

***The Paris Orphan* by Natasha Lester**

First of all, there is no shortage of World War II historical fiction available, so if this book isn't for you, keep looking! *The Paris Orphan* is a heartbreaking story of love and war.

The Paris Orphan is written in two time lines, the first beginning in 1942, with Jessica May. May is on the brink of an expansive modelling career when she is derailed by a photo her photographer boyfriend sells to an advertiser. The relationship has already cracked, and his behavior splits it wide open. May finds herself in need of a new occupation, at least temporarily. She has done some writing and photography work, and upon landing an assignment as a female photojournalist, she finds the warfront in Europe appealing. The job is difficult and incredibly ugly. Horrific scenes of war, destruction and abuse are quickly the norm in May's travels, and her role as an American woman often puts her in additional danger. U.S. Captain Dan Hallworth works to keep her and other women journalists safe, and through Dan she is introduced to a young orphan, Victorine.

In 2005 D'Arcy Hallworth (Victorine's daughter) is sent to France to package and ship a famous collection for an exhibit in Australia. Victorine has shared very little about her early life, and even less about D'Arcy's parentage. The past and the present will meet before D'Arcy completes her tasks, bringing not only her history but the story of Jessica May to light.

The Paris Orphan was published in 2019, but came to my attention recently while looking for something to read while on vacation. In the author's notes at the end of the book Lester writes about her research into the life of Lee Miller, upon who Jessica May is based. Please be aware, the author does write quite extensively and graphically about war-related horror and abuse, as these details often parallel Miller's story. I have not read anything else by Lester, but Eureka PLD does own two other books by her, *The Paris Seamstress* and *The Riviera House*.