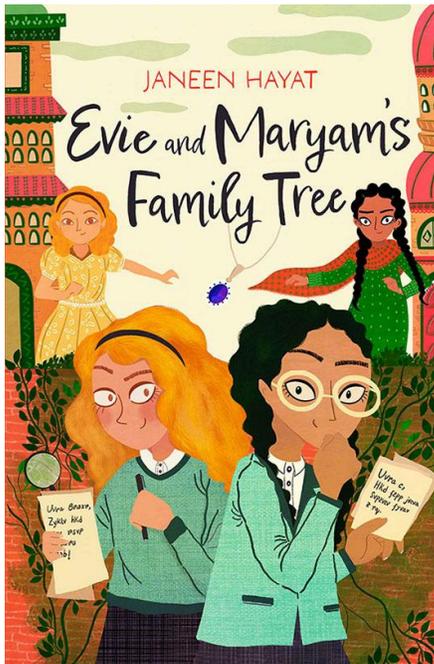


Evie and Maryam's Family Tree by Janeen Hayat

Discussion Questions



THEMES

Friendship, Empathy, History,
Family, Colonial India,
Racial prejudice, Belonging,
Social class, Bullying, Connections

Chapters 1 - 2: London, UK

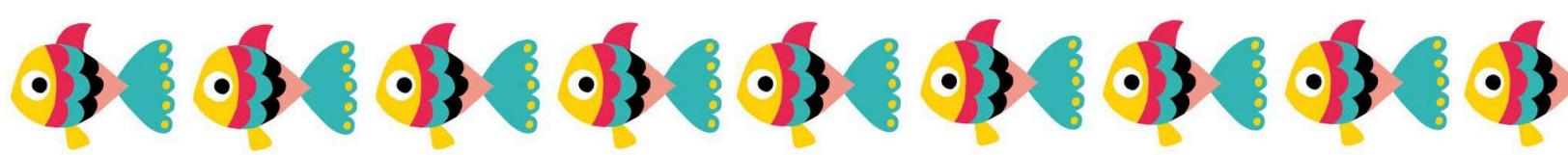
Chapter 1

- Why do you think Leo and Evie looked at Ted *'in awe'* when he told the story about stealing a bag of crisps from the corner shop?
- Why do you think Maryam was so bothered by his story?

Chapter 2

'There was a wildness to secondary school – sometimes, a meanness...'

- What do you think are the main differences between primary and secondary school? In what ways might secondary school feel more *'wild'*?
- Why does Evie perceive Maryam as *'a bit weird'*?



Chapters 3 - 4: London, UK

Chapter 3

- What makes Maryam feel like *'an outcast'*?

'Why couldn't he at least assign pairs? Didn't he see how awkward this would be for her?'

- Do you prefer it when you are assigned partners/groups to work with, or do you prefer to choose your own partners? Why?
- What does Maryam learn from Nani about Pakistan?

Chapter 4

- Why does Evie write down *'Parents in the food industry'* instead of *'Parents run a corner shop'*?

'She wasn't posh though, actually. Just ... normal.'

- Why might people have different ideas about what it means to be *'posh'* and what influences those perceptions?

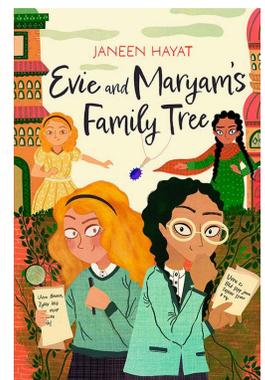
Chapters 5 - 6: Delhi, India

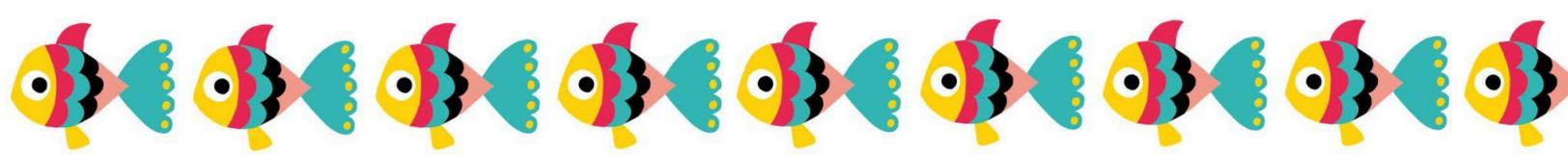
Chapter 5

- How do you think Safia feels about Kathy teaching her some English?

Chapter 6

- Why does Kathy think it is *'inconceivable'* for Safia to be illiterate?
- Why does Safia not want to watch the procession?
- Kathy's mother says, *"These people are not like us. They are not civilised."* What is she suggesting by using the word *'civilised'*, and why might she view the Indian people in this prejudiced way?





Chapters 7 - 8: London, UK

Chapter 7

'This was a game Maryam played sometimes – imagining the mean things others were saying about her. She knew it wasn't helpful, but she couldn't stop herself.'

