



Five Flights Up

Sex, Love and Family, from Paris to Lyon

Kristin Louise Duncombe

1. How does the theme of sex, money, and personal power play into the book *Five Flights Up*?
2. One reviewer spoke of the “sly yet skillful insertion” of a feminist message in the text of *Five Flights Up*? Where did this stand out most clearly for you?
3. Duncombe describes herself and her family as “simple people... ‘Dressing up’ means wearing black jeans instead of blue, city sneakers instead of flip flops.” Given that this is the case, why do you think she gets so attracted to the glamorous apartment in the fanciest part of Lyon?
4. About her husband’s long-ago affair, Duncombe writes that she “didn’t believe the ‘just sex’ argument, not for one second. I know men and women are ostensibly different this way, but I did not see how it was possible to have been sleeping with and sharing meals with and working and travelling with ‘that’ woman and not develop feelings.” Do you think men and women are different that way? How does this idea get challenged later on in the story?
5. Of the many choices the author has to make throughout the narrative, are there any in particular that stood out to you? If had you been in her shoes, you would have chosen differently? Are there any choices that she made that surprised you?