



CARA BLACK

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

"A taut, smart, heart-in-throat
page-turner worthy of the most
discerning reader of John le Carré,
Daniel Silva or Alan Furst. Brava!"

—Pam Jenoff

A NOVEL

**ONE AMERICAN RIFLEWOMAN. ONE IMPOSSIBLE SPY MISSION.
ONE SHOT AT CHANGING THE COURSE OF HISTORY.**

THREE HOURS IN PARIS



TABLE OF CONTENTS

An Excerpt from the Novel

Praise for Three Hours in Paris

Three Hours in Paris: The Novel that Pursued Me by Cara Black

An Interview with Cara Black

About the Author

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SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 1940

NINE DAYS INTO THE GERMAN OCCUPATION OF PARIS

Montmartre, Paris | 6:15 A.M. Paris time

Sacré-Coeur's dome faded to a pale pearl in the light of dawn outside the fourth-story window. Kate's ears attuned to the night birds, the creaking settling of the old building, distant water gushing in the gutters. It was her second day waiting in the deserted apartment, the Lee-Enfield rifle beside her.

Will this really happen?

She moved into a crouch on the wood parquet floor in front of the balcony and winced. Her knee throbbed—she had bruised it on that stupid fence as the parachute landed in the barnyard. She smelled the faint garden aroma of Pears soap on her silk blouse, which was dampened by perspiration. The June day was already so warm.

She dipped her scarf in the water bottle, wiped her face and neck. Took another one of the pink pills and a swig of water. She needed to stay awake.

As apricot dawn blushed over the rooftop chimneys, she checked the bullets, calibrated and adjusted the telescopic mount, as she had every few hours. The spreading sunrise to her left outlined the few clouds like a bronze pencil, and lit her target area. No breeze; the air lay still, weighted with heat. Perfect conditions.

"Concentrate on your target, keep escape in the back of your mind," her handler, Stepney, had reminded her en route to the airfield outside London Friday night. "You're prepared. Follow the fallback protocol." His last-minute instruction, as she'd zipped up the flight suit in the drafty hangar: "Always remember who you're doing this for, Kate."

"As if I would forget?" she'd told him. She pushed away the memory that engulfed her mind, the towering flames, the terrible cries, and looked him straight in the eye. "Plus, I can't fail or you'll have egg all over your face, Stepney."

As dawn brightened into full morning, Kate laid her arm steady on the gilt chair on which she had propped the rifle. From the fourth floor her shot would angle down to the top step. Reading the telescopic mount, she aligned the middle of the church's top step and the water-stained stone on the limestone pillar by the door; she'd noted yesterday that the stain was approximately five feet ten inches from the ground. She would have been able to make the shot even without it—three hundred yards was an easy shot from one of the best views of the city. Next, she scoped a backup target, referencing the pillars' sculptured detail. She'd take a head shot as he emerged from the church's portico, fire once, move a centimeter to the left and then fire again. Worst-case scenario, she'd hit his neck.

With a wooden cheek rising-piece and a telescopic sight mount on its beechwood stock, the Lee-Enfield weighed about ten pounds. She'd practiced partially disassembling the rifle every other hour, eyes closed, timing herself. She wouldn't have time to fully strip it. Speed would buy her precious seconds for her escape before her target's entourage realized what had happened. Less than a minute, Stepney had cautioned, if her target was surrounded by his usual Führer Escort Detachment.

Her pulse thudded as she glanced at her French watch, a Maquet. 7:59 A.M. Any moment now the plane might land.

Kate sipped water, her eye trained on the parishioners mounting Sacré-Coeur's stairs and disappearing into the church's open doors: old ladies, working men, families with children in tow. A toddler, a little girl in a yellow dress, broke away from the crowd, wandering along the portico until a woman in a blue hat caught her hand. Kate hadn't accounted for the people attending Mass. Stupid. Why hadn't Stepney's detailed plan addressed that?

She pushed her worry aside. Her gaze focused through the telescopic sight on the top step, dead center. Her target's entourage would surround him and keep him isolated from French civilians.

That's if he even comes.

The pealing church bells made her jump, the slow reverberation calling one and all to eight o'clock Mass. Maybe she'd taken too much Dexedrine.

