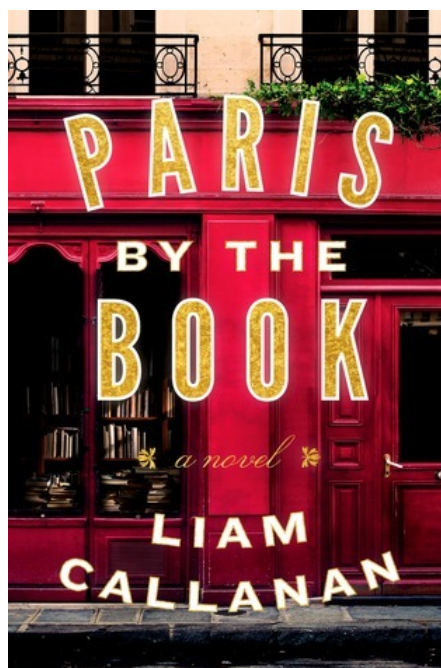




## Paris by the Book: A Novel

*Liam Callanan*

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# Paris by the Book: A Novel

*Liam Callanan*

**Paris by the Book: A Novel** Liam Callanan

**A missing person, a grieving family, a curious clue: a half-finished manuscript set in Paris. Heading off in search of its author, a mother and her daughters find themselves in France, rescuing a failing bookstore and drawing closer to unexpected truths.**

*Once a week, I chase men who are not my husband. . . .*

When eccentric novelist Robert Eady abruptly vanishes, he leaves behind his wife, Leah, their daughters, and, hidden in an unexpected spot, plane tickets to Paris.

Hoping to uncover clues--and her husband--Leah sets off for France with her girls. Upon their arrival, she discovers an unfinished manuscript, one Robert had been writing without her knowledge . . . and that he had set in Paris. The Eady women follow the path of the manuscript to a small, floundering English-language bookstore whose weary proprietor is eager to sell. The whole store? Today? Yes, but Leah's biggest surprise comes when she hears herself accepting the offer on the spot.

As the family settles into their new Parisian life, they can't help but trace the literary paths of some beloved Parisian classics, including *Madeline* and *The Red Balloon*, hoping more clues arise. But a series of startling discoveries forces Leah to consider that she may not be ready for what solving this mystery might do to her family--and the Paris she thought she knew.

At once haunting and charming, *Paris by the Book* follows one woman's journey as her story is being rewritten, exploring the power of family and the magic that hides within the pages of a book.

## Paris by the Book: A Novel Details

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## From Reader Review Paris by the Book: A Novel for online ebook

### Julie says

2.5 stars. Boy, was I looking forward to this book. Especially with two of my favorite things in the title, Paris and book. The story line was intriguing as well. Robert is a struggling author who needs to take time away from his wife Leah and two daughters, frequently. When he vanishes for a significant time period, the ladies pack up and head to Paris. They find a bookstore, move in to the apartment above and start a new life. They search the city high and low for their father/husband. This searching really wore me out. It became tedious to the point of not caring if he ever came back. What a bummer

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### Theresa Alan says

DNF When writer Robert Eady disappears, his wife, Leah, and daughters, Ellie and Daphne, don't know if he's alive or dead. I did want to find out the mystery of what happened to him, but unfortunately, the writing style made me not care enough to actually finish this book.

Leah's narration is incredibly odd. She'll skim over months and months. Events will abruptly happen. There is just no continuity in the narrative, and it bugged the heck out of me. Leah and her daughters go to Paris to find clues about what happened to Robert, and Paris is a city I love. Still, even the wonderful setting wasn't enough for me to get passed the 30 percent mark in this novel.

Thanks so much to NetGalley for the opportunity to review this novel.  
For more of my reviews, please visit <http://www.theresaalan.net/blog>

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### ?Dani? ?Touch My Spine Book Reviews? says

I just loved this novel and the plot was fantastic! I loved it until I got to the ending and felt like I was hit by a truck because there was too many unanswered questions and I didn't like the way it ended at all but everything besides that was great. I really felt Robert and felt I could relate in quite a few ways. I thought the story had wonderful characters and the setting was gorgeous! I mean, a bookstore with an apartment above painted beautiful red(my favorite color) and in beautiful Paris. I didn't like the way mental distress/illness was perceived by one of the characters at some points but with it's flaws, I'm still glad I read this book and enjoyed in the beginning, the tale of a romance with two awkward and unique people that fell in love.

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### Nancy says

The story could have been condensed by half, because halfway through I no longer cared whether the missing husband/father ever turned up.

