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**Part 1 (Compulsory)**

Almost French is about the author, Sarah Turnbull, who learns to adapt to the ways of the French land while retaining fundamental parts of who she is. Her new culture also rubs off on her and she finds herself transformed before her very eyes through “moments of clarity” into a savvy Parisian resident, able to hold her own with social events, un-cooperative bureaucrats, rude remarks, and other potentially unsettling situations. In the beginning Sarah tried her best to fit in, although her conversation, her laugh, and even her wardrobe advertise her foreigner status. Sarah’s move to Paris is prompted by her chance meeting of Frederic in Bucharest, and on impulse she decided to take him up on his offer to visit him in the world’s most romantic city. A year later she moves in, they fall in love, and eventually marry. She has been there ever since.

**Part 2 (culture)**

1. Why is it so difficult for Sarah Turnbull to adapt to French ways? Why does she feel invisible?

It was so hard for Sarah to adapt to French ways because she was constantly being judged and pressured. It seemed like the French had a lot of rules and when you didn’t obey them, they became rude and arrogant. It’s hard to adapt to a different culture when you’re used to your own customs and beliefs. Sarah also felt invisible because she felt like no one wanted to get to know her. Nobody seemed interested. It was hard for her to carry conversations because of the language barrier. When she attempted to speak and carry a conversation in French she ended up getting shut down and ignored.

2. How is Frederic's reaction to Australia different from what Sarah Turnbull expected? How are their roles reversed in Australia?

Frederic’s reaction to Australia was different from what Sarah expected. Sarah thought he was going to be amazed at the colors, and the architectures, and beaches. She ended up being completely wrong. When they were on their way home from the airport Frederic said,

“The buildings are so dark, so English.” It seemed like he had such a negative outlook on Australia whereas Sarah gleamed with excitement on how beautiful France was. She always had positive adjectives. When Sarah went to visit the Louvre in Paris she described it as, “Lights pour abundantly through the glass ceilings, dancing on the marble figures. The rooms burst with lyrical beauty and brightness.” Frederic never really had positive descriptions he ever called the water at the beaches “violent.”

3. What makes Sarah Turnbull realize she'll never be French and never be fully integrated? Have you had a similar experience?

Sarah realized that she will technically never really be French because there way of life is very different then hers. She tried numerous times to fit in and some of the people she encountered were rude and not accepting of foreigners. Sarah had a real difficult time with the language. She would sometimes say the wrong thing and it would come off as rude or inappropriate. A lot of the people didn’t have patience with her. When she telephoned Ecole Militaire to get an interview she ended up insulting him. According to Turnbull, “The conversation had turned into an excruciating out-of-body experience.”

4. Why is the French approach to rules and regulations so difficult for a foreigner to understand? How does Sarah Turnbull explain these?

Sarah explains that the dress code in France was very foreign to her. She says, “One of the consequences of this pervasive beauty in Paris is that it makes leaving your front door feel like you’re stepping onto a stage. It calls for dressing up. Just like actors in a play, the pressure is on those who look the part.” One of the most revealing lessons in French dress standards occurred one Saturday morning when she went to the bakery to get a baguette and croissants. She had on an old jumper and warm-up pants. When Frederic saw her leaving he was appalled and said, “It’s not nice for the baker.” Sarah felt that Frederic’s reaction to the warm-up pants was a foreign concept. Sarah felt that coming to terms with the emphasis on appearance was tough, and trying to look perfect all the time was never a priority for her.

5. 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?

Sarah envisioned each intimate garden and every candlelit café terrace to spark romance. She ended up questioning herself. Asking if it’s the scene, the city or the man she is succumbing to. Basically she is portraying that it is too good to be true, but at the same time she believes, “I’m carried away on a kaleidoscope of clichés straight out of a trashy romance novel.” Meaning France is really not that romantic as it seems. It’s what you make of it.

**Part 3(Interpersonal communication)**

1. How does the fact that Frederic and Sarah speak different languages create misunderstandings, sometimes hilarious? Have you ever experienced this?

At a dinner party that Sarah and Frederic attend a misunderstanding occurs. Frederic begins to pat his coat pocket searching for something. Sarah claims she knows that he’s looking for his pipe and asks, “Tu veux une pipe?” Immediately she realized that her question was not correct, and judging by the four male faces that were dying of laughter she most definitely said something wrong. In fact she actually asked Frederic if he wanted a blow job. I experienced a little bit of this. When I went to Italy last summer I kept speaking Spanish because the languages were so similar. I would get so embarrassed because they would laugh at me. I remember my grandma asked for pesos instead of Euro. My family died of laughter because even she was speaking Spanish and she’s Italian!

2. What would you have done in Sarah’s place to cope with the frustrations of speaking in a foreign language?

I probably would have been as equally frustrated as Sarah was when she couldn’t speak the language. I admired how much she tried. She always attempted to speak in French whether it was to answer a question or hold a conversation. I would have basically done the same thing as Sarah. I would have gotten lessons and kept on trying. I most certainly wouldn’t give up. To cope with the frustration I would keep educating myself so that I could be as fluent as possible. I would also try not to stress as much.

**Part 4(Media)**

1. How did she describe her work as a journalist and how it influenced the way she viewed different reality in the world?

An example of how her work as a journalist influenced the way she viewed different reality in the world is when she had to write about fashion. Sarah said, “Paris might be synonymous with fashion but I’d never expected to end up writing about the shows. It’s not that I was oblivious to them—living in Paris you can’t be. Everyone from taxi drivers to your newsagent will knowledgeably discuss the collections based on what they’ve seen on television or photos in the press.” Sarah didn’t view fashion like the French did. They took is very seriously almost as if it was a religion. She felt so out of place compared to the ultra-sophisticated crowd.

2. What are some of the ways in which the author describes French media? Based on your reading, would you say that censorship is more prevalent that in the US? How would you classify the French media based on the press theory? Please explain.

Sarah describes the French media in different ways. The French are not avid newspaper readers. I would say that censorship is a little bit stricter in France because in France one cannot express an opinion unless this opinion is permitted under French law. I would classify the French media as strong like the United States.

**Part 5(Reflection)**

1. List three interesting things that you learn as a result of reading this book.

\*I learned how difficult it is to adapt to a new culture

\*I learned how rude and impatient people can be with foreigners

\*I learned that discovering a new culture can broaden your horizons and make you a better person

2. What changes would you like to bring about in the way you interact with foreigners?

I definitely would like to change my attitude as a whole with foreigners. I was always impatient when I came across them and never really gave them a chance. After reading this book and seeing what Sarah went through with all the judgments it really made me think twice. People are so hard on one another. In the end you can really learn from each other by taking the time to be patient and listen. When I did the assignment in the beginning of the semester to meet a foreign exchange student I was really hesitant. I didn’t want to make time to talk to someone that I could barley understand. After doing these two assignments it really opened my eyes to see that everyone is human and struggles in something weather it being a language or simply trying to fit in.