But she kept her grip steady, her finger coiled around the metal trigger, and her eye focused.

A few latecomers hurried up the church steps. Kate recognized the concierge of the building she was hiding in. She'd sneaked past the woman yesterday, using her lock-picking training to let herself into one of the vacated apartments. An

unaccustomed thrill had filled her as the locked door clicked open—she'd done it, and after only brief training in that drafty old manor, God knew where in the middle of the English countryside.

After the flurry of the call to Mass, a sleepy Sunday descended over Montmartre. The streets below her were empty except for a man pushing a barrow of melons. He rounded the corner. The morning was so quiet she heard only the twittering of sparrows in the trees, the gurgling water in the building pipes.

The wood floor was warm under her legs. On the periphery of the rifle's sight a butterfly's blue-violet wings fluttered among orange marigolds.

8:29 A.M. Her heart pounded, her doubts growing. Say her target's plans had changed—what if his flight landed tonight, tomorrow or next week? She wondered how long she could stay in this apartment before the owners returned, or a neighbor heard her moving around and knocked on the door.

8:31 A.M. As she was thinking what in God's name she'd do if she was discovered here, she heard the low thrum of car engines. Down rue Lamarck she saw the black hood of a Mercedes. Several more followed behind it, in the same formation she'd seen in the newsreels Stepney had shown her. She breathed in deep and exhaled, trying to dispel her tension.

She edged the tip of the Lee-Enfield a centimeter more through the shutter slat. Kept the rifle gripped against her shoulder and watched as the approaching convertibles proceeded at twenty miles an hour. In the passenger seat of the second Mercedes sat a man in a white coat like a housepainter's; in the rear jump seats, three gray uniforms—the elite Führerbegleitkommando bodyguards. She suppressed the temptation to shoot now—she would have only a one in five chance of hitting him in the car. Besides, that might be a decoy; her target could be riding in any of the cars behind the first Mercedes.

The second Mercedes passed under the hanging branches of lime trees. A gray-uniformed man with a movie camera on a tripod stood on the back seat of the last Mercedes, capturing the trip on film. She held her breath, waiting. No troop trucks. The cars pulled up on the Place du Parvis du Sacré-Coeur and parked before the wide stairs leading to the church entrance.

This was it. Payback time.

The air carried German voices, the tramp of boots. And then, like a sweep of gray vultures, the figures moved up the steps, a tight configuration surrounding the man in the white coat. He wore a charcoal-brimmed military cap, like the others. For a brief moment, he turned and she saw that black smudge of mustache. The Führer was in her sights now, for that flash of a second before his bodyguards

ushered him through the church door. As Stepney had described, five feet ten inches and wearing a white coat. In her head she considered his quick movements, rehearsed the shot's angle to the top step where he'd stand, the timing of the shot she'd take, noting the absence of wind.

The church door opened. So soon? Kate curled her finger, keeping focus on the church pillar in her trigger hairs. But it was the woman with the blue hat, leading the toddler in the yellow dress by the hand. The little girl was crying.

Why in the world did the child have to cry right now?

It all happened in a few seconds. A gray-uniformed bodyguard herded the woman and child to the side and the Führer stepped back out into the sunlight. Hitler, without his cap, stood on the top step by himself. He swiped the hair across his forehead. That signature gesture, so full of himself.

The wolf was in her sights. Like her father had taught her, she found his eyes above his mustache.

Never hold your breath. Her father's words played in her head. *Shoot on the exhale.* She aimed and squeezed the trigger.

But Hitler had bent down to the crying toddler. A spit of limestone dust puffed from the church pillar. The child's mother looked up, surprised, finding dust on her shoulder. Any moment the guards would notice.

Concentrate.

As calmly as she could and willing her mind still, Kate reloaded within three seconds, aimed at his black hair above his ear as he leaned over, extending his hand to the little girl's head, ruffling her hair. The guards were laughing now, focused on the Führer, whose fondness for children was well-known.

Kate pulled the trigger again just as Hitler straightened. Damn. The uniformed man behind him jerked.

As the shot zipped by him one of the guards looked around. She couldn't believe her luck that no one else had noticed. She had to hurry.

