



And Laughter Fell From the Sky

By Jyotsna Sreenivasan
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Introduction

Still living at home despite a good career and financial independence, beautiful and sophisticated Rasika has always been the dutiful daughter. With her twenty-sixth birthday fast approaching, she agrees to an arranged marriage, all while trying to hide from her family her occasional dalliances with other men.

Abhay is everything an Indian-American son shouldn't be. Having spent his post-college years living in a commune, he now hops from one dead-end job to another, brooding over what he *really* wants to do with his life.

Old family friends, Rasika and Abhay seem to have nothing in common, yet when the two reconnect by chance, sparks immediately fly. Abhay loves Rasika, but he knows her family would never approve. Rasika reluctantly accepts she has feelings for Abhay, but can she turn her back on the family rules she has always tried so hard to live by? The search to find answers takes Abhay and Rasika out of their native Ohio to Oregon and India, where they find that what they have together might just be something worth fighting for.

Questions for Discussion

1. At the beginning of the book, Rasika and Abhay each have very different perspectives on life. By the end of the book, they have each influenced the other. In what ways have they changed in response to each other? Have you ever changed in response to someone else? Do you think it is a good thing to allow someone else to influence you in this way?
2. Why do you think Rasika changed her mind so dramatically about Abhay at the end? Could this have happened without a traumatic event like the accident? What causes people to revise their perspectives on life?
3. On the surface, Rasika and her grandmother seem to have very different lives. Yet in some ways her grandmother understands her better than her own mother does. Why do you think this is so?
4. Abhay has an intense experience during the Thai yoga massage at Auroville. How would you characterize this experience? Have you ever had a similar experience?
5. As part of Abhay's journey to find himself he travels across the globe: Portland, Oregon; India. In what ways, if any, do you believe he gets some answers through his travels? Does Abhay remind you of anyone you know in your own life?
6. During the pivotal scene with Kanchan, Rasika says, 'She couldn't believe what was happening. This scene was not supposed to be part of her life.' Have you ever felt that way?
7. By having a heavy influence on her life, Rasika's parents believe they are protecting her best interests. Do you agree with their method? Why or why not?
8. If you have read *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton, compare and contrast the characters: Rasika vs. Lily Bart, and Abhay vs. Lawrence Selden.

About the Author

The daughter of Indian immigrants, Jyotsna Sreenivasan was born and raised in Ohio. Her short fiction has appeared in numerous literary magazines and she has received literature grants from the Washington, D.C., Commission on the Arts and Humanities. The author of several nonfiction books published by academic presses and the creator of the online Gender Equality Bookstore, she lives in Moscow, Idaho, with her family. This is her first novel.