

# They Called Us Exceptional

**Michael Brown**

**They Called Us Exceptional** Prachi Gupta, 2024-10-07 An Indian American daughter reveals how the dangerous model minority myth fractured her family in this searingly honest memoir that manages to be at once a scalding indictment and a heartfelt love letter (Scott Stossel, author of *My Age of Anxiety*). In examining with boundless love the secrets and sorrows of one family, Gupta shows us the life-altering power of telling one's truth.--Megha Majumdar, author of *A Burning* How do we understand ourselves when the story about who we are supposed to be is stronger than our sense of self? What do we stand to gain--and lose--by taking control of our narrative? These questions propel Prachi Gupta's heartfelt memoir and can feel particularly fraught for immigrants and their children who live under immense pressure to belong in America. Prachi Gupta's family embodied the American Dream: a doctor father and a nurturing mother who raised two high-achieving children with one foot in the Indian American community, the other in Pennsylvania's white suburbia. But their belonging was predicated on a powerful myth: that Asian Americans have perfected the alchemy of middle-class life, raising tight-knit, ambitious families that are immune to hardship. Molding oneself to fit this perfect image often comes at a steep but hidden cost. In *They Called Us Exceptional*, Gupta articulates the dissonance, shame, and isolation of being upheld as an American success story while privately navigating traumas invisible to the outside world. Gupta addresses her mother throughout the book, weaving a deeply vulnerable personal narrative with history, postcolonial theory, and research on mental health, to show how she slowly made sense of her reality and freed herself emotionally and physically from the pervasive, reductive myth that had once defined her. But, tragically, the act that liberated Gupta was also the act that distanced her from those she loved most. By charting her family's slow unraveling and her determination to break the cycle, Gupta shows how traditional notions of success keep us disconnected from ourselves and one another--and passionately argues why we must orient ourselves toward compassion over belonging.

*They Called Us Exceptional* Prachi Gupta, 2024-08-20 "In this vulnerable and courageous memoir, Prachi Gupta takes the myth of the exceptional Indian American family to task."—The Washington Post "I read it in one sitting. Wow. It aims right at the tender spot where racism, sexism, and family dynamics collide, and somehow manages to be both searingly honest and deeply compassionate."—Celeste Ng, New York Times bestselling author of *Little Fires Everywhere* A SHE READS BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR • ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE SEASON: The New York Times, The Washington Post, The

Boston Globe, Bustle How do we understand ourselves when the story about who we are supposed to be is stronger than our sense of self? What do we stand to gain—and lose—by taking control of our narrative? Family defined the cultural identity of Prachi and her brother, Yush, connecting them to a larger Indian American community amid white suburbia. But their belonging was predicated on a powerful myth: the idea that Asian Americans, and Indian Americans in particular, have perfected the alchemy of middle-class life, raising tight-knit, high-achieving families that are immune to hardship. Molding oneself to fit this image often comes at a steep, but hidden, cost. In *They Called Us Exceptional*, Gupta articulates the dissonance, shame, and isolation of being upheld as an American success story while privately navigating traumas the world says do not exist. Gupta addresses her story to her mother, braiding a deeply vulnerable personal narrative with history, postcolonial theory, and research on mental health to show how she slowly made sense of her reality and freed herself from the pervasive, reductive myth that had once defined her. But tragically, the act that liberated Gupta was also the act that distanced her from those she loved most. By charting her family's slow unraveling, and her determination to break the cycle, Gupta shows how traditional notions of success keep us disconnected from ourselves and one another—and passionately argues why we must orient ourselves toward compassion over belonging.

*The Statist* ,1907

*Pillar of Fire* ,1907

**The Musical Standard** ,1875

The Burroughs Clearing House ,1925

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**Mark Jarrett's Daisy, Or The Wild Flower of Hazlewood** Pierce Egan,1879

The Homoeopathic Physician ,1890

**The Parliamentary Debates (official Report[s])** ... Great Britain. Parliament,1901

**Report** Commonwealth Shipping Committee,1909

*Pharmaceutical Journal* ,1924

**An Inaugural Lecture Delivered Before the University of Oxford** ,1993

The Church of England Pulpit, and Ecclesiastical Review ,1882

*The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art* ,1900

**The Spectator** ,1929

Journal of the Royal United Service Institution Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies,1923

The Highland Brigade James Cromb,1886

**Christian Register and Boston Observer** ,1912

Inaugural Sermon Delivered in the Temple Beth-El, at Detroit, Mich., December 6, 1884 by Rabbi Louis Grossmann Louis Grossmann, 1884

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## **Table of Contents They Called Us Exceptional**

1. Understanding the eBook They Called Us Exceptional
  - The Rise of Digital Reading They Called Us Exceptional
  - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
2. Identifying They Called Us Exceptional
  - Exploring Different Genres
  - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
  - Determining Your Reading Goals
3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
  - Popular eBook Platforms
  - Features to Look for in an They Called Us Exceptional

- User-Friendly Interface
4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from They Called Us Exceptional
    - Personalized Recommendations
    - They Called Us Exceptional User Reviews and Ratings
    - They Called Us Exceptional and Bestseller Lists
  5. Accessing They Called Us Exceptional Free and Paid eBooks
    - They Called Us Exceptional Public Domain eBooks
    - They Called Us Exceptional eBook Subscription Services
    - They Called Us Exceptional Budget-Friendly Options

6. Navigating They Called Us Exceptional eBook Formats
  - ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
  - They Called Us Exceptional Compatibility with Devices
  - They Called Us Exceptional Enhanced eBook Features
7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
  - Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of They Called Us Exceptional
  - Highlighting and Note-Taking They Called Us Exceptional
  - Interactive Elements They Called Us Exceptional
8. Staying Engaged with They Called Us Exceptional
  - Joining Online Reading Communities
  - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
  - Following Authors and Publishers They Called Us Exceptional
9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books They Called Us Exceptional
  - Benefits of a Digital Library
  - Creating a Diverse Reading Collection They Called Us Exceptional
10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
  - Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
  - Minimizing Distractions
  - Managing Screen Time
11. Cultivating a Reading Routine They Called Us Exceptional
  - Setting Reading Goals They Called Us Exceptional
  - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
12. Sourcing Reliable Information of They Called Us Exceptional
  - Fact-Checking eBook Content of They Called Us Exceptional
  - Distinguishing Credible Sources
13. Promoting Lifelong Learning
  - Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development
  - Exploring Educational eBooks
14. Embracing eBook Trends
  - Integration of Multimedia Elements
  - Interactive and Gamified eBooks

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