Reloading and adjusting once more, she aimed at the point between his eyes. Cocked the trigger. But Hitler had lifted the little girl in his arms, smiling, still unaware that the man behind him had been hit. The toddler's blonde curls spilled in front of Hitler's face.

Her heart convulsed, pain filling her chest. Those blonde curls were so like Lisbeth's. Why did he have to pick this toddler up just then?

Killing a child is not part of your mission. This time, the voice in her head was her own, not Stepney's. Agonized, she felt her focus slipping away.

Now. She had to fire now. Harden herself and shoot. Ignore the fact the bullet

would pass through the little girl's cheek. That the woman in the blue hat would lose her daughter.

The hesitation cost her a second.

The uniform slumped down the church pillar. A dark red spot became a line of blood dripping down his collar.

Hitler was still holding the child as she heard the shouts. She hadn't yet taken her shot when all hell broke loose.

A guard snatched the little girl from his arms. Guards forced Hitler into a crouch and hurried him to the car. In the uniformed crowd now surrounding Hitler a man pointed in Kate's direction. Through the telescopic sight she saw his steel-gray eyes scanning the building. She could swear those eyes looked right at her.

Praise for

THREE HOURS IN PARIS

“Cara Black brings her masterful knowledge of the city and its people to the Second World War and an imagined failed attempt on the life of Adolf Hitler by a female American sniper that leaves her fate and that of the war effort very much hanging in the balance. The result is a taut, smart, heart-in-throat page-turner worthy of the most discerning reader of John le Carré, Daniel Silva or Alan Furst. Brava!”

—Pam Jenoff, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Lost Girls of Paris*

“Breathtaking! A worthy successor to *The Day of the Jackal* and *Six Days of the Condor*, but with the addition of a real and likable heroine. This thriller takes Cara Black to a whole new level.”

—Rhys Bowen, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Tuscan Child*, *In Farleigh Field* and the Royal Spyness Series

“I couldn’t stop reading Cara Black’s newest! A young American markswoman named Kate Reese is sent to Paris to assassinate Hitler—what could possibly go wrong? Everything, as it turns out, prompting an intense cat-and-mouse chase through the blacked-out City of Light. Nothing is as it seems, certainly not for Kate, as she tries to escape and make it back to Britain with plans of the secret of the Nazi invasion. Black keeps you guessing—and biting your nails—up to the very last page.”

—Susan Elia MacNeal, author of the *New York Times* bestselling Maggie Hope series

“An unbreakable American heroine pitted against a charismatic German detective: pure gold in a wartime thriller. This hair-raising cat-and-mouse race across Nazi-occupied Paris left me breathless.”

—Elizabeth Wein, award-winning author of *Code Name Verity*

“There is a serious problem with Cara Black’s new stand-alone novel—you won’t be able to sleep once you start reading it! A beautifully written, fast-paced thriller with a depth of knowledge about tough American mamas and WWII Paris. Stunning.”

—Liz Newstat, Chevalier’s Books (Los Angeles, CA)

“Based on nothing more than the title, *Three Hours in Paris* was not the book I expected! In part, that’s because this is a real departure for Cara Black. This is not Aimée Leduc’s France. The story is an exquisitely tense cat-and-mouse chase between an American operative and a Nazi officer in the dark days of WWII. *Vive la différence!* This one is a must-read!”

—Susan Tunis, Bookshop West Portal (San Francisco, CA)

“Few know the streets of Paris as well as Cara Black, and no one is as good at bringing a suspenseful thriller to life in the twists and turns of their back alleys and memorable sites. With smart, complex characters, fascinating historical details, and a propulsive story that doesn’t disappoint, *Three Hours in Paris* is a literary thrill ride that shouldn’t be missed.” —Luisa Smith, Book Passage (Bay Area, CA)

“I just loved this. It ratchets up very quickly and never lets go—a high stakes cat-and-mouse tour through the heart of Paris that features constant danger around every turn for the protagonist from several sources, not the least of which is a sadistic Nazi officer. This is the very best kind of thriller, whereby using one’s wits is the only way forward. A big thumb’s up!”

