

## *Cheri* by Colette

### Questions by Faith Adams and Lynn Adams

1. What is the principal appeal of *Cheri*? Style, theme? Etc.
2. Lea is typically described as a courtesan. What do we know from this book about the position of career mistresses in French society at the time?
  - a. Why might their lives and loves be of interest to the author and to us?
3. Is the name “Cheri” only Lea’s private name for him?
  - a. If it is a private endearment, what is the purpose or effect of using it like his name?
4. Cheri is apparently wealthy. Where does his money come from?
5. At the time of the story, is Cheri an adult?
  - a. Or one could ask, is Cheri more than a spoiled brat?
6. What is it about Cheri that makes him irresistible to Lea?
7. There are elements of quasi-maternal love and pure sexual passion in Lea’s and Cheri’s relationship. Does one or the other predominate?
8. How does the age difference affect the power balance in the relationship?
9. Interior décor and bedroom appointments are richly described. How might this be important?
10. Why did Charlotte (Cheri’s mother) condone Cheri’s liaison with Lea?
  - a. How would you describe Lea’s and Charlotte’s relationship?
11. Why is Cheri unhappy with his wife?
12. Why is he finally able to leave Lea and return to Edmee?
13. Was Lea going to be able to “make it on her own” after losing Cheri?
14. Did Colette intend this story to be ironic in any way?
15. Is this “Proust Lite”?