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## Carol (Bookaria) says

This is a novel is about coping with loss and taking a leap of faith by following a dream.

Leah is devastated after her husband's disappearance. Soon after, Leah takes her daughters for a visit to Paris and ends up staying and managing a bookstore.

The premise sounds wonderful but I did not enjoy this novel as much as I expected. The main character goes on and on about *The Red Balloon* movie (and the book) and also about the *Madeline's* children's stories. After extensively describing them she returns again to it several times in the book.

Also, the pace is very slow. I had expectations this novel would have some mystery to it, and it does but I think the novel can be better categorized as women's fiction. After reading over 51% of it I found myself skimming some sections. I finished it expecting the pace would pick up later on but it didn't.

Overall, it was ok. As much as I love reading about Paris and bookstores the story could not hold my interest. 2.5 rounded up.

*I received an advance copy from the publisher via Netgalley*

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## Dorie says

I really wanted to love this book, this writer is from my hometown and the Milwaukee bookshop he references is also close to me. I would classify this more as women's fiction than anything else as the mystery is slow moving and is only part of the story.

Leah and Robert Eady had what started out as a good marriage with bright prospects for the future. They have two daughters, Daphne and Ellie, now young teens, and both parents are quite involved with the girls. Robert is a writer who had one bestseller but has been struggling for years to produce another. He goes on what he calls "write aways" which start to become longer and longer periods of time away from home. Leah is starting to have less and less patience with him and his habit of leaving short notes or clues as to where he is going. It soon becomes apparent that the marriage is headed for trouble and finally Robert disappears for what seems like forever. After the police and others have searched and searched for Robert, Leah finally finds a clue in a cereal box which leads to finding tickets for them all to go to Paris. With the family somewhat in shambles Leah decides to uproot the family, go to Paris and eventually stay. She becomes the owner of a bookstore, not unlike the one described in an unfinished manuscript of Robert's which comes to surface.

We are witness to the struggles that Leah and the girls have in Paris. At first it is difficult but the girls in particular seem to take to the city, the language, the whole different feeling that they are experiencing from their life in Milwaukee, youth usually acclimate quicker than adults in my experience.

Both Leah and Robert are obsessed with the "Madeline" series of children's books as well as a film called "The Red Balloon". I am familiar with the books but not the film.

Problems I had with the book. I found the plot very slow moving and somewhat choppy with references back and forth from past to present that did not flow well. The continued references to the Madeline books and The Red Balloon became tiresome and felt overdone. I didn't really feel a close connection to Leah, I enjoyed the point of views from the girls more interesting and caring.

This is a good story, particularly if you love Paris, which unfortunately I've never visited. The writing is good but as I mentioned slow moving, it took me several days to get through it because I kept putting it down. At 70% I started to enjoy the novel more as things finally started happening and the last quarter of the book is probably my favorite.

I received an ARC of this book from the publisher through NetGalley, thank you.

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## Bernadette says

3.5 Stars

I requested **Paris by the Book** from NetGalley initially because I liked the title and the cover. Then there was that opening line: "Once a week, I chase men who are not my husband..."

Liam Callanan's novel is a charming yet mysterious story about Leah and Robert Eady. The couple have two daughters, Daphne and Ellie and the family appears to have a relatively happy life until Robert, a novelist, disappears. Leah finds a clue that leads her to Paris in search of Robert. The Eadys have their own little obsessions with Paris. Leah loves the film **The Red Balloon** and Robert likes the **Madeline** series of books by Ludwig Bemelman.

Leah and the girls move into an apartment atop a failing bookshop. Callanan's details of this little corner of France pulled me in: the food, the books, the streets. **Paris by the Book** is a love story and a mystery. The meeting of Leah and Robert was one of my favorite parts of the novel. Leah and her daughters experience the loss that comes with the disappearance of a loved one.

My issue with the book was the repeated references to the **The Red Balloon** and **Madeline** which I thought were a bit overdone. Not having seen the film, I wondered if I was missing something in parts of the book. Overall, the book is a nice read that left me longing to visit a bookshop and Paris.

Thank you to Netgalley and Dutton for the opportunity to read this ARC.

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## Lisa says

Paris by the Book  
Liam Callanan

MY RATING ??????????  
PUBLISHER Dutton  
PUBLISHED April 3, 2018

A touching story of a family consumed by a mysterious disappearance that launches them on a literary journey in the City of Light.