- Why do you think Maryam believes that people are often saying unkind things about her?

'You also need to pick your battles.'

- Do you think Ms McVey's advice to Maryam is helpful?

Chapter 8

- Why do Bella and Evie's mums believe that Bella is being bullied?
- Why does Evie tell her parents that her new friend is called Sarah?

Chapters 9 - 10: Delhi, India

Chapter 9

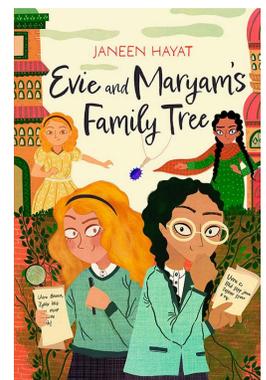
'Don't be so lily-livered'.

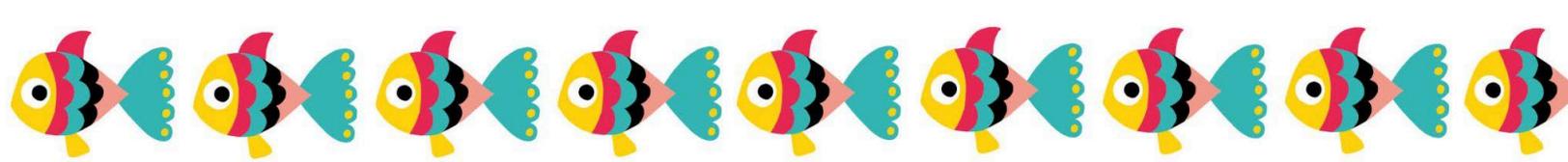
- What do you think this means? Where might the phrase have originated from?
- Why do you think Safia was more nervous about taking the mangoes from the garden than Kathy?
- Why do you think Safia was so upset about the dress being ruined?

Chapter 10

'And yet, this was their home. In a way, they were Indian.'

- What does this suggest about identity and belonging?





Chapters 11 - 12: London, UK

Chapter 11

- Why are both Evie and Maryam keen to go to the other girl's house to work on the project?
- Why do you think Evie's mum is *'still looking all around her'* as they left Maryam's flat?

Chapter 12

'But you've known these girls since you were toddlers. They're going to be your friends for life.'

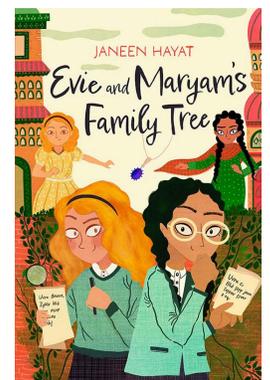
- How likely do you think it is that friendships formed in early childhood last a lifetime, and why?

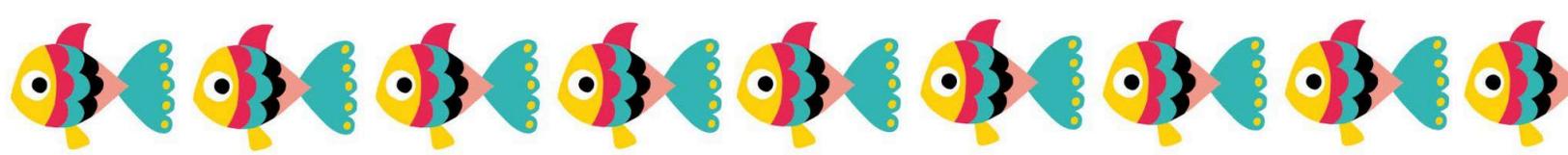
Chapters 13 - 15: Delhi, India

Chapter 13

'The law is unfair'.

- What differing ideas does this chapter present about the importance of following, or not following, laws?
- Kathy and Safia both admit they don't fully understand the issue with the salt laws, yet they still argue passionately. Why do people sometimes form strong opinions about matters they don't completely understand?
- Why do you think Safia is tempted to join the Sisters of India and learn to weave?





Chapter 14

'Either she was wrong about how she saw the world or Safia was.'

- Do disagreements always require one person to be completely right and the other completely wrong, or can different perspectives both have value?
- What evidence is there in this chapter that Kathy has already begun to understand Safia's perspective?
- How does Kathy feel in the weeks after her father died? How does she think she was *meant* to be feeling?
- Who does Kathy perceive to be *'her own people'*?

