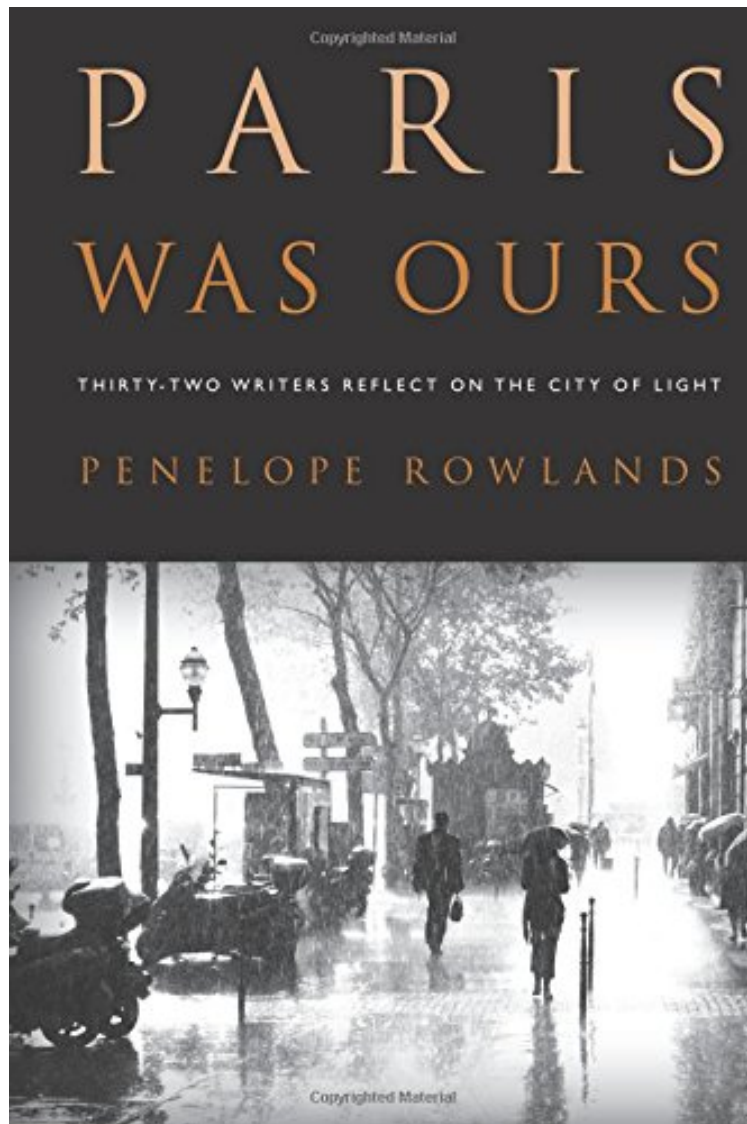


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Paris Was Ours

Penelope Rowlands

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Penelope Rowlands : Paris Was Ours before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Paris Was Ours:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The good, the badBy aletaThis book is an anthology of stories about people who have moved to Paris to live there. Experiences vary, and this is not a book by travel agents. The good, the bad, and the unpleasant are included. Very realistic if you are considering moving there to live, it will give you a better idea of situations than a travel book would give you.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A new

perspectiveBy JamieAs other reviewers have stated, "Paris Was Ours" is unique in that it doesn't just glorify the city, but also shows the day-to-day hardships faced by its residents. Rowlands writes: "Vacation syndrome is dangerously seductive. You actually believe that this magical place you have come to allows you to be the contented, stress-free person you really are. There's a lot of vacation syndrome in Paris." And the thirty-two stories that follow show that it's not all baguettes and eclairs in the City of Light. The city is expensive, it can be mean and in some cases, impossible to live comfortably. I really enjoyed some of the stories, while others left me a bit bored. However, I think all of the contributions were worthwhile and I certainly recommend reading this book if you love Paris.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. In preparation for my own journey to Paris...By EVWonderful impressions of Paris written by folks who spent a good deal of time in Paris. Will be traveling to Paris soon so I wanted to read this book recommended by a sales lady in a little boutique in Cape Cod who also spent time in Paris and her trip had a lasting positive effect on her. I am sure my trip, while only short term, will allow me to write some inspirational thoughts. Took notes of places to visit that may not be in the tourist guides. Very special accounts of Paris by those who lived there. Loved the book.

