

## ***Questions for Book Clubs***

- 1) Why do you think the book is entitled *The Balcony*?
- 2) How do the recurring characters change from one story to another?
- 3) If you were to pick one character to accompany you on a long road trip, who would you choose and why? Which character would be your last choice for a companion?
- 4) *The Balcony* is a novel-in-stories. How is that form different from a novel and a regular story collection?
- 5) How does the book depict France?
- 6) How is *The Balcony* a book about women? How is it a book about everyone?
- 7) How can a house affect the lives of the people who live in it?
- 8) What is the most significant event in the history of the manor house?
- 9) Do the changing fortunes of the house reflect events in society at large?
- 10) Is it a house you could imagine living in?
- 11) What is the book saying about the choices we face in life?
- 12) What questions linger after finishing *The Balcony*?

*Some of these questions were taken from The Daily Mail's [reading group guide](#).*

## Timeline of Inhabitants in the Stories

Date	Manor Inhabitants	Cottage Inhabitants	Story Title
1880s	<b>Jean-Paul Léger</b> , père, builds manor and cottage		
1890s	<b>Jean Léger</b> (son of JP Léger) and wife, <b>Giselle Léger</b> , a former courtesan	<b>Pierre Frontin</b> , gardener	"Eclipse"
1910s	<b>Emile Vouette</b> , mill owner, and <b>Geneviève Vouette</b> , wife, with sons, <b>Charles</b> and <b>François</b>	Empty	"The Pond"
1920s	<b>Geneviève Vouette</b> ("The Widow Vouette")	Empty	
1930s	<b>Geneviève Vouette</b> (Garden used by <b>Madeleine Blanchard</b> to meet her boyfriend, Gabriel.)	Empty	"Plunder" "Nothing of Consequence"
1940s	<b>Geneviève Vouette</b>  Upon death of <b>Geneviève Vouette</b> , manor bought by Nicholas and Sonya Altman, Russian Jews. Sonya is pregnant with a daughter who will be named <b>Olga</b> .	Bought by <b>Simone Blanchard</b> , village laundress, with her young daughter, <b>Charlotte</b> , after her other daughter, <b>Madeleine</b> , runs away.	"Nothing of Consequence" "Plunder"
1950s	Abandoned after arrest of the Altmans	Simone Blanchard	
1970s	<b>Olga Altman</b> (daughter of Nicholas and Sonya Altman) reclaims her parents' manor as a weekend house	Simone Blanchard	
1980s	Weekend house of <b>Olga Altman</b> with her husband, <b>Hugo Boyer</b> , and, in late 80s, their daughter, <b>Élodie</b> .	<b>Henri Havre</b> (former schoolmaster) and wife, <b>Augustine Havre</b> (grown sons, <b>Jacques</b> and <b>Guy</b> )	"A Place in the Country"
1990s	<b>Hugo, Olga, Élodie Boyer</b> <b>Brigitte</b> visits one summer Manor rented out when Boyers go to USA	<b>Jacques Havre</b> and his wife, <b>Hélène</b> (grown sons, <b>Alexis</b> and <b>Emmanuel</b> )	"Au Pair" "Half Life" "Ants" "Tintin in the Antilles"
2000s	<b>Élodie Boyer</b> with her husband and children.	Stephen Maxwell, an American cardiologist, and wife, Emilie, a French nurse.	"Between"