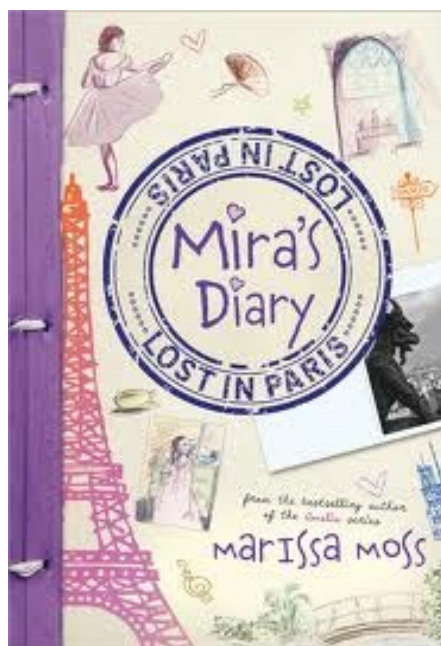




Mira's Diary: Lost in Paris

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Mira is shocked when she receives a postcard from her missing mother from Paris. Her father decides it's time for a trip to France to search for her. While visiting Notre Dame, Mira touches a gargoyle and is whirled into the past. There she meets the famous painter Degas and catches a brief, shocking glimpse of her mother. Mira begins to suspect that her mom didn't run out on them but is a prisoner of the past. Can one family on an incredible worldwide adventure stop a plot in time?

Mira's Diary: Lost in Paris Details

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Author : Marissa Moss

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From Reader Review *Mira's Diary: Lost in Paris* for online ebook

Breda says

Cute, and a great introduction for kids who might be interested in art or France but don't know much yet. It felt a little bit too educational with not enough heft for adult readers: I was disappointed, given how much I'd loved the *Amelia* series in my American Girl days. Moss's art is still lively but less witty, and the plot felt a bit scattershot. I would've preferred less jumping back-and-forth through time and a more focused narrative. But as an introduction to time travel for middle grade readers, this does the trick.

Even if I didn't love it, I'm sure this book will awaken a great love of art or Paris or time travel stories in many young readers.

I should also mention that I received a (signed) ARC of this at BEA.

Sonia says

If you're looking for an enjoyable MG with a little bit of everything -- time travel, culture, history, romance - - look no further! *Mira's Diary* is a fun and charming trip to Paris that you'll be able to race through in no time.

What starts off for the main character Mira as a trip to Paris to find her mysteriously missing mother quickly turns into a whirlwind of an adventure as she tries to shape the future and hide her identity. I can't say that I was familiar with most of the history and information shared in the book about Degas and that entire scandal but it was interesting to read about. I did feel like the information came a little abruptly at times (I would have liked a bit more of a break between chunks of it) but overall, it was very cool to learn.

Mira herself was an interesting character. I appreciated for the most part what she tried to accomplish throughout the novel but I also wish that her character had been a little more well-developed. At the end of everything, I still don't think I have a good sense of who Mira is.

A part of this, I suspect, is the constant back-and-forth with the time travel. Now look, I get it. Time travel novels usually have lots of this and it's fine! For some reason though, it didn't 100% work all the time with this novel for me. The jumping around got a little confusing for me and I kept having to go back and compare the dates in the chapter titles (super helpful, those).

Overall, a cute MG with great pictures to improve the experience even more! Lots of fun.

Cover Comments: I saw this IRL at a bookstore when it first came out and it looks adorable! I love the diary style of it.

Johnny says

While reading this book, I rolled my eyes a lot. While I understand it's aimed at a YA audience, the time traveling conceit isn't very clearly drawn and the characters are pretty flat. While I think the attempt to shed light on an important historical event here is important, I shouldn't have to wait until the acknowledgements

at the end of the book that details what was real and what wasn't to truly appreciate a book.

Angelc says

4.5 Stars

I loved this book for many reasons. I think it's great that a middle grade book is actively teaching young people about history, art, and tolerance all at the same time.

I loved the main message of the book, and that is tolerance. I hadn't heard of the Dreyfus Affair before, Dreyfus being accused of ugly crimes in 19th century France simply because he was Jewish. But I think that tolerance and acceptance is something that needs to be addressed in our society today. There is also a great message of standing up for what you think is right, in the face of intolerance, and I think that's what Mira was able to learn through her time travels.