Paris is the world capital of memory and desire, concludes one of the writers in this intimate and insightful collection of memoirs of the city. Living in Paris changed these writers forever. In thirty-two personal essays--more than half of which are here published for the first time--the writers describe how they were seduced by Paris and then began to see things differently. They came to write, to cook, to find love, to study, to raise children, to escape, or to live the way its done in French movies; they came from the United States, Canada, and England; from Iran, Iraq, and Cuba; and--a few--from other parts of France. And they stayed, not as tourists, but for a long time; some are still living there. They were outsiders who became insiders, who here share their observations and revelations. Some are well-known writers: Diane Johnson, David Sedaris, Judith Thurman, Joe Queenan, and Edmund White. Others may be lesser known but are no less passionate on the subject. Together, their reflections add up to an unusually perceptive and multifaceted portrait of a city that is entrancing, at times exasperating, but always fascinating. They remind us that Paris belongs to everyone it has touched, and to each in a different way.

From Publishers WeeklyIn original and previously published essays, 32 diverse writers share both exciting and depressing Paris moments. Diane Johnson, evaluating French stereotypes, was surprised that French hostesses serve store-bought entrees. Jeremy Mercer was taken in by the owner of the famous bookstore Shakespeare Co., living there rent-free (downstairs with the riffraff, and Janine di Giovanni saw French mothers hit their children to enforce good manners. In three of the most substantial essays, Alicia Drake muses on the disconcerting ability of the French to accept human faults as she visits sites from which the Nazis, aided by French police, deported Jews to their deaths; Stacy Schiff finds that picking up the dry cleaning was less of a chore when done on ground Ben Franklin and John Adams trod before her; and Roxane Farmanfarman escaped revolutionary Iran for springtime in Paris. Many of the original pieces are wordy, mired in mundaneness, and lacking forceful editing by journalist Rowlands (A Dash of Daring: Carmel Snow and Her Life in Fashion, Arts and Letters), But overall this book should strike a chord in those harboring love/hate relationships with Paris and Parisians. (Feb.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.From BooklistRowlands compiles into one volume 32 works, about half of which have never been seen before, by different writers who relay their experiences of living in Paris. Although the contributors are as mixed a bag as the City of Lights 20 arrondissements, they report universal similarities: In Paris, the customer is, if ever, only rarely right. The city's taunting, melancholy beauty is unsurpassed. And any moment passed in the Luxembourg Gardens can be considered time well spent. Rowlands does a seamless job of presenting a city as seen by so many eyes (those of David Sedaris, Stacey Schiff, and Zo Valds, to name a few) that readers who've visited will recognize their own memories, and those who haven't will glean a globally in-depth portrait. (The piece by a Parisian single-mom, blogging about her homelessness, is particularly poignant.) Judith Thurman perhaps sums up the whole endeavor best when she writes that one of the greatest charms of having lived in Paris is the Proustian glamour of being able to claim that one did so. --Annie Bostrom "...Paris doesn't merely put visitors in the mood; the city itself is the object of mad crushes. This diverse collection of reflections is a testament to that passion...." The New York Times "... it's fascinating when 32 writers asked to note their impressions of the French capital react in uncanny harmony. In Paris Was Ours the authors describe their attraction to the mystical, mercurial city as the always dazzling yet also dizzying experience of being drawn, moth-like, to a flame..." The Courier-Journal (Louisville, KY) "...Penelope Rowlands culls 32 essays, stories and poems, some original, some previously published, from writers who include professors, single mothers, gay men, a homeless woman, a wealthy Iranian and a poor young Cuban. The collection takes some of the shine off Paris but not the allure..." Minneapolis Star-Tribune "In vivid, varied, demitasse-length essays, students, mothers, journalists, chefs, and designers (from America and Great Britain, but also Iran, Iraq, and Cuba) attempt to decipher their Parisian counterparts. ... The authors' often hard-won insights and admiration provide a welcome key to the heart of this iconic city." Virtuoso Travel "I'm also reading Paris Was Ours ... It's the exact escape I need during this snow mania, and it includes pieces by David Sedaris, Diane Johnson, Marcelle Clements and others." USA Today's Pop Candy blog "A

lively show-and-tell about the city's legendary Latin lovers, celebrated cuisine, fashion worship, and its rarely heard from (or about) homeless citizens." --Elle (Elle)"Whether you have lived in Paris or not, this captivating collection will transport you there." --National Geographic Traveler (National Geographic Traveler)"The essays capture the mood of the city in all of its dark and light shades, evoking the spirit of Eugene Atget and Marcel Proust. "Paris Was Ours" is a sparkling collection as well as a nice literary complement that fans of the Woody Allen movie "Midnight in Paris" would especially enjoy." --The Chicago Tribune