

THE SIMP Reading Group Guide



1. How did you read Raj's character? Is he desperate, conniving, passive—or truly simpering?
2. What did you make of the protagonist's alternate names, "Raj" vs. "Ray" vs. "Maharajah"? How do these designations affect the role he plays?
3. Are we meant to admire, critique, or commiserate with Anthony's dreams of acting? With Raj's?
4. Does the novel present Jim and Anna L—as villains, or merely as humans with flaws? Do you agree with this assessment?
5. Discuss the boundary between reality and acting. When, if ever, does that line begin to blur for Raj?
6. Who did you find more pitiable, Raj or Ellen?
7. Do you think Roshan Sethi intended this novel as a comedy or a tragedy?
8. What does Peter's character—through his anxious disposition, attachment to Raj, and mimicry of his parents—represent? How did you understand him in the context of the novel?
9. The Simp has many intertextual references to William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, which is famously subtitled "A Novel without a Hero." Does Roshan Sethi's novel reject the idea of heroism altogether, or does it ask us to look for heroism in unexpected places?
10. Anthony stresses the importance of honesty throughout Raj's decisions. At what moments do you believe him to be most honest?
11. If Raj had been the actor to star in Anna's screenplay, would that have justified her script?
12. Discuss the ending of the novel. Did you read Raj's enacted play as real or a hallucination? Do you think Raj found satisfaction—and did you, in where the narrative leaves him?