I also loved being able to 'spend time' with Degas and Mary Cassatt in this book. It was great to see the artists' daily lives through the eyes of a friend. The Impressionist movement in France is a wonderful time in art history, and it's represented well in this story. Mira's sketches throughout the pages of the book added to the artistic story lines. She never saw herself as a good enough artist, but her sketches prove otherwise, something her friends were able to see.

Mira is a great character, and I really liked her relationship with her family and her 19th century artist friends. I loved the romantic story line between Mira and Claude, it was just enough romance for this age group. At the same time, it was heartbreaking in it's simplicity.

Overall, I loved this mix of history, mystery, and art, along with a fantastic message about tolerance that is still important today.

ARC sent by publisher in exchange for honest review

reviewed for <http://inthehammockblog.blogspot.com>

Margie aka The Bumble Girl says

What a surprising little time-traveling gem! I did not expect this "diary" to go the way that it did! Marissa Moss really knows her readers and how to tell a story fluently in journal form.

I was a bit surprised at the fact that Moss had chosen to dive into the 19th century Paris, France, surrounded by French artists and well into France's politics too. As much as the time-traveling was the main concern of the main character, the story focuses on intolerance and political corruption. At times, in my opinion, a bit too mature for the lower ages of the middle grade crowd.

The story begins with us getting to know Mira and her family, her mother has left them and they are dealing with why she would leave without any indication of her ever being unhappy and needing an outlet. Mira's father is so positive that her mother has left unwillingly and will be back as soon as she can. Her brother believes that she was having an affair and has gone to create a new life. Mira can't believe that her mother would ever leave such a loving and talented husband or a smart and promising son... but she thinks that if she had any reason to leave behind anything, it would be Mira.

And then they receive a postcard from Paris with a breezy message ending with "Love, Mom" - no one understands why she is there and why she sounds... happy?

Off to Paris they go!

Within a few hours of being in Paris, Mira time-travels back to 1881 and is off on her first adventure ever. While back-in-time, she meets a handsome boy who works with the famous artist, Degas. Thrown right into the middle of the artists world, Mira, who wishes to be an artist herself, observes her new world and doodles along the pages of her journal. Yes, the journals is filled with all kinds of drawings by her.

Mira also sees and finds things that she's never thought of being in the midst of.

Coming from a world that she always took advantage of and never had to think twice about, she is surprised by the intolerance of the Jewish people in France and soon discovers that there are deeper things going on within the society and government.

Readers will learn a lot about France's history and art history, while seeing a bit of a romance brew between Mira and Dega's assistant, Claude. The suspense of finding out what is going to happen, will Mira find her mother and how Mira will get back to her own time will keep you up for hours to finish this book!

Chapter by Chapter says

At a first glance, I didn't really know what to expect from Mira's Diary: Lost in Paris. I mean, the title did give me a hint and since I went into the novel with a brief idea of the synopsis, I had no idea what I would find in the contents of the novel. It's no secret that it appears to be a middle-grade novel and since I'm more used to the YA scene, I gotta admit I was a bit hesitant. But after reading the opening sentence I was already sure that this would be an intriguing read.

Mira's Diary (which I feel is a more suitable shortened form, agreed?) is the story of fourteen year old Mira; a Jewish girl with a missing mother who has been missing for a long amount of time. Upon receiving a postcard from her mother, Mira's family finds themselves on a trip to Paris where (after touching) a gargoyle she ends up flying into the nineteenth century in a quest to change the past.

The one thing that instantly caught my interest was that Mira was fourteen, that's close to my age group and I immediately wanted to see if author Marissa Moss would be capable of making a fourteen year old girl realistic.

I find it great to say that Marissa Moss not only succeeded, but also did not have to use "foul language" during any scene of the novel. Considering that this is middle-grade, that shouldn't be surprising, but nonetheless I have found that in YA to make a character more realistic authors will add swears as a way to represent the hormones or something—and that's not the case in Mira's Diary. It's actually a really cute book despite what comes about later and that is:

Racism and racism against Jewish people.

