

A READING GROUP GUIDE



"Sarah Jio weaves past and present in this eminently readable novel about love, gratitude, and forgiveness. I tore through the pages!"

—CHRISTINA BAKER KLINE,
New York Times bestselling author



sarahjio.com



A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear Book Club Friends,

I have never been more excited to share a book with you as I am with my new novel, *All the Flowers in Paris*! It's loaded with all of my favorite elements for an interesting book club read: mystery, love, tragedy, and history—with a sprinkling of the magic of Paris. I hope you will enjoy it!

Happy reading,
Sarah Jio



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The novel largely alternates between Caroline and Céline's perspectives. Did you find yourself identifying with one character in particular? Why or why not?
2. As Caroline gets to know Victor, she cannot help but feel undeniably connected to him. How did your view of their relationship shift over the course of the novel? Is there someone with whom you share a similar bond?
3. Flowers are arguably the most prominent symbol throughout the novel. Caroline rediscovers her passions thanks to her vivid floral paintings, and Céline's expertise within her father's flower shop proves useful. Were there any references that stood out to you as being particularly poignant or meaningful? Why did they stand out?
4. Though Céline and Cosi must keep their reunion a secret, they motivate one another to survive in the midst of Reinhardt's cruelty. Describe a time where you felt you had to be brave in the face of adversity. What can you take away from Céline's story?
5. Between Caroline's revelations about Victor and Alma, and Céline and Cosi's fates at the end of the war, these characters all experience life-altering moments. Name the scene that you found most moving—why did it affect you? Did you agree or disagree with the way these stories evolved?
6. Estelle and Caroline are able to track down Cosi's diary from her old hiding place beneath the floorboards, a sign that the young girl documented everything she saw and heard in captivity. Can you draw any parallels between this and Caroline's love of painting? Is there a pastime you turn to in your own times of need? How does it help you?
7. At the end of the novel, Estelle publishes her book and Caroline forms an alliance for women in need, in honor of Céline, Cosi, and Alma. What do you make of this ending, and of Caroline's future with Victor?

BEYOND THE PAGES *with* SARAH JIO

1. I'm a huge fan of jazz (all kinds!) and frequently listen to music when I write, and it's most always jazz (sprinkled in with a little classical). But while working on this novel, I became obsessed with French jazz (with apologies to my children and husband). Check out the "French Jazz" or "French Jazz Café" playlists on Spotify!
2. If I were forced to pick a favorite neighborhood in Paris, it would be Montmartre, which makes significant appearances in the book. The climb up to this hilly perch is worth the reward, because at the top, you'll find the most quaint village speckled with art galleries, cafes, restaurants, and flower shops—and the view of the city below is unparalleled. I'm pretty sure the movies *Before Sunrise* and *Before Sunset* were both set here (I loved them both).
3. Speaking of Montmartre, I devoted three research trips to learning about Paris and one of my favorite haunts was a tiny little restaurant on Montmartre's hilly backside. And I didn't just fall in love with it because it shares my middle name, well, a version of my middle name, Antoinette,

(how fun is that?): I also became smitten by the divine food and quaint atmosphere. In fact, it inspired some of what I imagined for Bistro Jeanty in the book. Make a reservation, then arrive early and have a glass of wine at a local café a few doors down where the locals sing folk songs at the bar. It's so much fun! Look for the restaurant at 20 Rue Germain Pilon, and tell them that I sent you.



BEYOND THE PAGES *with* SARAH JIO

4. Another memorable Paris destination for me, where I've spent two of the most fun nights of my life is Le Cavern—the most unique spot, deep in the bedrock below street-level and features nightly live music (find it at 21 Rue Dauphine). The stone on the walls is as old as time, but the live music is fun and hip! On the two times I visited, we enjoyed a band playing 1950s rock-and-roll (how fun to discover when in France!). P.S. I'm drawing a blank whether my mention of Le Cavern made it past final edits of the book, but if not, now you have one more of my beloved Paris destinations to add to your list next time you visit!
5. I may be a Seattle girl, but I have a very real confession: I'm 100 percent serious in telling you that I could spend the rest of my life living completely happily in Paris simply wandering from one café to another. I'd have coffee in one while waking up, then transition to the next, for another shot of espresso and open my laptop to write. Come noon, I'd move to another, for lunch, and more people watching. By 2 PM, I'd be bound for another, for a glass of light burgundy and more writing, or to meet a friend. By dinnertime, there'd

be another café in my future, this one that I'd walk to, so as to burn off some calories. I'd slip into a corner table beside my love, order a niçoise salad and a glass of wine and feel . . . good. Note that “café life” is not a place or specific destination, but a mindset!

6. Oh, Rue Cler. It's hands down my favorite street in Paris and the entire setting for my story. And to think that I stumbled upon it just by wandering around Paris aimlessly with my husband, Brandon, several years ago! I can't even tell you how we got there. We were literally two jetlagged Americans lost in Paris on a very rainy day, and then—bam—Rue Cler appeared, as if right out of a really beautiful and whimsical dream. The street is jovial, creative, festive, and something else . . . that I can't quite put my finger on. You'll find everything here—bistros and brasseries, boutiques, a fabulous farmer's market, and so much more. Come for lunch, and stay for dinner—or maybe forever, if you're lucky!

COCKTAILS *and* DRINKS

I recommend serving champagne—*naturellement!* But if you really want to jazz things up, why not make a French 75? If you haven't had this incredibly lovely champagne cocktail, it's time to get dazzled! For alcohol abstainers, anything fizzy and non-alcoholic served in champagne flutes will keep things festive and fun!

FRENCH 75 *makes one cocktail*

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lemon slice
- 3 tablespoons (1½ oz) gin
- 1½ tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon simple syrup
- 1 cup ice cubes
- ¼ cup (2 oz) of champagne or dry sparkling wine, chilled

PREPARATION:

Mix together gin, lemon juice, simple syrup, and ice in a cocktail shaker and shake for about 30 seconds. Strain into a champagne flute and top with sparkling wine and a lemon slice. Enjoy!

MENU RECOMMENDATIONS

Let's keep things French, shall we?

Here are my favorite ideas to serve at an *All the Flowers in Paris*-themed book club.

- **CRUDITÉS** with sliced baguettes and a cheese plate featuring some French specialties like Brie.
- **FRENCH ONION SOUP** with warm slices of baguette.
- **CREPE BAR** with all the toppings (whipped cream, Nutella, berries, bananas). A cherry clafoutis (sort of like a baked pancake with fruit) would also be brilliant.
- **QUICHE** (also a really fun idea for a book club brunch!)—or a savory tart, served with a very French salad composed of frisée lettuce, roasted hazelnuts, and a vinaigrette.
- **FRENCH PASTRIES** of all kinds: croissants, of course, but also macarons or pain au raisins (my favorite).
- **AN APPLE TART** would also be stunning on a cake stand and delicious served with coffee.

