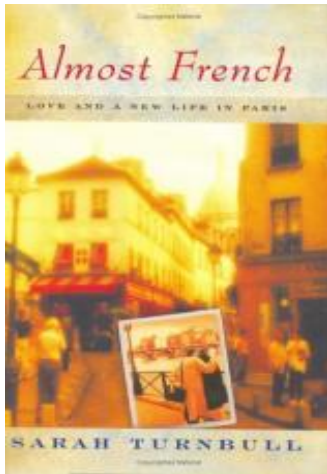


Almost French: Love and a New Life in Paris

by Sarah Turnbull



About the Book

A delightful, fresh twist on the travel memoir, **Almost French** takes us on a tour that is fraught with culture clashes but rife with deadpan humor.

Sarah Turnbull's stint in Paris was only supposed to last a week. Chance had brought Sarah and Frederic together in Bucharest, and on impulse she decides to take him up on his offer to visit him in the world's most romantic city. Sacrificing Vegemite for vichyssoise, the feisty journalist does her best to fit in, although her conversation, her laugh, and even her wardrobe advertise her foreign status.

But as she navigates the highs and lows of this strange new world, from life in a bustling *quartier* and surviving Parisian dinner parties to covering haute couture fashion shows and discovering the paradoxes of French culture, little by little Sarah falls under its spell: maddening, mysterious, and charged with that French specialty-*seduction*.

Discussion Guide

1. How does the fact that Frederic and Sarah speak different languages create misunderstandings, sometimes hilarious? Have you ever experienced this?
2. Seeing Frederic's apartment for the first time and sharing their first at-home dinner, Sarah Turnbull makes certain assumptions due to her own Australian culture. What does she later understand?
3. How are Frederic's contradictions reflective of France?
4. How is the author's visit to Paris to see Frederic different from her previous visits?

5. Explore the ways in which France and Australia are different but also similar. Are the same differences/similarities applicable to France and America?
6. What are the frustrations of speaking in a foreign language? Have you experienced this?
7. Why is Sarah Turnbull so eager to move from Levallois to the center of Paris?
8. The author tells us, "The biggest shock during these first months is how different France is from my romantic imaginings." How did Sarah Turnbull envision France and what does she conclude about the French?
9. Why is it so difficult for Sarah Turnbull to adapt to French ways? Why does she feel invisible?
10. What makes Paris so captivating according to Sarah Turnbull? What is a consequence of Paris's "pervasive beauty?"
11. How do the French approach dressing, and how is this different from the Australian/American approach?
12. What makes Sarah Turnbull realize she'll never be French and never be fully integrated? Have you had a similar experience?
13. How is Frederic's reaction to Australia different from what Sarah Turnbull expected? How are their roles reversed in Australia?
14. What does the author discover about "haute couture?"
15. Why is the French approach to rules and regulations so difficult for a foreigner to understand? How does Sarah Turnbull explain it?
16. Why is a view of the city --- achieved through the piercing of one wall in their apartment to make a window --- so important to the author?
17. Why do Sarah Turnbull's feelings about going to Baincthun change?
18. If you want to fit in with the French, what rules must you remember, according to Sarah Turnbull?
19. How did Sarah Turnbull's style of communicating change?
20. How has Paris changed Sarah Turnbull?

Author Bio

Sarah Turnbull is the author of the international bestseller *ALMOST FRENCH*. She now lives in Sydney with her husband, Frédéric.

Critical Praise

"A love song to Paris. . . . Sarah Turnbull seems to have gotten a lot closer to the real thing than most of us who will always be on the outside looking in, even those of us who imagine otherwise." ?Jonathan Yardley, *The Washington Post Book World*

"Jewels of insight. . . . Turnbull's story will entertain, and edify, both armchair travelers and those of us nutty enough to try living here." ?*The Boston Globe*

"Turnbull's memoir is a charming, insightful meditation." ?*USA Today*

"Full of honest ups and downs . . . its explorations of the 'cultural quicksand' Turnbull gradually adapts to are fascinating. I hope to visit Paris one day, and am grateful to learn so many ways to avoid being an ugly American." ?*The Seattle Times / Post Intelligencer*

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