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# Five Flights Up: Sex, Love, And Family, From Paris To Lyon



## Synopsis

“How can you be sick of living in Paris?” Life unravels when American psychotherapist Kristin Louise Duncombe faces being uprooted again to follow her husband from their secure nest in Paris to bourgeois Lyon. The result is a touchstone memoir for anyone facing a move, dealing with marital ghosts, or confronting the professional death of starting anew. Duncombe’s unique specialty is helping “trailing spouses” maintain their sanity while following their other half around the globe. But she must reconfigure everything she thought she knew about her “expat expertise” when her child sinks into existential crisis, addiction to Lyonnais cream puffs blooms, and tea time is to be had with glamorous French moms whose sex lives include swingers’ parties. This boisterous, big-hearted book provides a compelling glimpse into love, family, and sex in France, and a modern family grappling with the inevitable downs - and ups - of building a new life. “An insightful memoir of life in France in which the author and her multi-cultural family embrace the wisdom, step by step, that home is where the heart is.” Meg Bortin, author of *Desperate to be a Housewife* “Five Flights Up is hilarious and brave. With her trademark honesty, Kristin Louise Duncombe reveals the imperfect yet privileged world of being a foreigner in France.” Lizzie Harwood, author of *Xamnesia* “A must-read for any woman coping with monumental transitions, and who has felt they have lost their way along this trajectory we call life.” Samantha Vafarant, author of *Seven Letters from Paris*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I just finished Kristin Louise Duncombe's "Five Flights Up," about following her mother's doctor husband to Paris and then Lyon after a long stint in Kenya, which she described in her previous book, "Trailing." Her new book, like her first memoir, was very well-written and -edited, but one of the things that fascinated me about it was her description of the lives of the upper class women whom she meets in Lyon in the upper class neighborhood where she and her husband somehow land. It was a peek into a slice of French life that I'd never noted before, despite all the reading I've done on France and its people and culture. Duncombe is frank, witty, and candidly discusses her marriage and sex. She shares details about life as an expat, not quite fitting in, and the impact that has on her children who are French but never completely. It's a great story and I was sorry to see it end.

I read this book in practically one sitting. It is that good, that engaging. Kristin's prose is so friendly and engaging, while making profound and universal observations on balancing womanhood in your 40's. Did I mention that Kristin is funny, too? You should read it, as well as Kristin's previous book, Trailing, both available on Amazon. Kristin is so refreshingly honest and vulnerable, without any shred of moral superiority -- a definite down in the trenches book, with the strength of a woman who is willing to brutally self-assess and change both herself, and her view on life.

This is a very special book and I highly recommend it for anyone who has been an ex-pat in a foreign country and gone through the very confusing and frustrating process of culture shock and has travelled and would like to know what life is like in Paris from the honest and intelligent eyes of a highly articulate mother of two, married to a doctor working for World Health Organization who has experienced multi-moves in her childhood and adult life. Five Flights Up is highly informative, easily readable and once you start it, you will be compelled to read it to the end. Kristin writes in a style that is highly graphic and hypnotic and I felt like I was re-living what she had gone through. She is also very funny and I found myself laughing at many points in the book as I followed her through the various situations and crises that she and her 2 children experienced and was amazed at the creative solutions that she found to her dilemmas. This book is compelling reading and I highly

recommend it for readers of all ages!

Once you pick up this book you will not be able to put it down! Her writing being witty, approachable and engaging, Duncombe takes you along for her wild ride of moving from Paris to Lyon when her husband receives a new job there. Her writing is honest, humorous and not without tears of joy and even sadness! On one page Duncombe has you keeled over with laughter, and on the next thinking intensely on topics of love, family, friendship, self-image and all around life choices that everyone can relate to. Duncombe is a master at making you feel like you are right there with her. A funny, honest and vulnerable story about a woman trying to find her footing again in this crazy world, this one is not to be missed!!!!

With her engaging, hard-to-put-down, and at times very funny prose, Kristin Duncombe has surpassed her fine first memoir "Trailing" with her second, "Five Flights Up." The subtitle might well be "Scenes from a Marriage II," as with her characteristic candor and brutal emotional honesty, she lets the reader into the day-to-day highs and lows that anyone in a couple (particularly those with children) can relate to. Bring the locales of Paris and Lyon, french patisseries, and "les soirées libertines" frequented by a couple of her friends into the mix and, as they used to say in Hollywood, that's entertainment. Highly recommended.

One of the things I like best about how Kristin writes is how easy it is to relate to her emotionally. From the outside, her life is so glamorous. Married to a doctor! Living in Paris! And then moving to Lyon! But the truth is, marriage is difficult, no matter who you are married to or where you live. And adjusting to new places (and worrying about how your children will adjust) is hard as well. It's so easy to imagine turning to sweets in order to cope with stress. In fact, I don't have to imagine it; I remember doing so in college. And I could feel the intensity of the conversations with other moms in Lyon--the ones not eating the pastries, the ones who ask Kristin why she isn't keeping herself thin and beautiful. I could picture shoving yet another sweet into my face as the stress of their judgment worked its way in. Kristin is warm and funny and so candid and vulnerable. It's a lovely relationship and family story, one that could take place anywhere, and made all the more interesting by the fact that it takes place in France.

"Having" to move from Paris to Lyon sounds like a problem a lot of us would like to have, but the genius of this engaging memoir is that we really get where the author is coming from--as well as

going to! Loved the vivid descriptions of her life in Paris, a city I know well, and of Lyon, a city I know not at all. Loved the apartment(s), food, new friends, old friends, marital jockeying, and career restructuring. But the big appeal here is the universality of the author's theme. Leaving behind all that you know to face the unknown is really the story of life itself. I enjoyed sharing this particular version of that story.

I was honestly surprised at how well Kristin told her story. As I read the story, I felt as though I was there with her every step of the way. Having to make the decisions she made and still be a great wife, mother, and friend to those she loved. Kudos Kristin, you did a wonderful job at expressing your emotions and capturing the heart of your reader. Looking forward to reading your first book "Trailing" !

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