While in the past, Mira finds herself having to change a past event that involves a wrongly accused Jewish

man. Apparently in nineteenth century France, the people were extremely biased towards the Jewish community and treated them in ways that you can only find in a history book considering that it's a lot different than the way people act in the present. I found it a bit dark, but I have gotta admit that it was really innovative.

When it comes to today's readers, I'd definitely tell them to read this novel as a way to recognize that the past really is important and that it's best not to forget what has happened before our time.

The coolest part about the novel's plot was that apparently some of the event's, plot points and are based on real things. Really, how many time-travelling novels are based on actual things? I'm sure that some readers can name a few, but since I've seldom found them, I found that part awesome and straight up great!

I'd recommend Mira's Diary: Lost in Paris to readers who want a quick read, a novel that is eye-opening and to readers who want to step away from the YA scene with a great book.

Justin says

This book is really fun, it is fairly light while still having some tough elements. I was really impressed with the authors ability to capture the feel of the different times throughout the books seeing as it does involve time travel after all. Granted it only spans the course of a few years, you do notice subtle little changes as you're reading. I also really liked all the fun illustrations that are in the book, it's always enjoyable when books have a visual aid to go along with the story. Helps make it all that muse more immersive and fun. Marissa's writing is wonderful though, she did a really great job making this story fun and easy to read.

The story is surprisingly quite complex. You have time travel, a family searching for their mom and also all of the things that take place during the time travel such as trials, etc. I am not going to go into a ton of detail about the book, other than that it takes place in 2012 and the 1880-1890's. I just thought the time travel, and the little adventures Mira went on in the past trying to find her mom was a lost of fun. There are several elements in the book that I think readers will really be surprised with to.

The characters in Mira's Diary were just as fun as the rest of the book. You had quite a mix of characters between the present and the 1880-1890's where Mira traveled back to. I really enjoyed them all though, I don't really think I had any issues in particular with any of the characters other than that there were a few I would of liked to know a little more about. Complete side note, but I would of liked to have known what exactly happened with a few of them.

Another thing I found really interesting, is how a lot of the book was based around actual events and people in history. I didn't even realize that until reading some of the Authors Note at the end. So it is nice to see that there is at least some truth to it. Always makes books seem much more enjoyable when they involve actual events, even if they are changed a little to help the story progress.

Overall I was really impressed with this book. It's a fairly quick read, that I feel will really be able to capture peoples attention when they read it. If this sounds like a book you might enjoy, then I would have to highly suggest checking it out. Even if you're just looking for a fun, short book to give you something light to read then this would be a great choice.

Dov Zeller says

I was interested in this "Mira's Diary" because it's a YA time travel book concerned with Jewish history. The basic premise: after Mira and her family receive a mysterious old postcard of a gargoyle on Notre Dame in Paris from Mira's inexplicably absent mother, Mira and her father and brother go to Paris in search of her. During their first outing, to Notre Dame, Mira touches one of its gargoyles and finds herself transported to the late 19th century (decked out in period garb and everything) and discovers that her mother has not abandoned the family, but, rather, is also traveling through time. Mira spends the rest of the book trying to get in touch with her mother, to dodge the evil Madam LeFoutre, to keep history on course (whatever that means) and, of course, trying to make sense of her questionable gift.

The historical details in this book were much more compelling to me than the writing and the story, which were very so-so. The author does a great job setting the scene and introducing characters. I also really appreciated the afterward, which gives a bit more information about the Dreyfus Affair and its key players.

If you are looking for a book with well-developed characters and story, this is unlikely a book for you. If you are looking for a book that uses a flimsy story-line to ground you in the fascinating goings-on-about-France during the time of the Dreyfus Affair, and the competing social and cultural forces at play, read this book!

Nafiza says

I am somewhat hesitant to review this book because I feel like I read it from a very adult perspective and therefore will not accurately be able to say whether a middle-grader (who are the intended audience) will enjoy it. The novel is a first in what seems to be a series and we start off with very interesting family dynamics. Mira's mother is missing – they thought she had been kidnapped/killed/etc because she did not leave any letter or forwarding address or anything that would let the family know that she was okay. Out of the blue, Mira's family gets a postcard from her from Paris in which she feeds them, what seems to Mira, a whole bunch of lame excuses that she chooses not to believe. Her father however refuses to consider that she simply left them and is convinced that something nefarious is involved. So he, because of a very convenient grant that allows him to take pictures all over the world, packs them up and gets them to Paris.

