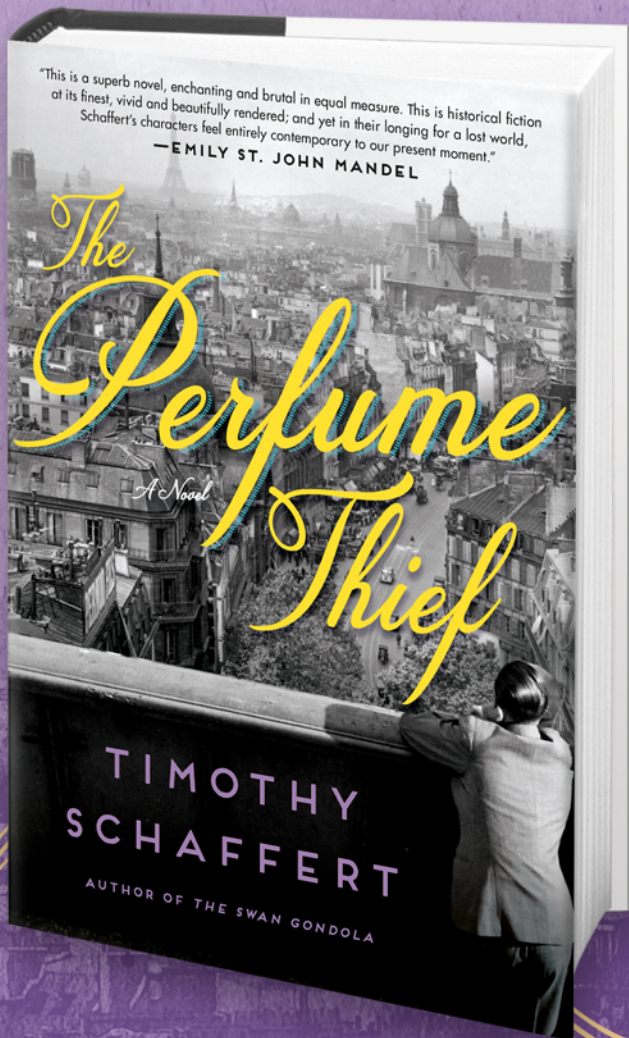


BOOK CLUB KIT



Dear Reader,

When I began reading about the history of perfume while researching my novel, I became intoxicated by all the spices, flavors, flowers, and scents of the world. The title character, a thief named Clementine, is similarly captivated, which has led her to travel to all the nations' cities and deserts and countryside, seeking the bazaars, the spice markets, the swap meets, the rose farms, and the perfume shops for the richest sensory experiences ... and the rarest scents and most valuable perfumes.

Throughout history, the desire for spice, fashion, and fragrance has brought cultures together, expanding the world and transcending boundaries. And storytelling has a similar power over the senses. Through books, we share our sensibilities, explore our differences, and seek understanding and compassion and empathy. In our favorite novels, no matter where a story is set, we're moved by the human experiences portrayed and overtaken by how vividly the world is brought to life through description, detail, and atmosphere. I hope for *The Perfume Thief* to send you to all the furthest reaches of Clementine's imagination.

-TIMOTHY SCHAFFERT

THE CHARACTERS OF *The Perfume Thief*

IN CANDY WRAPPER FASHION BY TIMOTHY SCHAFFERT

For more Candy Wrapper Fashion, check out [Timothy Schaffert's Instagram](#)