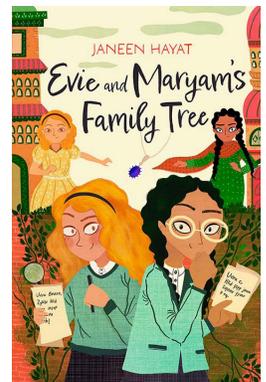
Chapter 15

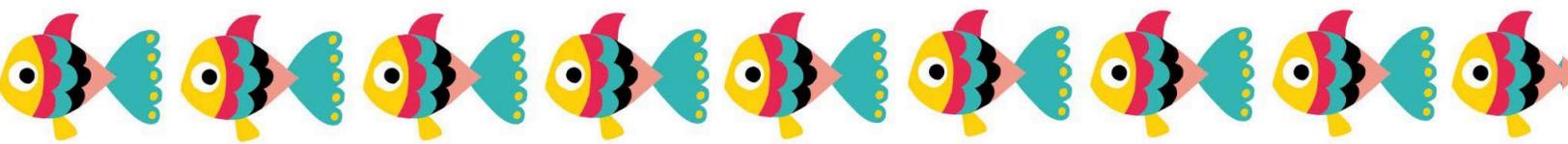
- *'In the same period, Amma had begun dragging her into the adult world.'* What did this involve?
- How does Safia feel about the possibility of becoming Jamal's wife?
- Do you think Safia expects to ever see Kathy again?

Chapters 16 - 19: London, UK

Chapter 16

- How does Hassan explain *'gentrification'*?
- How does Evie's mum react to finding out Maryam's real name and identity?





Chapter 17

- What reasons does Gran give for why Kathy never went back to India?

Chapter 18

- What challenges and hardships does Safia face in the years following Kathy's departure from India?
- What challenges and hardships does Kathy encounter in England?

Chapter 19

'They were trying to understand them with only echoes and fragments.'

- What does this suggest about how we understand the past, and why might it be difficult to build a clear picture of events or people who lived long ago?

Chapters 20 - 24: London, UK

Chapter 20

'She wanted to chuck her phone out of the window, but also found it impossible to ignore for even a few minutes.'

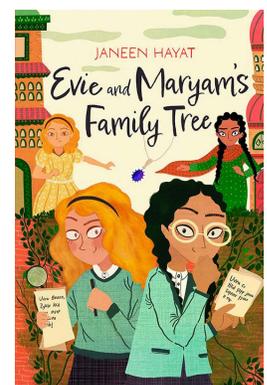
- What does this reveal about Evie's relationship with her phone?

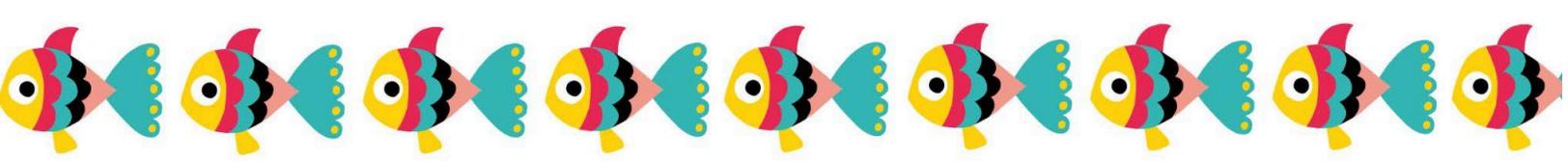
Chapter 21

- Which qualities or skills do you think helped Kathy become a codebreaker at Bletchley Park?

Chapter 22

- What difficult choice did Safia's family face at the time of the partition of India?
- In what ways was the world *'changing so fast?'*





Chapter 23

- Who do you think the missing sapphire rightly belongs to? Why?

Chapter 24

- How does Maryam deal with the cat food being left on her desk? Do you think her reaction was the best response to the situation?
- Why is Evie reluctant to perform the scene to the class? How does she feel after having done so?

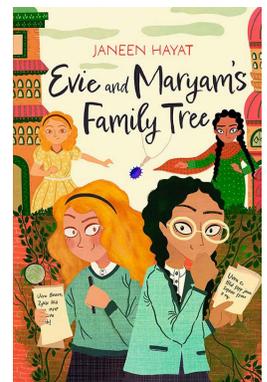
Chapters 25 - 28: London, UK

Chapter 25

- What reasons does Nani give for her family not moving back to Delhi, despite life being so hard in Karachi?

'I hope things are better for her generation. I hope she can live without fear and have everything she needs.'

- Do you think things have improved since Safia was a young woman?
- Are there any aspects of life that are harder today?
- Do you think having more money will solve all of Maryam's family's problems?



Chapter 26

- Gran describes Kathy's story as *'unbelievable'*. What does this choice of word tell us about her reaction, and why might Kathy's work at Bletchley Park seem so astonishing?

'As you get older, you'll learn how small the world is.'

- What is Gran trying to teach or suggest with this remark?

'She was, in a way, a revolutionary, I believe your mother was too.'

- What does it mean to be a 'revolutionary'. In what ways were both Safia and Kathy revolutionaries?

Chapter 27

- Do you think music can help people understand social issues such as racism? If so, how?
- Are people more likely to become friends with others who share similar backgrounds, or can friendships form just as easily between very different people?
- Do you think Zoe and Maryam are likely to become friends?

Chapter 28

- What makes Maryam feel as if she wants to *'die of shame'*? Why do children so often feel embarrassed by their parents' behaviour?
- Why is Evie finally admitting that she is Maryam's friend such a significant moment for both girls?
- Do you think working on the project together has helped Evie and Maryam develop greater empathy for each other?

