

Book Review: The Piano Teacher of Montparnasse
By Heather Morris

Thanks to NetGalley and Blackstone Publishing for this advance reader's copy, in exchange for an honest review. "The Piano Teacher of Montparnasse" is scheduled for release on October 20, 2026.

Having read and enjoyed Heather Morris's "The Tattooist of Auschwitz," I looked forward to checking out an advance copy of her newest novel, "The Piano Teacher of Montparnasse." I was not disappointed.

This extremely well-written novel is based on real people who suffered through extreme circumstances in occupied Paris in 1942. When Nazis come for a Jewish family living in the Montparnasse section of the city, the ensuing chaos enables 11-year-old Josie to escape while her mother and brother are taken away. Josie, following her mother's instructions, runs to the home of her piano teacher, Andree Levallois, where she is taken in by Andree and her parents, Louis and Tina, who present her as their niece and granddaughter and promise to protect her.

But life in the Nazi-controlled city is complicated for the Levallois family. Andree and her parents are secretly part of a French Resistance operative. All three are eventually arrested, with Andree interrogated before being sent to the Ravensbruck Women's Concentration Camp, where every day is a struggle for survival.

The narrative spans the years from 1942 until France is liberated in 1945. Morris's writing is vivid, from detailing the secret operations of the Resistance to the painful descriptions of families struggling to survive amid mounting food shortages. Danger was always nearby, but the members of the Resistance were steadfast in their determination to retake France at any price. Character development is thorough, especially the relationship between Josie and Andree, and how music is such an integral part of their lives. Emotions run high throughout.

There's an extensive Author's Note at the end, which provides additional information about the real-life characters and the Resistance. It's well done and adds another dimension to the overall story.

If you're thinking this is just another World War II historical novel, you'd be wrong. What it is, is a story about relationships, family, and the human spirit. And the power of music to bind and heal during even the most turbulent times.

Five stars for "The Piano Teacher of Montparnasse." I highly recommend it.