ReadingGroupGuides
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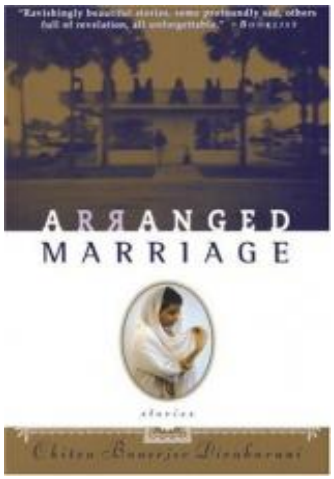
Arranged Marriage

by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni



About the Book

Divakaruni's exquisitely wrought debut collection of stories chronicles the assimilation--and rebellion--that Indian-born girls and women in America undergo as they balance old treasured beliefs and surprising new desires. For the young girls and women brought to life in these stories, the possibility of change, of starting anew, is both as terrifying and filled with promise as the ocean that separates them from their homes in India. From a young bride whose fairy-tale vision of California is shattered when her husband is murdered to a proud middle-aged divorce determined to succeed in San Francisco, Divakaruni paints eleven devastating portraits of women on the verge of an unforgettable transformation.

Discussion Guide

1. How do the physical and psychological landscapes of India and America differ in these stories?

2. "The Word Love" is written in second person. What does this unusual choice of voice add to the meaning and impact of the story?

3. The mother-daughter relationship is a central theme in many of these stories. Is the author making a general comment about this relationship?

4. Most of the stories in this collection focus on women who are in serious danger, be it physical, emotional, or both. Do the stories leave you reason to be hopeful for these women? How?

5. Do the women in these stories view themselves as having choices? Are they correct in their views, or are they deluding themselves?

Author Bio

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an award-winning and bestselling author, activist and professor. Her work has been published in over 50 magazines, including *The Atlantic* and *The New Yorker*, and included in *The Best American Short Stories* and *The O. Henry Prize Stories*. Her books have been translated into 29 languages, including Dutch, Hebrew, Bengali, Russian and Japanese. Several have been used for campus-wide reads and made into films and plays. She teaches at the University of Houston.

Critical Praise

" A remarkably strong debut . . . The all-too-imperfect lives of Divakaruni's heroines, like precious gems, are unrecognized treasures, worthy of being praised, protected and held dear. "--***San Jose Mercury News***"Both universal and unique. "--***Kirkus Reviews***"Beautifully told stories of transformed lives . . . Both liberated and trapped by cultural changes on both sides of the ocean, these women struggle fiercely to carve out an identity of their own. "--***San Francisco Chronicle***"These are ravishingly beautiful stories, some profoundly sad, others full of revelation, all unforgettable. "--***Booklist***

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