I initially was intrigued by this because we usually have disappearing parents but never any stories where the child along with her family actively pursues the missing parent. Things become convoluted when Mira discovers that she has time traveling powers. The sketches in the novel liven it up but I am afraid I had rather many problems with the execution of what seems like a fantastic premise. For one thing, Mira's age is never apparent in the way she behaves. Her preoccupation with getting a kiss from Claude is at odds with the middle-grade age I keep thinking her to be. The romance is rushed and unnecessary. I was also unable to believe the ease with which Mira navigates historical Paris. She meets all these famous figures and they conveniently happen to have the time and willingness to see her? And she sees them at intervals so they have grown older while she remains the same age – why would they not question the disparity? Why does her mother run away every time she sees her – yes, there's a justification given but it's too transparent and doesn't hold up to proper question – why would a mother not be concerned that her very young daughter is running wild in a strange place that she knows no one? Why does she change clothes automatically every time she time travels? How does that happen? How did she learn to time travel? Is it genetic? If so, does her brother have the same abilities and if not, why not?

There are too many questions that remained unanswered by the end of the book. I appreciated that Moss took a heavy subject – anti-Semitism – as a theme for her book but I found the execution a bit lacking. If I had these many questions, children will have many more.

Arminzerella says

After Mira's mother mysteriously disappears, the family receives a postcard from her (from Paris, France) and Mira's father decides to whisk the kids (Mira and her older brother Malcolm) off for the next year on sabbatical with him as he photo-documents the modern wonders of the world. Almost as soon as they arrive, Mira discovers that she has the ability to travel through time using various touchstones – objects that reveal themselves to her and compel her to touch them. She finds her mother in Paris of the late 1800s (she is also a time-traveler) and becomes embroiled in her plot to change history. What unfolds is a story of famous artists, anti-Semitism, and military conspiracy when a French soldier is wrongly accused of treason. Mira makes several jumps between the past and the present – keeping her family apprised of the situation (dad actually knows about his wife's time traveling ability). It seems that her efforts have done some good, but it's not enough – her mother does not return to the present. Presumably the search for mom continues in subsequent books.

I really liked Marissa Moss' Amelia series (also diaries, but with artwork), so I was hoping this would be something similar for an older audience. I didn't think "Lost in Paris" was as well-written as the Amelia books, however. It was very disjointed - too much jumping around between times, and the pacing was odd and irregular. Mira's interactions/relationships with the people she met in the past were superficial, and as a result it was hard to care about any of the characters. While some of the historical details are interesting, the narrative is often sacrificed in favor of sharing them and advancing the plot. I suppose the intention is to bring history to life in a fun and entertaining way, but I found this entry somewhat disappointing.

Ashley ? says

This book was a wonderful mix of non fiction and fiction. A great book to read on a rainy day.

Margo Tanenbaum says

In Mira's Diary, Moss creates a time travel story melding the exciting artistic world of 19th century Paris with the shocking political intrigue and anti-Semitism of the infamous Dreyfus affair. Although the Dreyfus affair is well known to those interested in French history, it's certainly not a topic most young people in the U.S. will be at all familiar with, and I applaud Moss for choosing to set her story around this important tale of corruption and scapegoats.

Our story begins when young Mira receives a strange postcard of a gargoyle from Notre Dame in Paris from her mother, who has been missing without any explanation for many months. Not only is the black and white postcard very old-fashioned looking, so is the faded French stamp. And "who sends postcards anymore?," wonders Mira.

With the postcard their only clue, Mira, her father, and her 16-year old brother take off to Paris, hoping to find her mother. They check into a quaint hotel in the Marais, Paris' historic Jewish quarter, before going off to explore the famous cathedral. Mira can't help looking everywhere for her mother, but it's not until she touches a gargoyle on the top gallery of the cathedral that she realizes she's been looking in the wrong century! Magically transported to April, 1881, Mira not only befriends a good-looking young man who turns

out to be an assistant to the famous French artist Degas, she also finds herself embroiled in the Dreyfus affair, a political scandal that involved the French army and virulent anti-Semitism in the French military and society at large. Mira spots her mother several times, and receives several mysterious and secret notes from her. It's clear that her mother is in danger, and Mira must step up to try to keep Dreyfus, a Jewish army officer, from being unjustly punished as a traitor.

