

Reading Group Questions

1. Sylvie says, ‘The French way of home cooking is not *fancy*, or difficult, or even necessarily time consuming.’ Thinking about Sylvie’s approach to French cooking, does it differ from your own impressions of French food culture?
2. The food descriptions in this book are sumptuous—was there any particular recipe that you wanted to try?
3. Sylvie emphasises the importance of stories when cooking; do you have a family recipe with a story you’d like to share with others?

4. Cross-cultural connections—and occasional misunderstandings!—are important in the novel, and not only between French and English-language culture. What examples can you think of, and what do they show?
5. Do you think Gabi's creative block is due to fear of failure—or success? What else could she have done to overcome it?
6. Kate's strawberry tart is a recurring motif in the novel, and she reflects on its meaning to her at the end. But what does it represent for you, as a reader?
7. Gabi's and Kate's motivations for attending the Paris Cooking School are very different. Or are they?
8. Was Sylvie really guilty of deliberately closing her eyes to Claude's lies, as she's accused by Caroline, or was she simply too trusting?
9. Romantic love in its many forms is a central focus of the novel, but other kinds of close relationships—family, friends—also feature significantly. How do you think this affects the atmosphere of the story?

10. Paris can be seen as not only the setting of the novel, but also a very important character in its own right. How would you describe that character? Did you learn about any new places you would like to visit?