### SUMMARY

They met outside a bookstore in Wisconsin! Leah, a former film student, whose favorite film was *The Red Balloon* by Albert Lamorisse and Robert, a struggling author, loved the *Madeline* books by Ludwig

Bemelmans. The two continued to debate about which was better, even after they got married and had children of their own, two little girls. Both works are set in Paris, and Leah and Robert's ultimate dream was to go to Paris, but there was never enough money. And then one day Robert went out for a run and totally disappeared. No one could find any trace of him, or knew whether he was dead or alive. Leah and the girls, Daphne, 14, and Ellie, 12, were devastated, confused and inconsolable. They don't want to believe that he is dead, but they also can't believe he would leave them for good. Perhaps it was time to go to Paris, maybe Robert was there. There are clues pointed in that direction, particularly a half finished manuscript about a family in Paris. Once they are there, it's not long before they are living above and running a failing bookstore...and believe they are seeing Robert everywhere.

## REVIEW

Paris by the Book is the story of a woman whose life has been usurped by her husband's disappearance. Leah's character is well developed and you can easily understand her struggle of not knowing if he is dead or alive. The mystery of Robert's disappearance most definitively propels the narrative. Parts of the story are brilliant and fun, while a few parts are confusing and slow. Leah's thoughts frequently are wandering here and there, pondering the past, struggling with the present and worried about the future. But who can blame her, given the situation. Book People and Paris lovers should appreciate this story. Not being familiar with The Red Balloon film, the book motivated me to watch it one afternoon. Very interesting! Liam Callanan is an American author and professor of English at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, his other novels include Cloud Atlas and All Saints. Thanks to Penguin for an advance reading copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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## Nikki (Saturday Nite Reader) says

### 3.5 stars

Is Leah a widow? For almost a year, she is unsure. Her husband, Robert, vanishes and I don't say suddenly, because it is like him to take a break from the family from time to time: this time, he doesn't leave a note and does not return. Is he leaving her clues to his whereabouts? Conflicted with her emotions, Leah and her daughters, Ellie and Daphne, take a trip to Paris in hopes of finding their father; if he is still alive.

The book does have a slow start, but I felt a need to discover what happened to Robert and kept on reading. About midway through the pace picked up a bit more and I felt more connected to Leah, Ellie, and Daphne.

It is a story about grief and how one's grief journey is never the same as another, and the need for family to understand each other is essential in moving forward (or to stay in one's preferred place until ready to move forward). The need to listen, and how often listening is avoided in order to protect one's own emotions. You are experiencing Leah, Ellie, and Daphne's journey and will find that you silently fight for them: for their protection.

This is not a read that you pick up if you are looking to brighten your mood. But, its a read that makes you think "what would you do in this position?" The concept was unique and I was not left disappointed when I finished. The ending suited the story.

I would rate this book a 3.5 out of 5. I liked it, but its one that you have to be in a certain mood to read, and need a bit of patience to read through the slower first half.

To read my reviews visit: [www.saturdaynitereader.com](http://www.saturdaynitereader.com)

### **Jill Frederickson says**

I found this book enchanting. It draws the reader in and keeps them off balance with the protagonist as she negotiates her new normal. It represents Paris through a variety of literary filters and adds its own spin. I enjoyed the settings, the characters and the way it did not take the easy way out.

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### **Lindsay - Traveling Sister says**

3.5 stars.

This was a story of family. A broken family searching to piece itself back together.

One day Leah's husband Robert, an eccentric novelist, vanishes. His absence leaves Leah and their two teenage daughters, Ellie and Daphne, alone and confused. In their search for Robert, mother and daughters, 'temporarily' move to Paris to continue exploring the possibilities of where he may be. Through hidden notes, hand written clues in books, a secret manuscript and mysterious 'sightings', the three women try to find their way back to becoming a family.

While parts of this novel felt slow and somewhat repetitive, looking back, it seems as though that may have been intentional. These women find themselves in a long, drawn out search to find answers and my journey, as the reader, felt similar (and not in a bad way). Upon finishing this novel, I look back and feel that my experience was a direct reflection of what the characters were going through. Quite simply, I felt a connection to these characters and their search.

The author, Liam Callanan, has a unique writing style. It took me more than a few pages to get into it, but once I did, I really connected with it. There were several sentences that made me stop and reread because the wording was just so good.

A big thank you to Edelweiss, Dutton and Liam Callanan for providing an ARC in exchange for an honest review!

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### **Julie Failla Earhart says**

First there is the title: What an enticement! Paris and books; I GOTTA read this novel.

Then there is the synopsis: An eccentric novelist who has gone missing. His grieving family. A bookstore. An unfinished manuscript by said missing novelist. I was already anticipating how wonderful this book would be.

