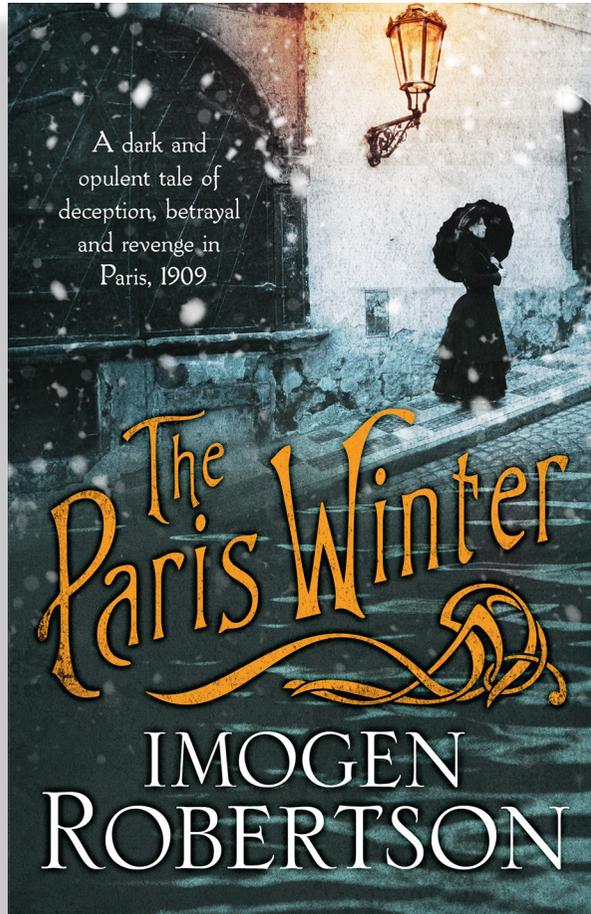


Reading Group Guide



The Paris Winter

Imogen Robertson

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About the book

Maud Heighton came to Lafond's famous Academie to paint, and to flee the constraints of her small English town. It took all her courage to escape, but Paris, she quickly realizes, is no place for a light purse. While her fellow students enjoy the dazzling decadence of the Belle Epoque, Maud slips into poverty. Quietly starving, and dreading another cold Paris winter, Maud is hired by Christian Morel as companion to his beautiful, young sister, Sylvie. But Sylvie, Maud discovers, is not quite the darling she seems. She has a secret addiction to opium and an ominous air of intrigue. As Maud is drawn further into the Morels' world of elegant luxury, their secrets become hers. And before the New Year arrives, a greater deception will plunge her into the darkness that waits beneath this glittering city of light.

Set against the backdrop of the Great Flood, *The Paris Winter* is a dark and powerful tale of deceit and revenge from a masterful storyteller.

About the author

Imogen Robertson directed for TV, film, and radio before becoming a full-time author. She also writes and reviews poetry. Imogen is the author of several novels, including the Crowther and Westerman series. She was shortlisted for the CWA Ellis Peters Historical Award 2011 and for the CWA Dagger in the Library Award 2012. *The Paris Winter* was partially inspired by Imogen's paternal grandmother, a free-spirited traveller who set off through Europe with money sewn into her skirts.



Discussion questions

1. How do you think the flooding of Paris in 1910 fits in to the narrative of *Paris Winter*? Why do you think the author choose this event as a backdrop to the story?
2. The city with its different areas, populations and architectures is almost a character in the story itself. Could the story have been set in any other city? What would have been the affect of setting it in a different period?
3. Maud in the first part of the book is something of an innocent. How is this shown and in what ways does she change in the second part of the book?
4. How does Maud's work as an artist affect the way she sees the world? How does this affect the writing?
5. In Gertrude Stein's salon, Tanya and Maud are confronted with the art of Picasso. How do you think you would have reacted in their place?
6. Do you think Maud should have taken the chance to go home quietly at the beginning of the second part of the book? Is her quest for revenge understandable or just destructive?
7. How important is the Countess in the story? Do you feel she is fair or unfair in her treatment of the girls? Are they fair or unfair to her?
8. What do you think Maud's feelings are for Sylvie at the end of the book?
9. The book tells the stories of a number of women trying to find out how to survive and how to exist in the world. Do you feel women are facing the same problems as Maud, Tanya and Yvette today?

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