Clementine, the Perfume Thief



Blue, the Actor



Day, the Cabaret Singer



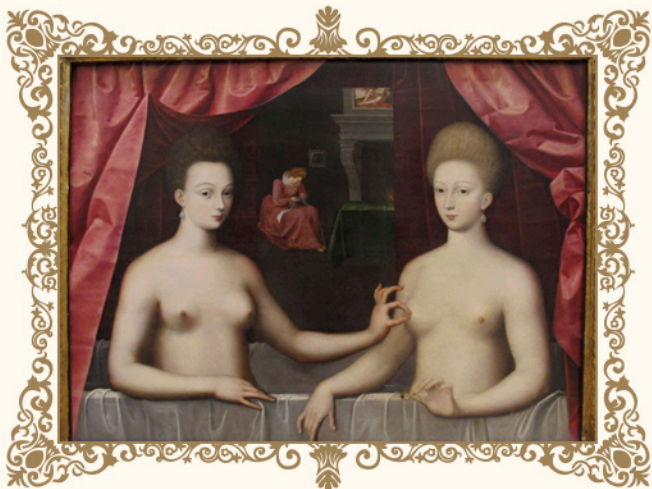
Zoe, the Headliner

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of your favorite scent memories? What are those scents that make you the most nostalgic, or those that have been lost to time, or those that carry you away to another place or to a particular moment in the past?
2. While we might not often see women in their 70s leading the action in crime novels and movie thrillers, many aspects of Clementine's age and experience give her the upper hand throughout the novel. What are the aspects that Clem works to her advantage?
3. Describe Clem's insights into what makes her such a good thief, and what are her perspectives on her life of crime? Let's say you have all the best skills and no scruples: What one thing would you most like to steal?
4. The novel is set among singers and actors in wartime. How do art and literature, fashion and perfume, and music and entertainment have the power to influence politics, social conflicts, and the balance of power?
5. Why do you think Clementine is so preoccupied with M, a lover she hasn't seen in decades?
6. What roles do memory and nostalgia play in the novel? How do memory and nostalgia influence your own life and decisions?
7. *The Perfume Thief* addresses issues of gender, isolation, and global conflict. What parallels do you see between the novel's portrait of the past and the conditions of our present?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS *(continued)*

- Black performers from America—Josephine Baker, Ada "Brickhouse" Smith, Alberta Hunter, among many others—flocked to Paris in the 1920s, where there were more opportunities for success for singers like Day. How did treatment of these Black Americans differ in Paris? How was Day's situation under Nazi Occupation different from that of Blue and Clem's?
- Since Clementine has led a life of deception and criminality, why do we believe her and the stories she tells us?
- What do you imagine becomes of all the characters after the liberation of Paris in 1944 (which would have been three and a half years after the conclusion of the novel)?
- If you were to design a perfume based on *The Perfume Thief*, what would it smell like? What would the bottle be like?



Gabrielle d'Estrées and One of Her Sisters

Provocative Perfumes

The following perfumes have a history of resistance and hints of danger, subversion, and corruption. Most of the scents listed here are <gasp> unisex or gender-neutral. Wear with caution!

SHOCKING



Some of the mystery in *The Perfume Thief* hinges on a perfume bottle shaped like a naked woman. Though the perfume in the novel is fictional, the bottle is influenced by Shocking, a scent by legendary fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli. In a playful bit of marketing, Schiaparelli declared the bottle fashioned after a dressmaker's mannequin, and its label was in the shape of a modiste's tape measure draped over the bottle's clear glass shoulders. But there was no mistaking that the bottle was actually all about the curves, inspired by Mae West's figure, which Schiaparelli dressed as costumer for the film *Every Day's a Holiday* in 1937. The bottle was designed by surrealist artist Leonor Fini, who later provided the graphic illustrations for the famously banned erotic novel *Histoire d'O* (*The Story of O*). (Shocking, Shocking is no longer manufactured, but you can still find lingering whiffs of it in secondhand bottles.)

MA GRIFFE

The couturier Marie-Louise Carven, who lived to be 105, founded her fashion house in Paris during WWII, and introduced her signature fragrance, Ma Griffe ("my signature") in 1946. During the Holocaust, she helped to protect her sewist Henry Bricianer, a Romanian Jew, and his wife and five children, by hiding them in her home and in the homes of her relatives. (In 2000, she was honored by the Righteous Among the Nations program of the World Remembrance Holocaust Center.) On the tenth anniversary of the liberation of Paris, she celebrated with a publicity stunt that dropped sample bottles of Ma Griffe, attached to little parachutes, onto the streets of the city. The perfume is still available today in its original formula, with top notes of bergamot, lemon, and gardenia bud.

SHE CAME TO STAY

Autumnal in nature, with its heart notes of nutmeg and clove, She Came To Stay is part of Timothy Han's literature-inspired series of fragrances; in this instance, he draws from Simone de Beauvoir's autobiographical novel of the same name, about a romance between two women and a man in Paris during the Nazi Occupation. For Beauvoir, the senses are central to her philosophies. "There were soldiers in the Luxembourg Gardens," she wrote in her diaries. "Magnificent autumn morning, golden chestnut trees, the smell of falling leaves. I was thinking of small pleasures....I withdrew from the world.... War was nowhere."

TABAC BLOND (House of Caron) **AND TOBACCO NUIT** (Atelier Cologne)

According to the House of Caron, which still distills a version of its Tabac Blond introduced in 1919, the parfum was designed for men but appropriated by the newly liberated women unbuckling their corsets – the flappers of the twenties wanted a fragrance that flaunted their bad habits (smoking in public) and covered them up at the same time (disguising the lingering scent of stale smoke with top notes of cedar and leather). While smoking in nightclubs is no longer the glamorous (or legal) thing it was, Tobacco Nuit, a cologne absolue from Atelier, suggests a sultry cabaret singer in a jazz den, with its notes of Turkish tobacco blossom and Italian clementine.

