

YOU BRING THE DISTANT NEAR

Read & Discuss

1. What is the significance of Rabindranath Tagore's quote that appears before the novel begins?
2. How do attitudes toward gender differ between the various characters and between the generations?
3. What does Tara mean when she says: "She tells me I use the screen the way she uses reading and writing, but she's wrong. For her, that's escape. For me, it's research" (page 36)?
4. Why does Tara feel the need to perform and change her identity (page 37)?
5. What does Tara mean when she says that "power oozes from every American pore of her skin" when talking about Marcia Brady (page 41)?
6. What is the cultural significance of the conversation had about Tara getting new shoes on pages 45-46?
7. What do Ranee's attitudes toward gender reveal about the Indian notion of gender in the 1970s as opposed to the 1970s American idea of gender?
8. How would you describe the Das family dynamic? What does it reveal about each member?
9. Why do you think Ranee is so obsessed with social status and social standing?
10. Why does Sonia burn her journal (page 75)?
11. What traditions does each character hold onto? Which traditions does each give up? What do these say about each of the characters?
12. How does Sonia's conception of freedom change throughout the novel?
13. What does Tara's fear of becoming her mother say about her (page 147)?
14. How do Chantal's fighting grandmothers resemble her mother and aunt's struggle to reconcile the differences in their two cultures? How do they represent her own struggle with her biracial identity?

**Five girls. Three generations.
One great American love story.**



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