

A Question Guideline for your Book-club

- 1- If you saw the book cover for the first time (without reading the synopsis or blurb for the novel) what was your reaction? How does the use of a single word title make you feel?
- 2- The use of a 'preface' seems to be mostly out of favour (by today's standards) with many editors and publishers. However, the author was trying to accomplish *something* by using it in this novel, that has perhaps never been done before in the mystery/suspense genre. After reading the book, can you see how, (in any way), the implementation of this preface has made the storyline different from other mystery/suspense novels?
- 3- We learn about 'the green book' in Chapter 2 and find out that Edward has based his own spiritual growth on it. What does 'the green book' represent, and symbolize for you throughout the course of this novel? How important is it?
- 4- The trade of the 'watchmaker' is a complex one. It has survived in its' purest form for hundreds of years, yet it has also integrated itself into the high-tech world of computerized robotics in modern day watchmaking. Herbert Osterhagen is an old watchmaker. We get a glimpse of Herbert as a young boy. He becomes a mysterious character portrayed throughout the novel. We keep returning to him again and again. For you—what *does* Herbert Osterhagen mean to this writing? What have we learned from him?
- 5- Carmen James is undoubtedly portrayed as a modern young woman—intelligent, attractive, funny ... Perhaps her greatest passion in life is an art form—which dates back as much as 400years—classical ballet. As a metaphor, the author shows her dancing, silhouetted upon an ancient stone wall within the Old City of Jerusalem, for the front cover of the book. Why do you think the author might be using this contrast? What could the symbolization be? Can it relate to the entire novel?
- 6- We have probably all known or met a 'Derek' in our lives. In this story, he seems to bring a feeling of light-heartedness, comedy, and amusement. He becomes a 'sub-plot' throughout this adventure and is an integral part in solving the mystery. But, do you think the author might be using Derek as a stylistic approach to impact the reader? If so—in what way?
- 7- Chief Inspector Claude Gadget adds some colour and reassurance when needed, particularly for Carmen. After his first meeting with Edward and Carmen, what was the significance of him fixating on the glasses on the table containing the remnants of melted ice? Why did he say: 'Perhaps I am guilty of an oversight?'
- 8- The author has titled only 3 chapters. Any thoughts on why? What do you think of this approach?
- 9- The trend for women to be, at times, objectified in our modern culture is a real occurrence. The author has chosen to examine this phenomenon from a more seldom observed male perspective, in the form of the character, Aaron. We clearly see how he reacts to constant staring when he is in public. Do you feel his feelings are warranted? How have women evolved to deal with this situation in comparison to men?

- 10- What is a specific weakness that both Carmen and Aaron are trying to overcome? Why are the consequences of this weakness *so important* to this story, and in our own personal lives?
- 11- Why are museums so valuable in our modern-day society? What does the L.A. Mayer museum, in Jerusalem, symbolize for Carmen and Aaron?
- 12- Edward admits he does not know why Carmen is so 'fiercely proud' of her modified Canadian flag. Do you have an idea?
- 13- The author chose to end our last engagement with Herbert Osterhagen in a subtle way. Marie had stood beside Herbert—a broken man, who would never utter another word—and offered him a candy wrapped in gold covering. He refused. She gently set it by his side. Chapter 56 ends with the exit of Herbert Osterhagen. Marie glances back to where he had been sitting—the candy was gone. Any thoughts?
- 14- We all learn from great lecturers like Amnon Gosser. He is an intelligent man. Amnon guides us through the closing stages of this novel and brings us closure. But is this enough? What can, and *does* preside over intelligence?
- 15- The author has chosen to write the last chapter (epilogue) in 'first person' (narrated by Edward James). What might his intent have been?
- 16- It seems unusual and perhaps redundant that the author would introduce in descriptive detail, two new characters—Scarlett and Sigmund—in the epilogue. What purpose could this possibly serve?
- 17- Finally—what *is*: 'The Greatest of Mysteries?'