the shops and cafes we passed by for a week. I wasn't as taken with the plot itself though, it seemed unlikely, and I lost interest several times and only kept going because of the library and surroundings. So I'm afraid Mark Pryor is not going on my list of

not-to-be-missed writers, but it was fun to visit Paris again in my imagination and memory.

Good entry in the series. I have read all of the Hugo Marston books and while this one is not the best I think it is up to par with many of the others. The writing style is good it is the mystery in this one that I had a problem with. In the very beginning of the book you are basically told who did it, whereas in the others there was a real build to find out who did it. Granted there is a twist toward the end that tells you the "why", but it just didn't hold me as well once was pretty sure I knew who had done it. The others in the series are much more page turners, where this one is more an easy walk through the pages. I like the characters in the series and his writing style, so I would recommend these books, I just hope the next one is another page turner like the earlier ones.

If you enjoy mysteries and love Paris, books and libraries, you are in for a great treat. Hugo is becoming a friend of mine. I met him in *The Bookseller* and in *The Crypt Thief*. Here he is again in *The Paris Librarian*, investigating once again in the city of lights. Hugo, a US Embassy employee in Paris, loves old books. So when his friend Paul, director of the American Library, informs him about an upcoming library sale, he is thrilled. Alas, when he gets there, his friend is found dead. Under mysterious circumstances. So Hugo starts digging, helped by his friend Tom, a former CIA agent, and his girlfriend Claudia. Paul had a difficult past. Did he just commit suicide, or did his past come to haunt him? Miki, a journalist, friend of Merlyn, Hugo's former colleague, has just arrived in Paris to research on special files stored somewhere in the library on American actress Isabelle Severin, who may have worked for the Resistance and even possibly killed a Nazi. Could this be connected to Paul's demise? And then, murders multiply. I thoroughly enjoyed this new mystery by Pryor, and devoured it in no time. The author has a knack for recreating so well the ambiance of Paris, especially the streets, this time around and also in the American Library (which even has a secret door, for real!), the center of this multi-layered mystery, rich in red herrings as well. There's plenty of dubious characters whom you are not sure you should trust or not. And it was cool spending time with the characters at Café Les Deux Magots. Now, when I take notes as I read along, I insert my own ideas about the plot. So I discovered at the end that I had actually identified who did what by chapter 6 and basically how, but as usual, I had no idea why. So the suspense got to be going to the very end, with its fun twists and turns.

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