—Sheryl Coteleur, Copperfield’s Books (Sebastopol, CA)

“A fresh take on the espionage novel genre. Kate is a dynamic and creative character. Her spontaneity, resourcefulness and creativity reminded me of so many smart women that I know. I enjoyed being in her head and watching her think!”

—Totsie McGonagle, Buttonwood Books (Cohasset, MA)

“WOW, what a page-turner! Kate Rees, a sharpshooter raised on an Oregon ranch, accepts a top-secret mission to assassinate Hitler while the Führer is in Paris. Each chapter ends in a cliff-hanger as the plot unfolds through the streets of Paris, told from three viewpoints: the Germans, the British, and Kate. I don’t know when a book has so held me captive—I couldn’t put it down until I reached the conclusion on the final page!”

—Mary Fran Buckley, Eight Cousins (Falmouth, MA)

“The book is well-written and moves along at a brisk pace. The reader will find the many situations faced by Rees as believable. Cara Black has an obvious ‘feel’ for Paris, especially during the Nazi occupation. She also shows how capable a woman can be facing adverse circumstances.”

—John McGonagle, Buttonwood Books (Cohasset, MA)

THREE HOURS IN PARIS: THE NOVEL THAT PURSUED ME

By Cara Black

AIMÉE LEDUC ISN'T DONE PROWLING THE COBBLESTONE
STREETS OF PARIS, BUT FOR THE PAST DECADE I'VE HAD ANOTHER
STORY I'VE NEEDED TO TELL AND CAN WAIT NO LONGER.

Aimée Leduc recently celebrated her twentieth anniversary (nineteen books in twenty years is hard even for me to believe), and I'm thrilled to confirm—she *will* be returning. I'm writing this in Paris where I'm researching her next adventure. So far, as a private detective, Aimée has investigated murders in eighteen of the twenty Parisian arrondissements. Soon, she'll be entangled in a yet-to-be-named arrondissement. There are only two arrondissements left for Aimée to adventure in. Any guesses?

It's not that I wanted to stray from my Aimée Leduc series, but rather that there was a story I *had* to tell. This story, *Three Hours in Paris*, germinated and grew from information and anecdotes I encountered during my many research trips to Paris. Before long, I found myself thinking about it as often as the Aimée book I was already writing at the time. But I waited. A few more books passed while *Three Hours in Paris* sat on the back burner.

I've always been interested, maybe a little obsessed, with the Second World War era. Tales of the war and military service were handed down in my American family. In France, I began to visit the battle-scarred sites I'd previously only read about. To this day, I am still deeply impressed by the Parisian buildings with bullet holes left from street fighting during the Libération in 1944. The war is very much still visible in Paris and so my WWII story was always lurking in the periphery.

Somewhere along the way I began keeping a separate journal to jot down ideas and note stories from older Parisians I spoke with. I began saving period photographs and old maps I'd find at the flea market. I consulted with private collectors of WWII memorabilia and interviewed former Résistants whose memories of the German occupation still contained a freshness and pain that was startling. It wasn't until I found myself poring over archival newspapers and documents that I realized that *Three Hours in Paris* was the only book I could possibly write next.

As I said before, this story had long been on a slow boil, simmering, while I wrote the Aimée Leduc investigations. Now that the story was out in the open, I was excited to actively work on it. My heroine even had a name: Kate Rees. Kate,

I was soon to learn, lived a hardscrabble life during the Depression. She was motherless, the only girl in a family with five brothers, and learned to survive while moving around Oregon with her father, a migrant ranch foreman. Her father taught her to shoot game and defend the ranch, a necessary skill in backwoods Oregon. Her family's itinerant life made her resilient. Kate, I decided, descended from the frontier women. She was forged in the Wild West. A cowgirl.

A modern young woman in her time, Kate came from all the strong, even headstrong, women I've ever known. She is very different from Aimée in many ways: more stolid in character, more solidly built in appearance, and decidedly less fashionable. But fans of my Parisian detective will find these two women definitely share moxie, spirit, and relentlessness.

While Kate Rees was surprising as she developed, I already knew the fulcrum on which her story turned. The seed from which she and this novel grew was a single historical fact, a footnote really, that was irresistibly full of potential. In June of 1940, after Paris was seized by the Nazis, Adolf Hitler came to Paris to victoriously survey the city. He spent only three hours in the City of Light before abruptly leaving and never returned.