Then there is the first sentence: "Once a week, I chase men who are not my husband." I can't wait to get my hands on a copy of this novel.

And finally I did.

Leah steals a copy of “The Red Balloon” from a Milwaukee book store. Robert sees, follows and confronts her. That’s how they met. The encounter sets up a sweet romance between the two who eventually get married and have two daughters.

Leah and her daughter don’t think much about it when their Robert turns up missing. He does that a lot. When he gets stuck in his work, he goes on writeaways. He always leaves a note. But this time there is no note. Still, they shrug it off as sometimes the notes are left in the strangest places.

Months pass, and the family goes about its daily life. Clues begin to surface in the strangest of places. One clue was six capital letters inside Robert’s favorite box of cereal.

Quickly deciphering the code, Leah and her daughters head to France in search of Robert. Looking for a place to stay, they stumble upon a small bookstore, whose owner is eager to sell. Leah buys it and the family starts to settle in with an eccentric cast of supporting characters. Leah discovers one of Robert’s books on the shelves and places it in the store window.

The girls are convinced that they catch glimpses of their father in various Paris locales, but Leah is convinced he is dead. When someone want to buy the book in the window, Leah discovers an “I’m sorry,” written on the inside cover. Who but Robert could have written that, and if did come into the shop, why didn’t he stay? There are so many questions with no answers.

Then a manuscript by Robert turns up. It’s like he’s been watching them, writing as their lives unfold. This part of the novel was rather hazy for me.

The story was interesting and I did enjoy it, but it moves rather slowly. Therefore, “Paris by the Book” receives 3 out of 5 stars in Julie’s world.

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### **Karen Mace says**

This should have been a book I adored! And from the blurb I thought I was going to be in for an incredible journey following a family who are beset by a disappearing husband, and their quest to trace him, wherever that may have been.

But for some reason I just found myself not connecting with the wife and daughters, as they moved to Paris where they opened up a bookshop and keep thinking that they spot the missing Robert, and is it him leaving messages in odd places? The story wasn't whimsical or emotional, and at times just felt a bit messy as the story wandered all over the place.

There were the odd moments that were delightful to read, namely their time in Paris and life in the bookshop, but as a family there just wasn't enough of the characters to capture your attention and to keep you caring as to what was going on. It was all just a little too complicated and I wish it had been just that bit shorter!

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### **Rachel Kamery / Never Enough Novels says**

2.5 Stars - I had such high hopes for a story about an American family who by happenstance ends up owning a bookstore in Paris. However, this one fell flat for me. The heart of this novel is the search for the husband,



who disappears before the wife and daughters move to Paris. The tone is rather sad and lonely and I still can't comprehend why the husband acts the way he does. I prefer my Paris novels full of hope and love and joy, an escape rather than a descent into the despair of broken families.

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## Susanne Strong says

3 Stars.

Leah and Robert were College sweethearts, always wanting to go to Paris, France, settling for trips to Paris, Wisconsin, and other cities and towns named Paris thinking, maybe one day.

Robert is a writer - he craves time alone and often takes off, he and Leah and his kids, Ellie and Daphne, have an understanding. When Robert needs time, he just leaves, always leaving a note, saying "be back soon." Sometimes he's gone for hours, sometimes days, never providing an explanation. One morning, Robert leaves and doesn't come back. At first, Leah and her girls think he simply took a trip and then, as the days go by, they think he abandoned them or worse. When Leah finds a confirmation code in a cereal box for 4 plane tickets to Paris, France, leaving in a few weeks time, Leah knows - she and the girls must go. Maybe, just maybe... Paris is like a dream for all of them, being able to let go, find each other, and get help. Once they receive a half finished a manuscript of Robert's, however, Leah, Ellie and Daphne have more questions than answers and can't help wonder if maybe Robert is alive.

"Paris by the Book" is a slow moving domestic drama about a family whose lives have been torn apart. There were times when I was deeply involved in the storyline and enraged at the character of Robert, who took off for days at a time with no explanation and seemed to have little regard for his family and at the character of Leah, who often cared more for her own regard than her daughters. Unfortunately, in my opinion, this novel included a bit more of a tell vs. show style of writing and had a tendency to overuse the phrases "I said" and "Ellie said" etc., which I admittedly grew a little tired of. The characters of Leah, Daphne and Ellie however, all had me fully invested in the storyline which made me eagerly await the outcome.

This was a sister read with Lindsay - thanks for reading this one with me Linds! Sorry it took me a little while to finish!

Thank you to Edelweiss, Penguin Publishing Group and Liam Callanan for an ARC of this novel in exchange for an honest review.

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