

BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

1. A recent AARP survey¹ revealed that 75% of adults wish to remain in their homes as they get older, and yet a number of significant challenges prevent them from doing so. Another study from Consumer Affairs² reported that 7 out of 10 people are expected to require assisted living care over the course of their lives. Where do you want to live when you get older? Have you or your family needed to find ways to take care of your aging loved ones? What challenges did you face?

2. What do you think of Chitra's reaction to her first chair yoga session and to the instructor? How does her reaction fit into conversations about cultural appropriation? How have yoga practices changed over time and across cultures?

3. Throughout the novel we see Chitra teaching and sharing Bengali culture with others – first with her children, then with her daughters-in-law, and finally with Helen. How would you describe Chitra's teaching style and her attitude toward cultural traditions? How were her lessons received?

4. What role(s) does food play in the novel?

5. How does the novel describe community dynamics? How do they compare to family dynamics, particularly the relationship between mothers and their sons and daughters?

6. How does Chitra's friendship with Anamika and Deboshri compare to her friendship with Helen? What role does listening play in their friendships?

7. Chitra and Helen have different viewpoints about being in Tranquil Town and what their children owe them. How do cultural norms and societal expectations shape our beliefs? How do you hold conversations with someone you don't agree with?

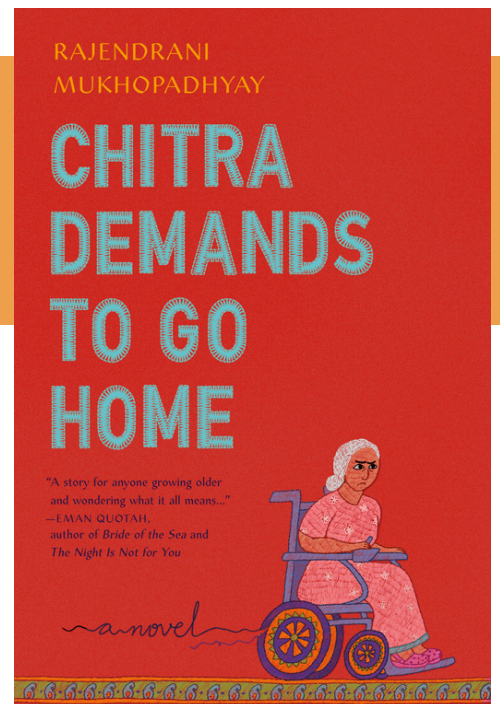
8. In the last chapter, Prodosh reflects upon his relationship with his mother. How does it differ from the way that Chitra sees their relationship? Why do you think the author ended the novel this way?

9. Why do you think the author included Bengali in the novel? What other linguistic choices stood out to you?

10. How does the cover design reflect the themes of the novel?

¹ "New AARP Report: Majority of Adults 50-plus Want to Age in Place, But Policies and Communities Must Catch Up." AARP. Retrieved August 2025. <https://press.aarp.org/2024-12-10-New-AARP-Report-Majority-Adults-50-plus-Age-Place-Policies-Communities-Catch-Up>.

² "Assisted living statistics." Consumer Affairs. Retrieved August 2025. <https://www.consumeraffairs.com/assisted-living/statistics.html>.



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Author photo by Linda Wang Photography

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Rajendrani Mukhopadhyay, who goes by "Raj", originally trained as a scientist. After earning a Ph.D. in biochemistry and cellular and molecular biology, Raj launched a career in science communications. For nearly two decades, she worked as a science storyteller in various forms. Raj was selected by Poets & Writers to be one of the 2025 Get the Word Out fiction fellows. Raj has lived in India, Kuwait, and Canada. She is now based in the U.S. with her partner, two children, two dogs, and two cats.

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