Why did Hitler leave so quickly? What could cause him to flee from a city held in the Reich's iron grip? From this little imaginative exercise in "*What happened?*" came the opportunity to finally tell the story of occupied Paris and weave together all the lore I'd been hoarding.

In 1940, Germany invaded France. Paris was declared an open city to prevent its destruction, though it reeled during the first two weeks of the occupation in June 1940. Many Parisians fled in an exodus to the countryside and what passed for the hastily reassembled government operated from Bordeaux. Rationing was on the horizon and a curfew was put in place by the occupying German command. Historians sometimes refer to this period as the honeymoon phase. The German soldiers, Luftwaffe, High Command and staff were under strict orders to behave. And enjoy. This was Hitler's gift to his troops after they had *blitzkrieged* across Europe. Hitler was also resting them. Operation Sea Lion, the name for Germany's plan to invade Britain, had already been drawn up and stamped for approval.

Enter newly appointed Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who'd rallied his country to save their troops at the ignominious retreat at Dunkirk. He saw the writing on the wall: his island country was next. Churchill desperately needed a win. It would have to be incredibly bold to give his country confidence in what he, not to mention Britain itself, could accomplish. For that, he relied on the little-known Section D. This branch, the precursor and forerunner of SOE (Special

Operations Executive), was mandated to run sabotage operations and assassinations in Occupied Europe. All Section D operations were clandestine, often using non-British agents, not officially sanctioned and therefore deniable. No love was lost between Section D and the British Secret Intelligence service who thought of them as a seat-of-the-pants, put-together-with-spit outfit of misfits. Just what Churchill needed.

Several of Section D's files became unclassified a few years ago and fell into my purview. These amazing documents reveal a rough-and-tumble outfit of men—and some women—with skills as diverse as their backgrounds. Class, family and elite, old school ties didn't count here. This group was recruited for their abilities to think on their feet and outside of the box.

Back to our Kate. This tough girl from the American West went to Europe. She married a Welshman and together, they had a child. She found herself living life as a European woman. Until a German bombing took all of this away, leaving Kate bereaved and then, enraged. Gifted with a skill for languages, a knowledge of how to live off the land, and not least of all a way with guns, the grieving Kate would be recruited by Section D. A woman like Kate Rees, a marksman who'd lost her husband and child to the enemy, desirous of revenge and without anything to lose, was exactly the sort of outsider Section D looked for.

Kate was just the woman this novelist needed to send the Führer packing and spring the story I'd been longing to tell.

All of this is to say: I had to do this. To my dear Aimée Leduc fans, I want to reassure you that as I write this note, our gal in Paris is already on her way back to bookshelves. In the meantime, I hope you will enjoy the story of Kate Rees and occupied Paris half as much as I did writing it.

—Cara Black



AN INTERVIEW WITH CARA BLACK

What made you decide to write a story about a female assassin?

Years ago, I read my father's copy of *The Day of the Jackal* by Frederick Forsyth, and then I saw the 1973 film. This is the tale of a brilliant for-hire assassin tasked by the OAS with killing de Gaulle. Pitted against him are the government, who flounder in the dark to prevent the assassination attempt until they draft one of their own Parisian police. It's a riveting cat-and-mouse story—we know before reading that de Gaulle survived, but it's still so suspenseful, so tense, so delicately balanced. My throat catches every time I rewatch the film, which I do every year. Every time I pass the Montparnasse train station I look up at the Jackal's window where he was aiming at de Gaulle and calculate the rifle angle. I think that inspired my window for Kate in Montmartre. I wanted to try my hand at writing an assassin story—but with my own spin, one that could include pieces of the WWII resistance history I have hoarded over twenty years of researching the Aimée Leduc novels in Paris.

But there was also a historical template for female assassins in WWII. The Russian army had a regiment of highly successful female snipers. The star female assassin, Lyudmila Pavlichenko, was credited with 309 kills, the highest of a woman and in the top five of all snipers. In 1943 she was invited to the White House, met Eleanor Roosevelt and toured the USA. Of course, the United States didn't enter the war until after Pearl Harbor in 1941 but I was still intrigued by that *what if*: What if an American woman had been a sniper in WWII? Why not?

