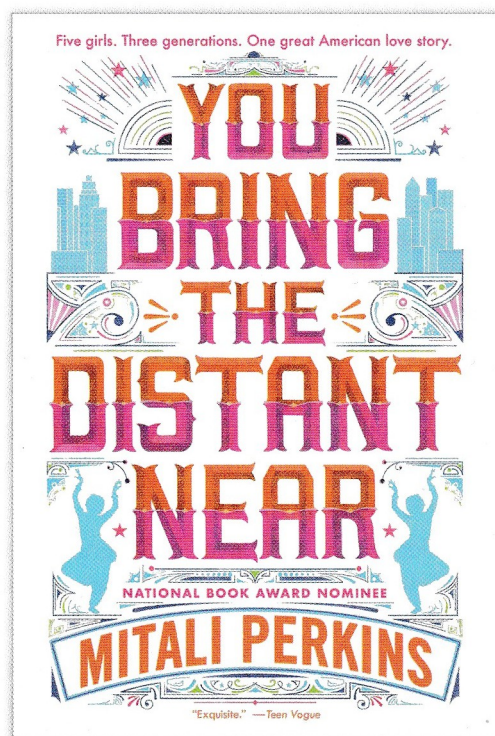


This novel follows an Indian American family from the 1960s to the early 2000s. In this extract, Chantal explains how she connected with her grandmother Ranee, also called Didu.

S picy smells drift out from the kitchen. Didu, my other grandmother, is making chicken curry and biryani rice. She visits us here in Harlem once a month or so, spending a couple of nights on the sofa bed in Mom's office. The rest of the time, she lives in Aunt Tara and Uncle Amit's Manhattan penthouse¹, which is three times the size of our apartment. It's no surprise that it's so luxurious. Aunt Tara's a movie star, and Uncle Amit's a banker. The two of them and my cousin Anna live mostly in Mumbai, in their *other* luxury home. They visit New York every now and then, but the grandmother we share stays in their Manhattan penthouse all the time. That she visits us, the Johnson family, at all is a miracle, now that I know the whole story. It's become lore².

Mom and Didu didn't speak for years because Didu didn't want my parents to get married. Not even when I showed up. But after Anna was born thirteen years ago, Mom insisted on hosting her first rice-tasting ceremony³ – something the family never did for me – here in our Harlem apartment. Aunt Tara and Uncle Amit somehow convinced Didu to join the party. Dad says that as soon as I saw my grandmother, I toddled⁴ over, lifted my arms, and in the sweetest voice possible, said "Dee-doo", which sounds exactly like the Bangla word for "grandmother." How I'd learned the word nobody knew, because this was the first time I'd laid eyes on her. I probably needed a diaper⁵ change, but



to all the grown-ups it sounded like I was calling my maternal grandmother by name. The story concludes with high drama like a Bengali soap opera. Didu burst into tears, swept me into her arms, and cuddled⁶ me close. Everybody bawled⁷, there was some kind of massive family reconciliation, and Didu hasn't let go of me since.

Mitali Perkins, *You Bring the Distance Near*, 2017

1. luxurious apartment on the highest floor – 2. legend – 3. Hindu tradition where a baby is fed solid food for the first time – 4. walk like a baby – 5. underwear for babies – 6. hug – 7. cry

Before reading...

1. What type of document is it ? Who's the author ? When was it written or published ? Is there any title ?
2. Read the introduction and say in your own words what the text is about

1st reading...

Take highlighters and focus on people – places – dates – elements of Indian culture

2nd reading...

Using all the members mentioned, draw their family tree.

3rd reading..

- Give a title to each paragraph
- What is the goal of the document ? What is the tone ?
-

Now, following the method, **write an account** of the document

Writing :

Write the reconciliation scene between Chantal 's mother and her grandmother

