

Marlborough Public Library Adult Book Club

October 8 or 10, 2024

*The Bandit Queens* by Parini Shroff

Question for discussion abridged from:

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/706934/the-bandit-queens-by-parini-shroff/9780593498972/readers-guide/>

1. India and the village Geeta lives in are intrinsic to the narrative. Discuss the ways in which the setting functions as a character in the novel and how each of the other characters relates to it.
2. In what ways does the past seem to control, or at least influence, the present in *The Bandit Queens*? How do the characters try to repress or escape the pain of their pasts?
3. Discuss the significance of the following quote from the book:  
“It was, Geeta felt, just another example of women living within the spaces that others defined. Farah’s words came back to her: They don’t get to make all the choices. We get to make some, too. It was pretty but it wasn’t true.”  
  
In what ways are the women in the novel limited in their choices? Did you find that Geeta’s view on the matter in the quote above evolved over the course of the story? How?
4. What role does gossip play in the narrative? To what extent does it change the course of the characters’ lives and help drive the plot within the story?
5. The author infuses snark, wit, and humor into a devastating storyline about women wanting to escape their abusive marriages. Explore ways in which you use humor in your own life to deal with difficult situations. Do you find this method to be effective?
6. How are female relationships depicted in *The Bandit Queens*? How does the novel play with and subvert female stereotypes and archetypes? How would you position Geeta in relation to contemporary feminist discourse?
7. Love, family, friendship, and feminism are all major narrative themes. What other overarching ideas did you notice? What did you take away from reading the book overall?
8. What did you think about the ending—were you satisfied or disappointed? How do you picture Geeta’s life after the story closes?