

*French Rhapsody* by Antoine Laurain

- A rhapsody, in musical terms, is a free-flowing, emotional piece of music with plenty of variation in tone and structure. Its theme is often about a place. How accurately does this definition fit the novel? What is the effect of the variety of voices included in *French Rhapsody*, and what do they tell us about the state of the French nation today?
- To what extent is Antoine Laurain's writing nostalgic for the past?
- *French Rhapsody* delves into the worlds of music and art, both classical and contemporary. How does Laurain weave different artforms together? To what extent is the novel a critique of the modern creative scene?
- Can *French Rhapsody* be read as a political novel? What does it tell us about those who long for power?
- Antoine Laurain collects antiques and used to work for an antiques dealer. His novels often focus around a quest to find a lost object – the talismanic hat in *The President's Hat*, the handbag and the notebook it contains in *The Red Notebook*, the missing demo tape in *French Rhapsody*. What do his novels tell us about the meaning and power of inanimate objects?
- A reviewer for French newspaper *Le Figaro* compares Antoine Laurain's comic skill to that of Molière, who understood that even the most absurd or grotesque characters should be likeable. Did you feel any sympathy for Vaugan?
- And finally ... would you vote for JBM for President?