I read a newspaper article in 2010 about the death of a quiet and reclusive elderly lady in a British coastal town. The woman had no known relatives and no friends, but when local authorities entered her home they found she was far from the typical pensioner. They discovered among her possessions a medal from Britain as well as France's highest wartime honor, the Croix de Guerre. She was Eileen Nearne—aka Agent Rose, one of the female spies dispatched by Britain into occupied France in World War II by the SOE. Eileen Nearne became a clandestine radio operator, was caught and put in Ravensbrück but survived. There are stories like this that beg to be told; women who worked as spies, who signed the Official Secrets Act during the war and never broke their silence.

Kate to me is an everywoman—a daughter, a sister, a mother, a wife—who, due to tragedy and loss in war, seeks revenge and rises to the challenge of using her skill set. In war time, “doing one's part” is a larger-than-life task, and so rising to the challenge includes becoming a larger-than-life character.

During the Second World War, secret services around the world knew women made perfect agents: in many ways, they were invisible as a man wouldn't be. As innocent as they might appear while walking with a basket of eggs or mopping a floor,

they could escape detection and perform sabotage, set up resistance networks, operate radios, and infiltrate occupied buildings as cleaners, mail couriers, housewives. The possibilities were endless.

Kate is recruited by a British intelligence officer to work for Section D, a deniable branch that specializes in foreign interference and sabotage. How much of your description of Section D is real?

Section D was real, and some of its records have even survived the war and been declassified, although of course many more were destroyed, so it is impossible to know its full scope and nature. I envision a clandestine department that specialized in missions like Kate's—ungentlemanly war, fought by recruits of Irregulars who performed sabotage and assassinations in Occupied Europe.

What about the technology you mention? Was it real?

All of the technology I mention has a basis in real wartime inventions, although I have taken fictional liberties. At the beginning of the war, in the British race for building airplanes and fighting equipment, many tools were also being developed for clandestine warfare. I became intrigued when I discovered information about the S-phone, very cutting-edge, which the British developed, buried in a Stanford University library archive. I was also fascinated by the way Lee Enfield rifles were adapted to sniper capabilities as prototypes before field and general operational use. There was even a lipstick gun which I was dying for Kate to use, but alas, it didn't quite fit in the story.

Kate has very little formal training in spycraft but endless creativity for inventing ways to get herself out of jams—for surviving. Where did you get these ideas?

I was inspired by the idea of what skills Kate would have had to develop as a girl growing up on a series of Oregon ranches. Ranch work is a tough job, and would have been even harder in the 1930s. Life was subject to incessant rain, blizzards, falling trees, insect infestation or crop failure. Cattle would get stuck in barb wire, tractor tires puncture, equipment breaks—all these problems need to be solved on the fly, with few resources. One would learn to think on one's feet, make do and get creative with what's available. So Kate, who grew up in a rough and tumble environment with five brothers, learns to hold her own and becomes resilient.

This is your 20th book. Do you have any advice for aspiring writers about the writing life?

Just write what you're passionate about. If there's a *what if* that won't leave you, listen to yourself.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

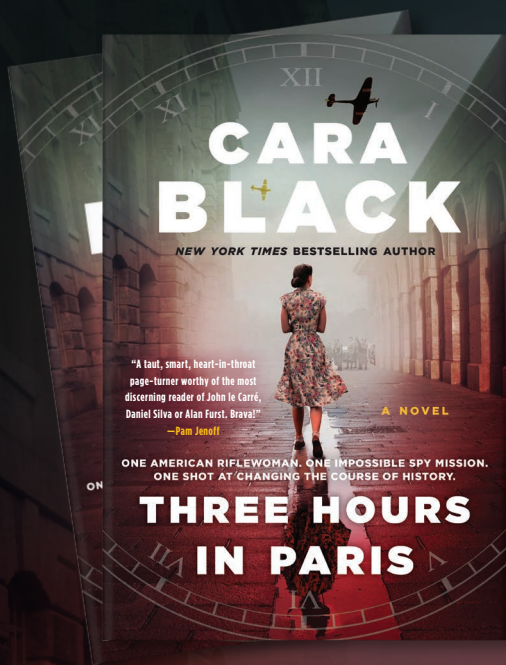


CARA BLACK is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of 19 books in the Private Investigator Aimée Leduc series, which is set in Paris. Cara has received multiple nominations for the Anthony and Macavity Awards, a *Washington Post* Book World Book of the Year citation, the Médaille de la Ville de Paris—the Paris City Medal, which is awarded in recognition

