

# THEY CALLED US EXCEPTIONAL

PRACHI GUPTA

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What did you think of the author's writing style? To whom is she speaking?
2. What was your understanding of or familiarity with the model-minority myth prior to reading the book? How does the author's perspective on it shape yours?
3. In what ways is the model-minority myth harmful? How did this myth affect the author and her brother's ability to understand themselves—and how did each of them respond to its pressures?
4. The author suggests that she initially wanted to write the book as a novel. Why do you think she considered that? Why does a memoir better serve her story?
5. Why are stories like Prachi Gupta's important? What about her story makes you examine your own?
6. *They Called Us Exceptional* is a memoir about a family. But it also offers up history lessons. How does historical context help you better understand the personal story?
7. As a teen, the author tells her father that she used to see him as a God. His response was "Why did you stop?" Discuss how children wish to view their parents—and how parents wish to be seen by their children.
8. Throughout the book, the author's father uses the idea of "culture" to enforce expectations and justify certain behavior. Do you think of culture as something static, or something that can change—and if so, how do we create that change? Why might this type of change be particularly challenging within immigrant or diasporic contexts?
9. How does the author's upbringing differ from her brother's? How do these differences affect them and their relationship?
10. The author says her brother was "trying to belong to a club that would never accept him." How does that theme play out for others in the family?
11. What does the book say about truth, compassion, forgiveness, and acceptance?