

THE PARIS KEY by Juliet Blackwell
Book Club Questions

Genevieve is sure that a drastic change of scene – moving to Paris – will make her happy. Do you believe in the geographical cure? What do you think about the possibility for new or different surroundings to bring out hidden aspects of someone's personality—or do they just make familiar problems worse?

When Genevieve moves to Paris she leaves her comfort zone behind her. What do you feel is the hardest part about moving somewhere new? After reading *The Paris Key*, what do you think are the best and worst aspects of being forced out of one's comfort zone?

Genevieve finds life in Paris slower than in the United States, with a greater emphasis on seemingly old-fashioned pursuits such as reading, cooking, and spending time in parks and museums. Do you think you would enjoy that sort of lifestyle? How do you feel you would adjust to the slow pace of life in France? Do any potential drawbacks come to mind?

Do you think tourists see famous cities differently than the residents? In what ways? Will the novelty of Paris wear off for Genevieve, or will she find a permanent home there? What from the story makes you feel that way?

Genevieve often wishes she could have known her mother as an adult. Do you think women are destined to become some version of their mothers? In what ways do you think Genevieve became like hers, and in what ways did she follow a different path?

Did her Paris experiences transform Genevieve into someone new – or did it make her a “better” version of herself?

Are there parts of Genevieve's married life you can relate to? How about Angela's life on the farm in Petaluma?

Do you enjoy a novel more when the heroine is someone a lot like you or someone very unlike you?

Do you think what Angela did was unforgivable? How do you think it related to her struggles with depression?

Throughout the book, Sylviane encourages Genevieve and helps her adjust to living in Paris. Do you think Genevieve would have made the same choices without Sylviane's support? Do you have someone like this in your life? When have you been most grateful for their point of view?

Would you have gone down to explore the catacombs, despite the warnings to steer clear? Do you think the catacombs serve as a metaphor in the novel, and if so, in what ways?

Does it really matter who Genevieve's biological father was? Do you think Jim knew the truth? What about Dave? If Angela had lived, do you think she would have told Genevieve when she was old enough to understand?

What do you think are the most powerful uses of symbolism in *The Paris Key*? Do you agree with Catharine that the fable of Fitcher's Bird was relevant to Genevieve's experiences?

An important turning point in the book comes about when Genevieve has a realization: "Genevieve feared she kept her mother's ghost alive; kept it strapped to her back like a proverbial monkey." Do you think Genevieve would have been able to release her mother's ghost if she hadn't come to Paris?