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King, David. Death in the City of Light

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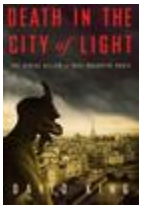

Sure to draw comparisons to Erik Larson's masterful true-crime epic, "Devil in the White City," King's "Death in the City of Light" unfolds the true story of a serial killer who stalked the streets of Paris during its occupation by the Nazi regime. A strange burning smell first alerted citizens that not all was right. When concerned firefighters entered the building from which the smell seemed to be emanating, they were appalled to discover severed body parts burning in a large furnace. Commisaire Georges-Victor Massu, the head of the Parisian Brigade Criminelle, was tasked by the Gestapo with bringing the murderer to justice. The main suspect quickly became Dr. Marcel Petiot, the owner of the building and, by current accounts, a reputable man. He was known as the "Peoples' Doctor," with a reputation for kindness and generosity and for providing free medical care to the poor. But when the police began digging into Petiot's background, a very different picture of the man emerged.

Petiot was soon charged with 27 murders…though authorities believed the true number of dead to be closer to 150. But who was being killed, and why? What Massu eventually unraveled was a plan of such deviousness and evil that it was shocking. When Petiot was charged, the city and the police hoped for answers and closure. What they got was a circus as the trial—for all of the cases simultaneously—stumbled over Petiot's charm and wit and the effective and aggressive defense of his lawyer.

Gripping and detailed.

king and death city light
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