

Discussion Question for: *Three Men in a Boat (To Say Nothing of the Dog)*

1. The book was rated #33 of 100 Best Novels by the Guardian in 2003, and was the BBC's Big Read that year. Esquire rates it #2 of 50 Funniest Books ever written. Do you agree? Why do you think it is still so widely read and translated?
2. Did you find the book reminiscent of other books or movies? Which ones?
3. What kind of humor does Jerome use? Is it still funny? Which incidents were most amusing?
4. The book has many tonal shifts: somber, comic, romantic. Why does Jerome insert serious digressions such as the woman who commits suicide? How do they affect the story? What is the purpose of J's inclusion of anecdotes into his narrative? Did the nature descriptions and historical events add or detract from the novel?
5. Is the narrator reliable? What do the historical digressions reveal about his world view?
6. What are some of the themes of the novel?
7. Jerome frequently calls Harris vulgar and common. What does he mean by this? Do you agree with this characterization? Why do you think Jerome and George tend to scapegoat Harris whenever anything goes wrong?
8. How are women portrayed in the book? Compare the Water Picnic anecdote to the water picnic in *Little Women*.
9. Why are the descriptions of the three men relatively shallow?
10. Did Montmorency enjoy the holiday?