



Family Planning

By Karan Mahajan
ISBN: 9780061537257

Introduction

Rakesh Ahuja, a government minister in New Delhi, is beset by problems: thirteen children and another on the way; a wife who mourns the loss of her favorite TV star; and a teenaged son with some *really* strong opinions about *Family Planning*.

To make matters worse, looming over this comical farrago are secrets—both personal and political—that threaten to push the Ahuja household into disastrous turmoil. Following father and son as they blunder their way across the troubled landscape of New Delhi, Karan Mahajan brilliantly captures the frenetic pace of India's capital city to create a searing portrait of modern family life.

Questions for Discussion

1. How does Rakesh Ahuja's job as Minister of Urban Development both benefit and deprive his family?
2. To what extent is Arjun's relationship with his stepmother defined by his ability to help her cope with her many other children and their needs?
3. Why does the death of the fictional Mohan Bedi have real-life ramifications in New Delhi society and government?
4. Why does Mr. Ahuja conceal the fact of Arjun's parentage for so many years, and what is the wider significance of the event that finally prompts him to reveal it?
5. To what extent is Mrs. Ahuja a sympathetic character in *Family Planning*? How do the circumstances surrounding her marriage complicate her identity in this novel?
6. How do the unfinished flyovers throughout Delhi's changing landscape serve as metaphors for Mr. Ahuja's contribution to his nation's government? What else might they represent?
7. How does Mr. Ahuja's seemingly compulsive urge to reproduce compare to his son's adolescent obsession with sex?
8. What does the closing scene in *Family Planning* suggest about motherhood and the nature of the bond between mother and child?
9. To what extent does New Delhi itself function as a kind of character in *Family Planning*? How would you characterize the city, based on its depiction here?

About the Author

Karan Mahajan was born in 1984 and grew up in New Delhi. A graduate of Stanford University, he now lives in Brooklyn, NY.