This novel manages to mix very serious topics such as prejudice and anti-Semitism with an up-close look at late 19th century Parisian artistic life, letting us visit Giverny, Montmartre, the Impressionists Exhibition, and Parisian salons populated by famous artists such as Degas, Monet, Seurat, and Mary Cassatt. Moss even throws in a hint of romance between Mira and Degas' handsome young assistant Claude. Although readers will learn a lot about history and art through this book, they will also be entertained by the suspenseful story featuring a likable heroine who finds herself in a difficult--and certainly unusual--situation.

In the manner of her Amelia's Notebook series and her historical journals, Moss gives this new book the feel of a real journal or diary, from the cover with its mock journal binding to the charming small pencil sketches distributed liberally throughout the novel and the endpapers decorated with Mira's notes to herself, a map of France, and French vocabulary.

An extensive author's note provides a detailed explanation of the complexities of the Dreyfus affair (geared for tween readers) and the military corruption and anti-Semitism it exposed in 19th century Paris. Moss also provides brief notes on Paris in the late 19th century, the impressionist art movement, and author Emile Zola, who wrote the famous "J'accuse" newspaper article in favor of Dreyfus. A bibliography lists other resources and books consulted by the author.

Sandra Bornstein says

A couple of weeks ago, I attended the Colorado Council International Reading Association (CCIRA) in Denver. I had the distinct pleasure of listening to one of Marissa Moss' talks that included a discussion of her book, *Mira's Diary: Lost in Paris*. Despite my interest in Jewish children's books, I was unfamiliar with her writing and was pleasantly surprised by the information that she shared. To date, Marissa has authored and illustrated over fifty children's books. She is best known for the Amelia series that she published over a decade ago.

As a Jewish historian, I was intrigued by her desire to bring the controversial topic of the Dreyfus Affair to the attention of a middle school audience. I applaud anyone who makes a conscious effort to unearth historical moments to youthful readers. In fact, everyone needs to be given periodic doses of history. In a room filled with over 30 local educators, I was the only one who knew anything about the infamous Dreyfus Affair. After attending the talk, I purchased a copy of *Mira's Diary: Lost in Paris* and had Marissa kindly autographed my copy.

Marissa uses a lighthearted approach to retelling parts of this disturbing story of 19th century corruption and anti-Semitism. Told through the eyes of Mira, the main character, readers follow the diary entries that chronicle Mira's adventures as she travels back in time. For readers who might be unfamiliar with 19th century Europe, the jumping back and forth in time might be confusing.

As an addendum to the story, Marissa includes an informative author's note and bibliography. This section will clarify any gaps in understanding. It provides a plethora of facts and a chronology of events.

Not only does Mira reveal some of the key aspects surrounding the political turmoil, she also interacts with

several famous painters of this era. Marissa does a wonderful job describing life in 19th century Paris and includes a romantic subplot that might further engage readers. In addition to Mira's popping in and out of 19th century France, she plays a cat and mouse game trying to connect with her mother who is a fellow time traveler.

Some historical fiction authors use time travel as a means to engage their readers. It provides a fanciful avenue to explore history. However in this instance, the connection between the past and present is a bit hazy. After learning about the ramifications of the Dreyfus Affair and that history is dependent on a series of events, I question whether modern middle school readers will fully relate to these 19th century injustices. Did this mother-daughter duo meddling in past events highlight the importance of making a difference or distract from actual historical events?

As the first book in this series, Marissa leaves the reader bewildered on a few other issues. Perhaps, her sequel, *Mira's Diary: Home Sweet Rome*, will address these points. (Due out April 1, 2013) Will Mira's 21st century life be any different as a result of her time travel experience? How will Mira divide her time between the 21st century and her extraordinary gift of time travel? What impact will future time travels have on Mira's family?

I cannot help but compare Mira's Diary to the award-winning story, *The Devil's Arithmetic*. In that story, Jane Yolen's main character was forever changed by her time travels back to the time of the Holocaust. Mira was impacted by what she experienced, but I wonder if her travels will have any long term implications.