I AM TRASH

Far more innocent than its name suggests, this perfume from Etat Libre D'Orange is a product of upcycling, incorporating already tossed-aside ingredients and wringing from them an elegiac essence: “exhausted” rose petals, expired apples, and over-twisted orange rind. The result is something sweet, soft, and comforting, as cool as a late summer breeze just after nightfall.

MEMOIRS OF A TRESPASSER

The perfume house Imaginary Authors presents its scents as a library of literature by fictional writers, its every synopsis utterly convincing, each perfume's name referencing a novel or a memoir that doesn't exist, by an author who sounds real, but isn't. The memoirs referenced by Memoirs of a Trespasser are attributed to a writer who defends a cloistered lifestyle with the quip: “Who needs love when there is still cognac in the glass?” The unisex perfume's scent first releases its sweet Madagascar vanilla and eases into the more sour, fleshy scent of reclusiveness.



Ether Dream Cocktail

Brought to the pages of *The Perfume Thief* and the fictionalized bordellos of Paris by bartender and friend of the author Mitch Cavanaugh via Omaha, Nebraska



MIX

3.0 oz Tanqueray gin

.5 oz lime juice

.25 oz simple syrup

Pour into a martini glass

**Top with a Citrus IPA foam
(Deschutes Fresh Haze is ideal)
& a sprig of rosemary to garnish**



A “MUSIC WILL SAVE US” PLAYLIST

“Music will be what saves us, Clem. You wait and see. We’ll be singing at the tops of our lungs as we drive the sons-of-bitches out of town.”

—Day Shabillé

Find Timothy Schaffert’s playlist on [Spotify](#)

“They Can’t Take That Away from Me”

A sweet and melancholy song by George and Ira Gershwin, introduced by Fred Astaire in *Shall We Dance* (1937). In the film, Astaire indulges in the nostalgia for his memories of Ginger Rogers, even as she sits at his side, the threat of their separation looming. (The song’s sentiments are heartbreakingly echoed in a song from 2020: Olivia Dean’s “What Am I Gonna Do on Sundays?”)

“Cheek to Cheek”

Another song from an Astaire/Rogers film (*Top Hat*, 1935), Astaire half-heartedly imagines venturing out and about, climbing a mountain or fishing in a river, but the song’s lyrics keep bringing him back to where he’s happiest: into the spin of the waltz, his true love in his arms.

“My Funny Valentine”

Refreshingly devoid of pronouns and gender roles, this Rodgers and Hart tune from 1937 can be sung by anybody about anyone without changing a word. Never mind that it’s a little insulting for a love song (the singer sings of laughable, unphotographable looks) — one suspects the valentine is in on the joke and unmoved by flattery.

“Pennies From Heaven”

The charming and lilting melody belies the ironies at play ... if you’re getting pelted with a rainfall of pennies, don’t hide under a tree, the song advises — this dangerous deluge of wealth in low-value coinage should be interpreted as a sign of your good fortune, so turn your umbrella upside down and catch what you can.

A “MUSIC WILL SAVE US” PLAYLIST *(continued)*

“I’ll Be Seeing You”

One of popular music’s most plaintive songs, it was recorded by multiple singers during WWII, an ode to nostalgia with ingenious rhymes, haunting repetitions, and swelling emotion. The image the song evokes of looking at the moon, but seeing “you” is the very essence of poetic longing.

“We’ll Meet Again”

Somewhat the antithesis of the elegant “I’ll Be Seeing You,” “We’ll Meet Again” has a simple sway and almost plodding, plucking rhythms. But while “I’ll Be Seeing You” will bring a tear to your eye, Vera Lynn’s sweet and strong rendition of “We’ll Meet Again” can reduce you to sobs. Lynn pauses midway in the song to be joined by a chorus and “We’ll Meet Again” takes on the quality of a saloon full of war weary, heartbroken lovers, raising their pints to all the heroes of the world. The song is so powerful, it led to the BBC to ban it during wartime, fearing it would make the troops too sad. On May 8, 2020, on the seventy-fifth anniversary of Victory in Europe, or VE Day, and in the height of the pandemic, the UK was invited to engage in a national singalong after a televised address by the Queen. Vera Lynn, at 103, lived to see this tribute; she passed away a month later. Video of the socially distanced singalong in the streets packs an emotional wallop — dial it up on [YouTube](#), and pour yourself a beer to cry into.

