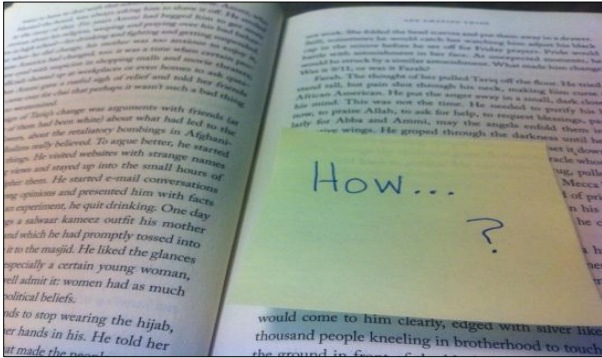


# ONE BOOK, ONE COMMUNITY OF MONROE COUNTY - 2013

## Discussion Questions



Now that you and other members of the community have read *One Amazing Thing*, start a discussion about the impact of this story.

Here are a few questions to get things started:

1. If you were to tell the story of one amazing thing that had happened in your life, what would it be? Would it be a memory of a gift, an experience, a person that you met, or an event that you witnessed? What made it amazing, and how did it change your life?
2. Would the experience of reading *One Amazing Thing* have been different had the narrative been from the point of view of just one person, or if the story was told by an outside figure removed from the events in the book?
3. The book begins and ends with Uma Sinha, the graduate student. Why did the author choose Uma's story to "bookend" the novel in this way? What about Uma set her apart from the members of the group, in your mind?
4. If you were trapped in a similar dangerous situation as the characters in *One Amazing Thing*, how do you think you'd react? Was there an action or behavior by a character that resonated with you?
5. Out of the nine people in the visa office, did you identify with any in particular? Which one(s) and why?
6. Why was each character's "one amazing thing" remarkable?
7. The symbol of the tiger crosses over between two stories in the novel. Mr. Prichett speaks of his boyhood remembering, "Should anyone ask him what he wanted most in life, the boy wouldn't hesitate. A dog, he would say-though this is not completely true. He would prefer a tiger."
  - When he finds the kitten, "he thinks it looks like a miniature tiger"
  - In the next story, Malathi describes the dark secrets of the rich which the beauty parlor girl was privy to. She states, "We knew that to meddle in the affairs of the powerful was akin to riding the proverbial tiger".
  - What does Divakaruni's use of "tiger" represent?
8. Which character's story did you find the most unexpected? Conversely, were you able to predict what was to happen in any of the stories?

9. Refresh your memory with the stories of the female characters in the book. Did these stories have anything in common?
10. “Apologize to a woman and she would gain the upper hand. Mangalam knew better than to let that happen” (pg. 55 – paperback version). What did you first think of Mr. Mangalam, and did this change after you learned his story?
11. Discuss Mr. and Mrs. Pritchett. Were you surprised, as their stories unfolded, to discover their reasons for going to India?
12. Almost all of the characters experience or perpetuate some kind of cultural misunderstanding. What did you learn about some of the cultures and religions explored in the book?
13. *One Amazing Thing* is a novel with an open ending. How did this affect your reading of the book? As a reader, did you choose to create your own ending?
14. What did you think of the book’s ending? What do you think the group’s fate was? Why did Uma’s story end where it did?
15. When writing of ethnicity, an author risks stereotyping. Uma is an American Indian girl who rebels against her parents’ wishes by having a relationship with a non-Indian man. Tariq is a young rebellious Muslim, prone to violence. How does Divakaruni attempt to flesh out these characters? Are they three dimensional, or caricatures?