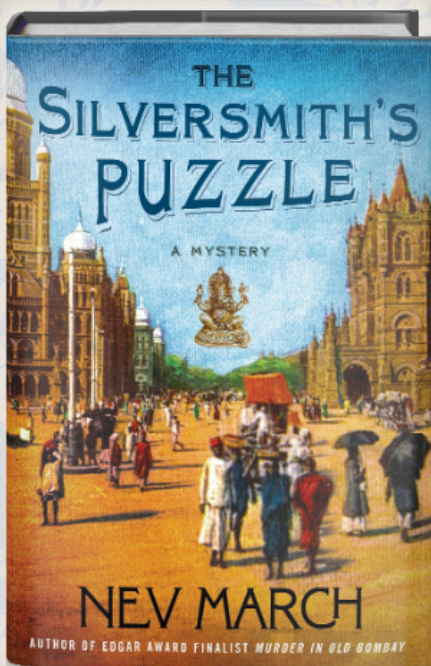


The Silversmith's Puzzle

by Nev March

Book Club Discussion Questions

1. When Captain Jim and Diana return to Bombay, what pressures do they face? How has the Framji family fared without them? Will their return help or harm the family's fortunes?
2. What purpose does the minor character John Raman, the musician, play? What do we learn about Diana through her interaction with him?
3. Why does Captain Jim feel the need to "go it alone" for most of this investigation? What changes his mind?
4. When Captain Jim does recruit the Framjis' staff, what is the inadvertent result?
5. What role does the poor gardener, Bala Mali, play in Jim's investigation? Why won't he reveal who assaulted him? What does this say about the loyalty of longtime retainers?
6. What are the parallels between Satya, the disgraced silversmith who was once a goldsmith, and Captain Jim, who has faced lifelong disgrace as an illegitimate child and as a mixed-race adult?



7. Both Satya and Captain Jim are pushed to do things they would not willingly undertake. What's the difference in how each approaches the crime they must commit? What does Captain Jim have that Satya did not?
8. How do British individuals help or hinder Captain Jim's investigation?
9. How does the priest Dastoor Kukadaru's request help Captain Jim to solve the mystery of Satya's murder?
10. What does this story explain about the Hindu caste system and its hold over social relations?
11. How does Captain Jim debunk the false witness? What does this reveal about how far he's willing to go to exonerate Adi?

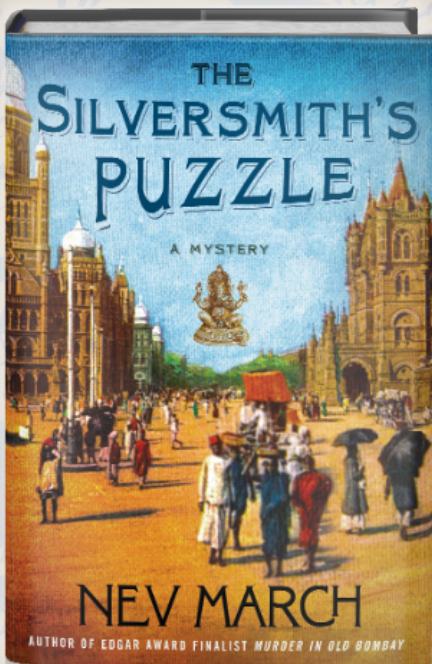


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12. How does Diana grow over the course of this adventure? Does her initial dismay at being rebuffed by her community change at the midpoint of the novel, and then change again toward the end?
13. How does Diana's emotional growth aid Captain Jim's investigation?
14. Why didn't Satya, the silversmith, escape with his child before his murder? What do we learn about the gang leadership from Rai Chand, as he compels Captain Jim to do his bidding?
15. What's the tragic irony at the end, when you finally learn who killed Satya?
16. How does the shadowy hand propelling Satya and others arrange for his gang to escape with the ransom? In what way does this arrangement reveal how intimately he knows they ways in which Captain Jim, Diana, and others will behave?
17. How does this story explain the (real life) "miracle of the Gold Brick," which funded the completion of the Anjuman Atash Behram fire temple in Mumbai?



18. What did you most enjoy about this novel: the children, the Framji family, seeing Captain Jim in action, or the complexity of India's history at this time?
19. Did the author's notes add to your enjoyment and understanding of the period? Did it surprise you that so many events in this novel are based on fact?
20. Who was the most tragic character in the novel? Why did the author introduce them as she did?

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