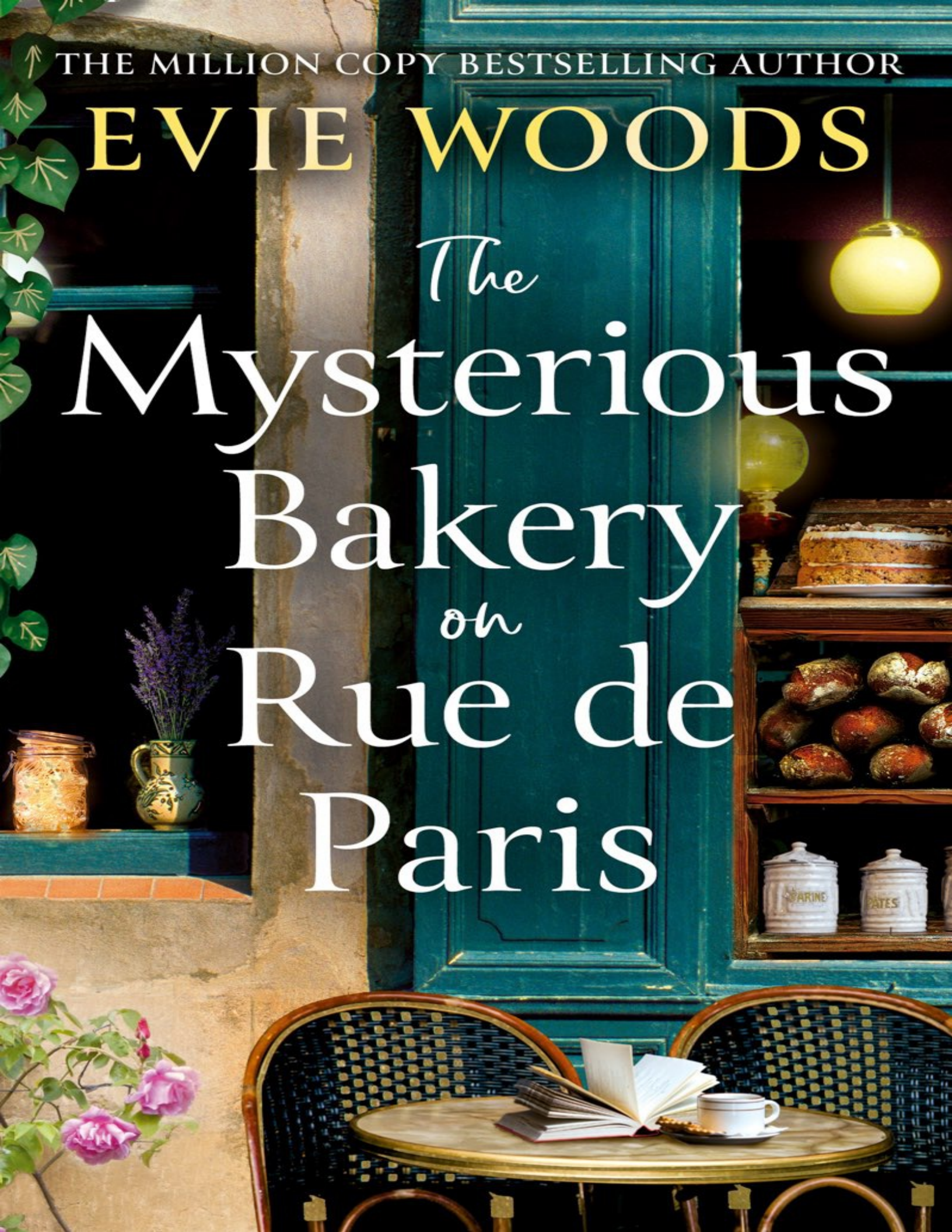


THE MILLION COPY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

EVIE WOODS

The
Mysterious
Bakery
on
Rue de
Paris



THE MYSTERIOUS BAKERY ON RUE DE PARIS

EVIE WOODS



One More Chapter
a division of HarperCollins*Publishers* Ltd
1 London Bridge Street
London SE1 9GF
www.harpercollins.co.uk

First published in Great Britain by HarperCollins*Publishers* 2025

Copyright © Evie Woods 2025

Cover design by Alex Allden
Cover photographs: Atlantide Phototravel/Getty Images (main image) and Getty Images and
Shutterstock.com (all other images)

Evie Woods asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work

A catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library

This novel is entirely a work of fiction. The names, characters and incidents portrayed in it are the work of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events or localities is entirely coincidental.

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. By payment of the required fees, you have been granted the non-exclusive, non-transferable right to access and read the text of this e-book on screen. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, down-loaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the express written permission of HarperCollins.

