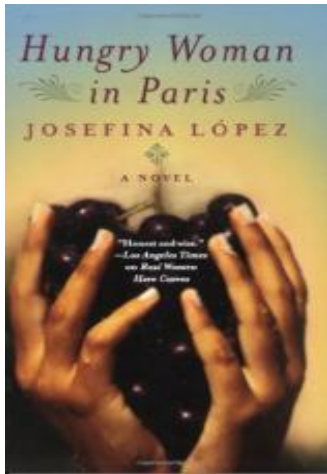


Hungry Woman in Paris

by Josefina Lopez



About the Book

A journalist and activist, Canela believes passion is essential to life; but lately passion seems to be in short supply. It has disappeared from her relationship with her fiancé, who is more interested in controlling her than encouraging her. It's absent from her work, where censorship and politics keep important stories from being published. And while her family is full of outspoken individuals, the only one Canela can truly call passionate is her cousin and best friend Luna, who just took her own life.

Canela can't recover from Luna's death. She is haunted by her ghost and feels acute pain for the dreams that went unrealized. Canela breaks off her engagement and uses her now un-necessary honeymoon ticket, to escape to Paris. Impulsively, she sublets a small apartment and enrolls at Le Coq Rouge, Paris's most prestigious culinary institute.

Cooking school is a sensual and spiritual reawakening that brings back Canela's hunger for life. With a series of new friends and lovers, she learns to once again savor the world around her. Finally able to cope with Luna's death, Canela returns home to her family, and to the kind of life she thought she had lost forever.

Discussion Guide

1. Compare and contrast Canela's immigrant experiences in the United States and France. Have you ever lived in another country? If so, how did your experience compare with Canela's?
2. Chart Canela's romantic and sexual relationship with Henry. How does her relationship with him compare to her relationships with other men, like Armando or Yves?
3. Why is Canela so hungry and depressed? Do you think there is just one reason or many reasons? Do you think she knows why she is depressed, or could there be something outside of what she shares with the reader that is causing her

pain?

4. What are the different types of hunger Canela experiences throughout the novel? How does she satisfy her hunger?
5. What is the significance placed by Canela --- and many young women in the United States --- on turning thirty?
6. When applying to school, Canela tells the admissions woman that she wants to open a French restaurant in the United States so that people can experience French culture. Do you agree that food communicates culture? Why or why not? If so, then how does food communicate culture?
7. Do you think Canela's journey to France is an act of courage, fear, or both?
8. How does Canela's experience in France fuel her to return to Los Angeles to continue fighting for what she believes in? What did she discover --- or rediscover --- while in Paris to enable her to do this?
9. What role does diabetes play in the lives of Canela, her mother, and Luna?
10. Compare and contrast Canela's expatriate experience with that of other famous American writers, such as Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, or Mark Twain.

A Spanish version of this discussion guide is available, which you can read [here](#).

Author Bio

Born in San Luis Potosi, Mexico in 1969, Josefina López was five years old when she and her family immigrated to the United States and settled in East Los Angeles. Best known for co-authoring the film *Real Women Have Curves*, Josefina is the recipient of a number of awards and accolades, including formal recognition from U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer's 7th Annual "Women Making History" banquet in 1998 and a screenwriting fellowship from the California Arts Council in 2001. She, along with **Real Women Have Curves** co-author George La Voo, won the Humanitas Prize for Screenwriting in 2002, The Gabriel Garcia Marquez Award from L.A. Mayor in 2003, and the Artist-in-Residency grant from the NEA/TCG for 2007.

Josefina resides in Boyle Heights and considers herself a "Renaissance Woman".

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