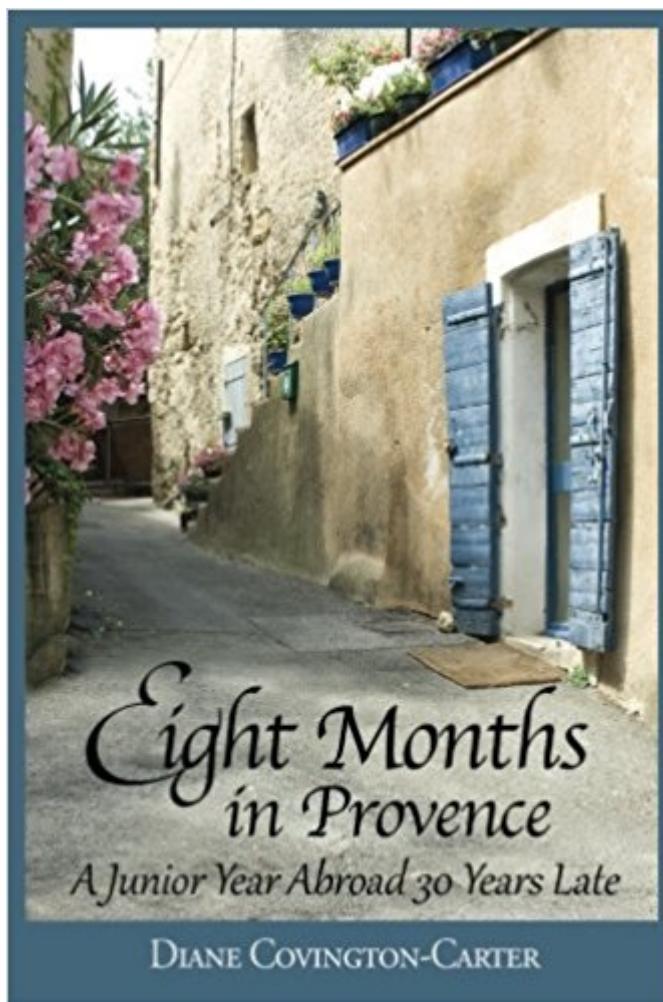


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Eight Months In Provence: A Junior Year Abroad 30 Years Late



Synopsis

For thirty years, Diane Covington-Carter dreamed of living in France and immersing herself in the country and language that spoke to her heart and soul. At age fifty, she set off to fulfill that yearning. Journey along with her as she discovers missing pieces of her own personal puzzle that could only emerge in French, in France. And the deep reservoirs of courage and strength that have come with living a half-century. Covington-Carter learns that it is never too late to fulfill a long cherished dream and that, with the gifts of wisdom and maturity, that dream can become even more powerful from the waiting.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Diane Covington-Carter graduated with honors from UCLA and has received awards for her writing, photography and NPR commentaries. She has been a life coach for more than thirty years, on a quest to discover the truth about the mysteries of happiness and love, both for herself and others. In 2013, she co-wrote Falling in Love Backwards, an Unlikely Tale of Happily Ever After, with her husband, Landon Carter. In 2014, she completed her memoir Reunion, La RÃ©union, Finding Gilbert. In 2016, Her book Eight Months in Provence, A Junior Year Abroad 30 Years Late, hit # 1 on in its category during the first week. She lives with her husband on an organic apple farm in Northern California and off the grid near the beach in Golden Bay New Zealand. This is her third memoir. For more information visit www.dianecovingtoncarter.com

Having missed out on a junior year abroad, Diane instead goes to (mainly) Aix-en-Provence for 8 months at the age of fifty. She manages to find -- lucky woman! -- just the right apartment, and does

what all tourists should do -- she walks. She talks too -- working very hard on her French language skills. Anyone who have tried will know French is very hard to master, indeed almost impossible, unless you live there for a long time! We learn about her life journey so far, which has not exactly been strewn with roses. The book is more an inward-looking journey, and not much happens during the eight months, unless one counts her pleasures -- the markets, the food, the visits from friends and family, and the friendliness of new French friends. Here and there she tends to concentrate a little too much on her own emotions, feelings and sadnesses. Yet I really enjoyed this book, and liked reading how she becomes a much stronger woman due to being all on her own, and also coming to terms with certain family problems, most notably her difficulties with her mother. Here and there are a few small mistakes, which could purely be typo's which were not corrected. A perfectly pleasant book for Francophiles.

