

TRAVEL |

On October 23 2014, I put on a cardigan and set off to explore Paris on foot and partially by the metro. It was a pleasant sunny afternoon and the sun was shining bright above my head. I took line one from Bon Nouvelle to Hotel de Ville where I was going to meet my second cousin Chitro Shahabuddin for the first time.

The Shahabuddins have been living in Paris over 30 years now. Chitro was born in this city and grew up appreciating everything about its culture and food. I considered myself lucky to have her as my guide to explore this cultural capital of the world. With her as my side, I could see Paris from the perspective of a Parisian and not from a tourist's point of view.

Paris has always been the breeding ground of avant-garde art and what better way to start the tour than a visit to the Centre Gorges Pompidou? The centre is not only a treasure-trove of contemporary art but also a great example of innovative architecture. From every direction the building is a work of art. What I liked most about the center is its glass elevator hanging from the main building like an intricate necklace. I met her in front of a little carousel in the street adjacent to the Centre Pompidou.

The weather got murky and the clouds were heavy. We hurried into the centre to avoid the risk of getting drenched by the rain. The centre was hosting an exhibition with selective works of Roy Lichtenstein,

ETERNAL PARIS

THERE'S NOWHERE THAT LIFE FEELS MORE ETERNAL THAN PARIS AS LIFE AND ART FLOW IN A SPIRITUAL BONDAGE

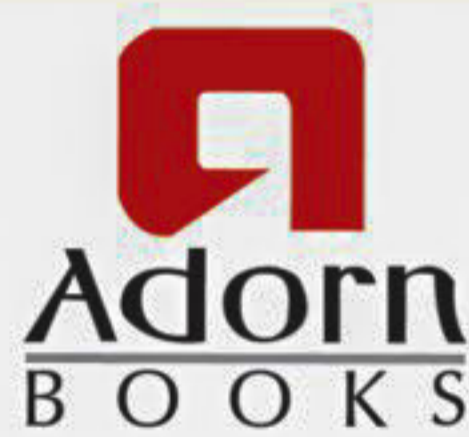
HYACINTH SHARMEEN ZIA

and throw the key into the river, as a romantic gesture. The bridge is apparently mistaken as the bridge where Jean and Cosette from Victor Hugo's novel *Les Miserables* hide under, while fleeing. The bridge mentioned in the book is actually Pont Neuf. We decided to walk by the Seine and take the metro to Eiffel.

After walking by the Seine and playing around with the locks in Pont Neuf we



PHOTOS: INTERNET



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the famous pop artist. Since you are only allowed to start the tour of the centre from the top floor, I could see the rain rattling on the glass roof of the escalator. The peak of the center is a glass dome. As we got to the top, I could see the whole of Paris, the Versailles and the Eiffel behind a pink sky all drenched in rain.

Another thing that I missed last time was a walk on the Pont Des Arts which is the bridge where lovers attach padlocks engraved with their names on the railings

took the line 6 to cite de architecture Patrimoine. The Eiffel tower stood tall dressed in bright lights for us. I got my picture taken and we went off to catch our midnight train. As the metro carried us to the south of Paris, the Eiffel blinked for one last time before departing for the night.

I wondered if my day would have been this memorable if it wasn't for her company. Indeed, it is not the places that make a memory last but the people in it.