

Book club guide for *Paris Lost and Found: A Memoir of Love*

What follows are a few questions that might be useful for readers as they discuss *Paris Lost and Found*.

Questions:

1. *Paris Lost and Found* is at times a tragic story, but it's also very funny. For example, right after chapter two, where Anne's illness becomes apparent, there's an entire chapter dedicated to human turds. Why did the author choose to blend these different registers? What effect does it have?
2. At the beginning of the book, Anne has started her descent into dementia. What connections are there between memory (or the loss of memory) and the city of Paris?
3. The book is divided into three sections: "The End," "The Middle," "The Beginning." What do you make of this backwards structure?
4. What chapters taught you the most about life in Paris? And what chapters made you reflect on the strangeness of the United States?
5. Paris is usually presented as the city of youth and young love. The author's experience is now that of a "senior." How does age affect his experience of the City of Light?
6. This is a very character driven memoir, and the book is populated with extremely idiosyncratic people. What is it about the characters that makes them quintessentially French?
7. Many of his characters—especially members of the condo board—are recurring. But sometimes the most touching encounters in the book are with people we meet once and will never see again—such as the young woman with the lamp in chapter 10, "Adieu." What does that say about the author, or about Paris?
8. At one point the author writes that "Not knowing people somehow improves them" (p. 106). What does he mean by that? Do you agree with him?
9. Many chapters begin with a mundane event—getting on the metro, sitting in a movie theater, paying bills—and evolve into much larger dramas. What does this tell us about the author's view of Paris, or his way of experiencing it?
10. The author writes about many different topics in this book — thefts, the difficulty of communication, love, illness, death, rats, guns, turds, movies, dating, money... What—if anything—binds these together? To what extent is the book a collection of disparate parts, and to what extent is it an integrated whole?
11. Toward the end of the book, the mood turns pretty low. Even if the writing remains bright, it's clear the author is in a very lonely state. Is that loneliness made easier by being in Paris, or does the city make it worse?

12. The last chapters of *Paris Lost and Found* deal with the tribulations (and terrors) of dating. What role does age play in this final section? What does this ending say about the nature of love?
13. What do you make of the title of the book? In what way is Paris “lost and found”?
14. How has *Paris Lost and Found* changed your view of Paris?