Source ISBN: 9780008744700
Ebook Edition © March 2025 ISBN: 9780008706692
Version: 2024-12-12

Contents

[Prologue](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

[Chapter 20](#)

[Chapter 21](#)

[Chapter 22](#)

[Chapter 23](#)

[Chapter 24](#)

[Chapter 25](#)

[Chapter 26](#)

[Chapter 27](#)

[Chapter 28](#)

[Chapter 29](#)

[Chapter 30](#)

[Chapter 31](#)

[Chapter 32](#)

[Chapter 33](#)

[Chapter 34](#)

[Chapter 35](#)

[Chapter 36](#)

[Chapter 37](#)

[Chapter 38](#)

[Chapter 39](#)

[Chapter 40](#)

[Chapter 41](#)

[Chapter 42](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Thank you for reading...](#)

[Extract from The Missing Notes](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Also by Evie Woods](#)

[Subscribe to OMC](#)

[About the Publisher](#)

To all those with a taste for magic

Prologue

Nestled among the cobblestone streets of Compiègne, there existed a bakery unlike any other. When customers crossed the threshold, they found not only sustenance for the stomach, but also for the soul. In the soft light of dawn, the baker began each day in the basement with flour-dusted hands, working a secret ingredient into the dough.

Before long, rumours were whispered throughout the town of a mysterious bakery whose pastries offered a taste of magic that could chase away even the darkest of sorrows. Just one bite of a croissant might bring luck, unlock a precious memory or reveal hidden longings.

But dark clouds were looming on the horizon and when the war began, everything changed.

Chapter One

A recipe for disaster doesn't require that many ingredients. An unhealthy amount of wishful thinking, mixed with a large dollop of devil-may-care when it comes to reading maps. Add a sprinkle of desperation distilled from wanting so badly for things to change, and you had the perfect recipe for my current situation – barricaded inside a toilet cubicle at the Gare du Nord with only my shame and embarrassment for company. I wasn't sure when I would come out, if ever, and so I decided that the best thing I could do now was replay all of the events that had led up to this moment so I could make myself feel even worse.

The storm had really taken hold by the time I got to Dublin airport. A leaden sky lashed down rain onto the tarmac and buildings with a fury, as though the Gods themselves had something negative to say about my decision to leave.

'Paris? In France?'

'Yes, Dad, we've been through this a million times, and I do wish you'd stop saying it as though it's the outer reaches of Mongolia.' As I checked I had my passport for the umpteenth time, the trusty old Ford came to a halt outside Departures.

'I don't mean to, Edie, it's just...' He hesitated, rubbing his early-morning stubble and fixing his gaze on anything but me. 'Are ya sure now?'

Rushing off to France on a whim seems a bit drastic. Would you not consider, I dunno, getting a cat?’

Great. The only thing worse than having an identity crisis was having it confirmed by your father. I took my phone out of my purse and confirmed that the flight was still on time.

‘I have to go. Listen, I’ll be grand and so will you.’

‘It should be me saying that to you,’ he said a bit sheepishly.

It wasn’t the first time our roles had been reversed. Way before my time, I’d become fluent in the world of adult emotions, and that was why I had to do something drastic. I had to strike out on my own and find out who I could be without my past weighing me down. I had felt so confident answering the ad online. I’d spotted it one night, after a couple of glasses of wine, when I indulged in my usual fantasy of moving abroad. Scrolling through the website English Jobs in France, I typed in ‘Paris’ and suddenly it popped up:

Assistant manager wanted for a quaint little bakery in Paris.

Accommodation provided. English required.

I’d sat up in bed and stared at the words. This was something I could actually do. It was something I knew I could be good at, despite the language barrier. All at once, my imagination was filled with visions of a chic, sophisticated *boulangerie* in one of the posh *quartiers* of Paris; modern but with a nod to vintage.

Frankly, I was surprised by how quickly I got the job, even without a proper interview. I couldn’t quite believe my luck. A few quickfire questions over the phone, ensuring my fluency in English and a background in the service industry, and that was it. My career path had been something of a cul-de-sac up to that point. I never really figured out what I wanted to do, so I just ended up waitressing in a café. It was meant to be a temporary thing; an escape from the pressures at home and an easy way to earn some money

while I figured things out. But over time, my future became more and more unclear and my job was the only stable thing I had to hold on to. At the age of thirty, I just couldn't see myself doing anything else. Until Paris came calling.

Once inside the airport, I tried to distract myself from the awkward goodbye with my father by trying to choose between a Mac blusher and a liquid eyeliner. I wouldn't ordinarily treat myself, but this was Paris after all. I had to up my game. Just then, I heard a breathy young woman sing the announcement:

'Final call for passenger Edith Lane, travelling to Paris on flight EI754. Please proceed to gate nine immediately, as the gate is now closing, thank you.'

I grabbed both products and practically threw money at the shop assistant, making a dash for the flight. This was my great adventure and I intended to soak up every second of it. For years I had watched old films with my mother, sighing enviously at elegant actresses like Grace Kelly or Audrey Hepburn, who embodied the kind of self-assured, fearless woman I hoped to be. Just thinking about how we used to lie on the couch together and listen to my mother's old jazz records, dreaming of the day I'd find the courage to be the star of my own movie, brought back bittersweet memories. For when the time came for me to flee the nest, she needed me to stay. Not that she would ever have asked it of me, but it was natural as breathing, caring for her. That was when those movies, *High Society*, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, became our escape. More recently, my own additions, *Amélie* and *Moulin Rouge*, created a world of timeless fantasy where we could pretend reality didn't exist.

Ever since I could remember, I'd been obsessed with the city of love. My parents had their honeymoon in Paris and spoke about it as though it was the most magical place in the world. Whenever we needed cheering up, we'd take out their photo album and my mother would point out all of the amazing places they'd visited. I chose French as my foreign language at school and I