This is the story of a woman who fell in love with the French language as a child and planned to spend a year abroad while in college but due to circumstances (I don't want to be too specific here and give away part of the story) wasn't able to go. Thirty years later she decides its always been her dream to live in France, so she goes. This is a novel plot, setting this book apart from so many adult-abroad stories where someone buys a vacation home or moves permanently. And it does take a lot of courage to just pick up and go to another country. Kids studying abroad have housing arranged, school during the day, and are among lots of others their own age. But I found this book less satisfying than I hoped (really a 3.5 star rating) for two reasons. First is the relative brevity of the book and many accounts in it. The book is written in a chronological order with mostly short chapters, some organized around months. January, 8 pages. February, 6 pages. Certainly there was more to be said? Among other pursuits the author has done freelance writing so she is very good at capturing a scene or an encounter. They really are a joy to read. But for example she'll bring up a trip with a friend and after a few pages when you're hooked on the story, they've found the right trains to that charming village, the account abruptly ends in a few more sentences. The 2nd reason I downgrade my rating a bit is the self-affirmation tone, especially present in the first part of the book. The end of each chapter almost felt like a written form of that Saturday Nite Live skit "I'm Good Enough, I'm Smart Enough, and Doggone It, People Like Me!" I understand that the author had a strained relationship with her mother, and Lord knows it takes courage to go off alone to a small village in France. On the one hand it is her story and I'm sure this is the way she experienced it and its meaning. So for those looking for a book heavy in metaphor and meaning they can apply to their own life, for encouragement to make a change or take a chance, this may be a great read.

But for those looking for a story without a generous serving of affirmation psychology they may find too much of the latter and not enough of the former.

One of my favorite reads of the year. What a soulful, light adventure. I was actually looking at French language programs thinking now that my sons are grown, maybe I could just go study for a semester at Aix-en-Provence. That was some years ago, so delighted to read this story. Like the author, I wanted to go on a France abroad trip my college offered, but my stepfather said I shouldn't. I think it was because his Father had been full French, but had left home when he was 2 and never come back. He'd wanted to go to France and write, but after the GI bill, got a degree, got married and had four children. Supporting them, then marrying again and having a new family meant stuffing those dreams. When I was in my 40's I was able to go to Paris for a week. My dream is to return. This book satisfies because I could see if I had gone to Aix-en-Provence and lived there for a semester or two, what it might have been like. Loved the rhythm of the life, and self-discovery that the author created and experienced. Her apartment sounds like a dream. This is a lovely book for those who would like to live in a culture for more than a few weeks, and create a different life for themselves. Very charming and a delight.

I really enjoyed this book. I thought it was inspiring that the author went to live in France and fulfill her lifelong dream. I was a little surprised that she wasn't really prepared very well, financially, to do what she did. I didn't quite understand her obsession with the French language either. But it's HER story, so be it. I wish there were photos. I liked her writing style. My one criticism is that she, like all authors who write about spending time in a foreign country, feel the need to write some phrases and sentences in that language, with translation. I find this to be distracting and didn't add anything to the story. It was actually a distraction and when I saw some French coming up in a sentence in italics, I skipped over it, trying to keep the flow of the story. But overall, it was a good book, an enjoyable read.

This was a lovely little book that I actually wish were longer. I read it in about two hours. The author's story was interesting and I enjoyed reading how she made her dream come true after 30 years. It gets 4 stars instead of 5 because of the misspellings - vieille, not vielle and fromage has just one m and rue des Bernardines, not Rue des Bernadins. Since part of her journey was about perfecting French, then these simple errors should have been corrected before going to print.

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