of contribution to international culture—and invitations to be the Guest of Honor at conferences such as the Paris Polar Crime Festival and Left Coast Crime. With more than 400,000 books in print, the Aimée Leduc series has been translated into German, Norwegian, Japanese, French, Spanish, Italian, and Hebrew.

Cara was born in Chicago but has lived in California's Bay Area since she was five years old. Before turning to writing full-time, she tried her hand at a number of jobs: she was a barista in the Basel train station café in Switzerland, taught English in Japan, studied Buddhism in Dharamsala in Northern India, and worked as a bar girl in Bangkok (only pouring drinks!). After studying Chinese history at Sophia University in Tokyo—where she met her husband, Jun, a bookseller, potter, and amateur chef—she obtained her teaching credential at San Francisco State College and went on to work as a preschool director and then as an agent of the federally funded Head Start program, which sent her into San Francisco's Chinatown to help families there—often sweatshop workers—secure early care and early education for their children. Each of these jobs was amazing and educational in a different way, and the Aimée Leduc books are covered in fingerprints of Cara's various experiences.

Her love of all things French was kindled by the French-speaking nuns at her Catholic high school, where Cara first encountered French literature and went crazy for the work of Prix Goncourt winner Romain Gary. Her junior year in high school, she wrote him a fan letter—which he answered, and which inspired her to make her first trip to Paris, where her idol took her out for coffee and a cigar. Since then, she has been to Paris many, many times. On each visit she entrenches herself in a different part of the city, learning its secret history. She has posed as a journalist to sneak into closed areas, trained at a firing range with real Paris *flics*, gotten locked in a bathroom at the Victor Hugo museum, and—just like Aimée—gone down into the sewers with the rats (she can never pass up an opportunity to see something new, even when the timing isn't ideal—she was headed to a fancy dinner right afterwards and had a spot of bother with her shoes). For the scoop on real Paris crime, she takes the *flics* out for drinks and dinner to hear their stories—but it usually turns into a long evening, which is why she sticks with espresso.



IN HER FIRST STAND-ALONE IN 20 YEARS, BESTSELLING AUTHOR CARA BLACK REIMAGINES HISTORY IN A PULSE-POUNDING WWII SPY THRILLER.

“Black keeps you guessing—and biting your nails—up to the very last page.”

**—SUSAN ELIA MACNEAL,
author of the Maggie Hope series**

AVAILABLE APRIL 2020

IN JUNE OF 1940, WHEN PARIS FELL TO THE NAZIS, HITLER SPENT A TOTAL OF THREE HOURS IN THE CITY OF LIGHT—ABRUPTLY LEAVING, NEVER TO RETURN. TO THIS DAY, NO ONE KNOWS WHY.

THE *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF THE AIMÉE LEDUC INVESTIGATIONS REIMAGINES HISTORY IN HER MASTERFUL, PULSE-POUNDING SPY THRILLER, *THREE HOURS IN PARIS*.

Kate Rees, a young American markswoman, has been recruited by British intelligence to drop into Paris with a dangerous assignment: assassinate the Führer. Wrecked by grief after a Luftwaffe bombing killed her husband and infant daughter, she is armed with a rifle, a vendetta, and a fierce resolve. But other than rushed and rudimentary instruction, she has no formal spy training. Thrust into the red-hot center of the war, a country girl from rural Oregon finds herself holding the fate of the world in her hands. When Kate misses her mark and the plan unravels, Kate is on the run for her life—all the time wrestling with the suspicion that the whole operation was a set-up.

Cara Black, doyenne of the Parisian crime novel, is at her best as she brings Occupation-era France to vivid life in this gripping story about one young woman with the temerity—and drive—to take on Hitler himself.



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