

READ GLOBAL

The Red Address Book by Sofia Lundberg

Questions

(Adapted from [Book Movement Reading Guide](#))

Warm-up: On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate this novel?

1. Doris calls her red address book “a map of [her] life” (7). Why does she want to tell her grandniece Jenny about it?
2. Why does Doris’s mother send her away as a child? What is Doris exposed to during this time that she had not previously known about or experienced before? What surprised you, or what did you learn, about this time period in Sweden?
3. Why do you think that Gösta and Doris are able to form such a close and enduring relationship?
4. Jean Ponsard stops her on the street in Paris because of her beauty. How does this encounter change her life? She says his complete lack of interest in her mind “might be one of the most degrading things you can subject someone to” (50)? Why does she put up with this?
5. What does the book reveal about the subject of beauty? What does Doris learn about beauty during her time as a live mannequin? Why does she say that beauty is “the most manipulative force of all” (78)? Do Doris’s ideas about beauty evolve as she ages?
6. After Allan disappears, Doris says that separation is “the worst thing on earth” (98)? How is Doris’s life shaped by the separations that occur? What other separations occur throughout the book and how do the characters cope with them?
7. When Doris begins to write for a living, what does she instinctively know that people will want in their stories? Why do she and Gösta laugh at the stories she writes for women’s magazines? What do you think the author is trying to convey about storytelling and its role in our lives?
8. Both Doris and Jenny are described as beautiful and had professions in modeling, yet they admittedly lack self-confidence. What do you think has contributed to their poor self-image and their inability to see themselves as beautiful? What might have changed or prevented this?
9. Do you agree with Jenny and Willie’s choice to locate Allan?
10. What does Jenny learn about her own life and family from Doris’s writings? Who does Doris feel is responsible for Elise’s abandonment of Jenny? What does Doris ask Jenny to do now that she has this new knowledge?
11. What does Doris’s confrontation with old age and her own mortality reveal about what really matters in life? Does the book ultimately suggest what one should value most or prioritize?

Wind-down: Did this discussion change your 1-10 rating for this book?

Notes

In the address book:

Alm, Eric
Alm, Agnes
Andersson, Carl
Andersson, Elise
Jenning, Elaine
Jones, Paul
Nilsson, Gosta
Parker, Mike
Pestova, Eleonora
Ponsard, Jean
Powers, John Robert
Serafin, Dominique
Smith, Allan

Doris



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