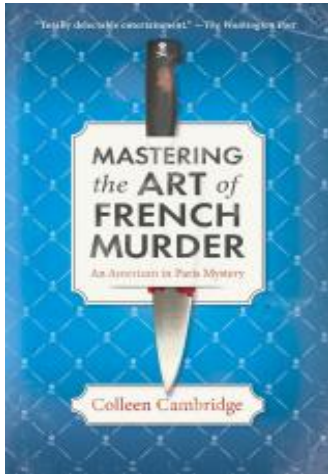


# Mastering the Art of French Murder: An American in Paris Mystery

by Colleen Cambridge



## About the Book

Set in mid-century Paris and starring Julia Child's fictional best friend, this *magnifique* reimagining of the iconic chef's years at Le Cordon Bleu blends a delicious murder mystery with a unique culinary twist.

*From fine Bordeaux and freshly baked baguettes to the friendly chatter of the green market, postwar Paris is indulging its appetite for food, and life, once more, as Tabitha Knight, a young American woman, makes friends with chef-in-training Julia Child --- and finds herself immersed in a murder most unsavory.*

As Paris rediscovers its *joie de vivre*, Tabitha Knight, recently arrived from Detroit for an extended stay with her French grandfather, is on her own journey of discovery. Paris isn't just the City of Light; it's the city of history, romance, stunning architecture...and food. Thanks to her neighbor and friend, Julia Child, another expat who has fallen head over heels for Paris, Tabitha is learning how to cook for her Grandpère and her Oncle Rafe.

Between tutoring Americans in French, and sampling the results of Julia's studies at Le Cordon Bleu cooking school, Tabitha's sojourn is thoroughly delightful. That is, until the cold December day they return to Julia's building and learn that a body has been found in the cellar. Tabitha recognizes the victim from a party given by Julia's sister, Dort, the night before. The murder weapon is recognizable, too --- a knife from Julia's kitchen.

Tabitha is eager to help the investigation but is shocked when Inspector Merveille reveals that a note, in Tabitha's handwriting, was found in the dead woman's pocket. Now, from the shadows of the Tour Eiffel, to the Childs' tiny kitchen, to the grungy streets of Montmartre, Tabitha navigates the city, hoping to find the real killer before she or one of her friends ends up in prison...or worse.

## Discussion Guide

1. Have you ever used Julia Child's *MASTERING THE ART OF FRENCH COOKING* --- or any of her cookbooks? Have you ever watched her on a cooking show?
2. Before reading this book, what did you know about Julia Child? What was a surprise for you to learn about her?
3. How do you feel about cooking? And how skilled are you in the kitchen? More like Tabitha or more like Julia...or somewhere in between?
4. Tabitha always carries a Swiss Army knife in her pocket. What's a tool you never leave home without? (House keys don't count!)
5. Tabitha reflects on the fact that in America, one just runs into the grocery store, gets what one needs, and runs back out --- a very impersonal and hasty experience in comparison to going to the market in France. How do you feel about shopping in the grocery store, as opposed to visiting street markets like farmers' markets? Would you want to have to shop like Julia and Tabitha did in Paris and make it a social event?
6. Before reading this book, what did you know about Occupied Paris and post-World War II Paris? What was a surprise or new information to you?
7. What do you think about the relationship between Tabitha's grandparents, with one of them living in America and the other living in Paris? What do you think about the relationship between Tabitha's grandfather and Uncle Rafe?
8. Would you have accepted a ride home from the theater with Mark Justiss, knowing that he was one of the suspects?
9. Tabitha gets thrown into working at the coat check counter, and that ultimately helps her to solve the murder. Have you ever been thrown into a situation where you're stepping in to help out like she did at the theater? How did it go?
10. Have you ever been backstage at a theater --- either during or outside of a show? How does that environment contribute (or not) to the suspense in *MASTERING THE ART OF FRENCH MURDER*?
11. Did you know that it was illegal for women to wear trousers in Paris unless they were riding a bike? What do you think of this? Have you ever had to deal with dress codes? How have dress codes for women changed over the years? If you were a woman, would you have worn trousers in Paris, even if you weren't riding a bicycle or a horse?
12. Tabitha lets herself into Thérèse's apartment. Would you have done the same?
13. What do you think about the interactions between Tabitha and Inspector Merveille? She provides him with several clues and information, and he accepts the information but responds to her only with cautions and warnings.
14. What do you think about Tabitha and Julia's relationship?

15. Have you ever thought about living in Paris? What do you think it would be like?

16. If you were in Tabitha's shoes, would you have done all of the same things she did to solve the crime, or would you have followed Inspector Merveille's orders and stayed out of it?

17. What do you think it would be like to have Julia Child as a friend?

18. Tabitha mostly stumbles upon the clues that help her solve the mystery, and she doesn't really know who the perpetrator is until she overhears them speaking at the theater. Does this ring true for her character as a first-time amateur sleuth, or do you think she should have been more proactive and figured it out sooner?

## Author Bio

Colleen Cambridge is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of the *American in Paris Mysteries* and the *Phyllida Bright Mysteries*, the first of which, *MURDER AT MALLOWAN HALL*, was an Agatha Award finalist and an Indie Next pick. The first *American in Paris Mystery*, *MASTERING THE ART OF FRENCH MURDER*, was both an Indie Next pick and a LibraryReads selection. An accomplished historian whose meticulously researched novels appeal to fans of historical fiction and mysteries alike, she also writes under the pen names C.M. Gleason and Colleen Gleason. She lives in the Midwest and can be found online at [ColleenCambridge.com](http://ColleenCambridge.com).

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