In the beginning, I struggled with trying to figure out why Mira's mother disappeared. Her mysterious departure seemed unnatural and the dynamics of the family's relationship was strange. After Mira encountered her mother in 19th Paris, the callous aspect of this mother-daughter relationship lingered. Mira was intent on helping her mother change the course of history while her mother seemed a bit standoffish. The intrigue surrounding this mother-daughter time travel experience partially negated this sense of oddness. There were rules that supposedly prevented direct contact between time traveling family members. Nevertheless, I am left wondering why a mother would prefer time traveling over spending time with her adolescent children. Once again, I hope that future books will shed more light on this point.

I cannot say with certainty that an adolescent reader would share my middle-aged perspective. That is one of the drawbacks of reviewing literature that is intended for a much younger audience.

After this initial exposure to Marissa's writing, I look forward to reading more of her books. I hope that the sequel will answer some of my questions.

This review originally appeared on my website <http://www.sandrarnstein.com/time-t...>

Ms. Yingling says

When Mira's family gets a postcard from her mother, who has disappeared, they all decide to go there, since the father has conveniently gotten a fellowship there. Mira hopes to find her mother, and she does... but only after she travels back in time to 1881. She meets Claude, who offers to help her find a place to stay. He is working with a group of artists, so Mira ends up at Mary Cassat's. She has limited contact from her mother, who tells her that she is a time traveler, must follow certain rules, and that they are both in that time to prevent an injustice. Mira soon finds out that the injustice has to do with the treatment of Jews at the time, and she is drawn in to the story of Alfred Dreyfuss. She goes back to 2012 to let her father know what is going on, but then goes back to 1895, where she is still unable to help as much as she would like, and when it

is awkward for her and Claude (who fell in love with her) because he is now so much older. Since her mother does not come back to the present, a sequel is probably forthcoming. Historical notes at back, and sketches accompanying text.

Strengths: Good time travel method (touchstones) and purpose, lots of historical information.

Weaknesses: This might have too much historical information for the casual reader who is more familiar with Moss' Amelia books than her other work. I knew a bit about the artists that appear (Degas, Renoir, Manet), and I still had to concentrate to follow.

Dorine White says

Mira's Diary-Lost in Paris, is the first in a new middle grade series written by Marissa Moss and published by Sourcebooks Jabberwocky.

The Story-

Mira's mom disappeared six months ago, and hasn't been heard from since. But, on June 11 a postcard from Paris arrives, signed by her mother. Along with her brother Malcolm and their dad, the family travels to France to look for their missing mom.

They head to where the postcard was taken, Notre Dame cathedral. When Mira touches a gargoyle, she suddenly finds herself back in the past, in 1881, France. And guess what? She sees her mom there too. They are both time travelers. However, Mira's mom won't talk to her and explain what is happening. Every time Mira sees her, her mom runs away.

Mira is on her own, but finds friends with artists like Degas and Mary Cassatt. Soon Mira is deep into a mystery involving a falsely accused soldier who is hated because he is Jewish. Mira hopes that by solving the mystery, she will get to go home and bring her mom with her.

My thoughts-

I had a hard time deciding what I wanted to say about this book. First off, though middle grade in style, some of the elements felt older to me, there's even mention of the mom leaving the family because of a love affair. Also, the main arc never concludes. We are left with the same questions we started with.

The main story line is about intolerance to Jewish persons. I found that the subject was a bit too heavy for the lightness of the book. This is the part I have a hard time describing. I just felt there was too much of the subject matter and it overwhelmed the story.

Now, the time traveling premise is great, and holds lots of promise. Unfortunately the mom is never able to tell us much about it. The sub plot involving the great artists of the time is fantastic. It is this subplot which really brought the book to life for me. Mira spends time with Degas, Cassatt, Renoir, Monet, Rodin, and writer Zola. The world she visits is fascinating and is developed well by the author. As the reader, you feel as if you were back in the 19th century.

I did not like the mother character. She is very distant and cold. And I did not have any sympathy towards her. She's a time traveler! Why didn't she come back and see her family, even if just for a minute? And the whole time Mira is in the past, her mom won't speak or touch her for fear of something cosmic going wrong.

Blah! Luckily Mira is a great character and I was interested in her choices and paths.

Mira's Diary- Lost in Paris is available now.
