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Family Planning: A Novel



Synopsis

Author of *The Association of Small Bombs*, longlisted for the National Book Award 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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Our hero is a politician and father of thirteen - all still at home. I don't know which is scarier: a politician raising his own voter base; or raising thirteen kids. Thankfully, the terror stops there. The fun, however, starts on page one and continues throughout the book. We have family follies and political pandemonium; coming-of-age and first-love; and lots of children. I felt as if Mahajan was sitting next to me telling me the story; the writing was that real and 'friendly'. I am amazed that this is a first book. This being the P.S. edition, we also get the additional material from him in the back of the book. Grab this one if you want to have fun and enjoy a satiric look at part of the life of India.

Debut novels of this caliber are incredibly rare. This reads more like a writer's fourth or fifth book. The prose is tremendously impressive and I love the humor. It is a hilarious book but do not, for one

second, imagine it will be a "ligh" read. This books has so much wisdom and human truth in it that you will come out with a most full reading experience. Do yourselves a solid-- buy this book and get swept away in an India you've never read about before!

As the adult program planner for a large suburban library in the NY metropolitan area, responsible for booking author appearances, a huge number of books cross my desk. It would be impossible to read them all so I choose pages at random, trying to avoid being influenced by the publisher's hype. Karan Mahajan's "Family Planning" grabbed me right from the beginning...not his beginning but mine, which just happened to be page 137. A few pages later I went to page 1 and didn't stop until the end. He is visiting the Port Washington Public Library on Tuesday, August 11 @ 7:30 - I can't wait! If you're in the neighborhood, drop by.

I bought "Family Planning" right after hearing an interview with the young author, Karan Mahajan, on NPR. It was an impulse buy based on how intelligent and witty Mr. Mahajan had been in the interview; I was not disappointed. It's a delightful coming-of-age story and very humorous, which is not something I usually associate with tales set in Delhi, India. I'll be watching for more from this promising young man.

There are many things to love in this immensely clever book. One that appeals to the scientist in me is Mahajan's virtuosic use of science-based metaphors and images to illustrate situations and feelings that are distinctly non-scientific. It is challenging enough for science writers to translate abstract descriptions of Nature into laymen's terms--a task that results more often than not in abusive metaphor-stretch and other such assaults on our language; but to successfully accomplish this work in the other direction (employing abstract scientific concepts to sketch the minutiae of human experience) is something of a coup. In less accomplished hands this sort of device is almost guaranteed to sound contrived and fall flat, but in "Family Planning" it blends seamlessly into Mahajan's cool, confident prose.

I read Family Matters after having heard the author at a reading in New York City. From the first page, the evidence of a unique new voice was present. The plot is highly complex, yet very accessible. It is full of unexpected turns and will make you laugh and think. Not many first novels have such a blend of poignant and fun characters. I agree with another reviewer whom found a kinship with Narayan's world. Mahajan's fiction is unique indeed, and I wish many more people

discover it as the very worthy beginning of a promising author.

Started reading, kept going, finished a couple hours later--one sitting. A very funny book that reads effortlessly but clearly took a deft touch and extraordinary control of tone and structure to write. Vivid characters, great dialogue, and an unusual story. Like a young, New Delhi-based Martin Amis, with a lighter and more humanist touch.

In this novel about a government minister facing a midlife crisis, Karan Mahajan takes a page from another Indian writer, R.K. Narayan, by telling readers a witty, engaging story about a lively cast of characters, while also addressing (if subtly) that age-old existential question: What are we doing here, anyway? I'm looking forward to seeing more from this young, and very talented, writer.

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