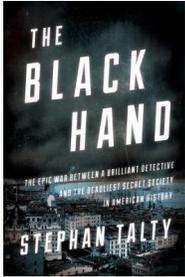


Books by the Stack



***The Black Hand: The Epic War Between a Brilliant Detective and the Deadliest Secret Society in American History* by Stephan Talty**

Chronicles the story about the origins of the mafia in early 20th-century America and the achievements of Italian-born detective, Joseph Petrosino, who gave his life to fight it.

Why you'll like it: *True crime. Fast-paced. Dramatic.*

About the Author: Stephan Talty is the award-winning author of *Agent Garbo*, *Empire of Blue Water*, and other best-selling works of narrative nonfiction. He is also the author of two psychological thrillers, including the New York Times bestseller *Black Irish*, set in his hometown of Buffalo. Talty lives outside New York City with his family.

Questions for Discussion

1. How vividly does Talty recreate the historical period? What draws you in? What, if anything, seems too dry or unnecessarily detailed?
2. What do you think was the most pivotal point in the book? How do you think the story would have changed had that not taken place?
3. Does the author present the information in way that is interesting and insightful, and if so, how does Talty achieve this?
4. Why do you think that such a significant piece of relatively recent history – Black Hand crime – is not better known?
5. Lieutenant Petrosino tried to get Italian immigrants to trust the police in America. Were they wrong to resist? What about the corruption that was beyond his control?
6. Sensationalist tabloids helped spread the terror of the Black Hand. Do you see similar events unfolding in the press today?
7. While ruthless and brutal, the Black Hand was undeniably effective and far-reaching, employing many clever tactics from coast to coast and even overseas. What do you think their greatest strength was?
8. So many Italian immigrants came to America hoping for a better life, only to be met with poverty and hatred. Some turned to the Black Hand Society and crime. Do you think that if the reception of Italians to America had been different, the Black Hand would have gained power?

