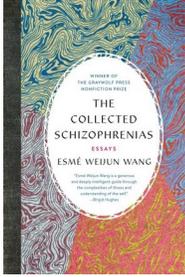


Books by the Stack



The Collected Schizophrenias by Esmé Weijun Wang

Schizophrenia is not a single unifying diagnosis, and Esmé Weijun Wang writes not just to her fellow members of the "collected schizophrenias" but to those who wish to understand it as well.

Why you'll like it: *Thought-provoking. Candid. Richly detailed.*

About the Author: Esmé Weijun Wang is the author of *The Border of Paradise*. She received the Whiting Award in 2018 and was named one of *Granta's* Best of Young American Novelists of 2017. She holds an MFA from the University of Michigan and lives in San Francisco.

Questions for Discussion

1. How did your perception of schizophrenia or severe mental illness change after reading the book?
2. Even while experiencing psychosis, Wang tries to appear fashionable. How does this help her cope? How would her life change if she didn't look like she was "high-functioning"?
3. How does Wang balance the necessity of having a diagnosis in order to get proper treatment with the stigma such a label can bring? How does her life change with each new diagnosis?
4. After giving a talk to group of people with similar diagnoses to hers, Wang is horrified that one of them feels bad for her and thinks, "I was her, but I didn't want to *be* her." (46) How does Wang's attitude toward others with mental illness help or hurt how she copes with her own situation?
5. As a professional speaker, Wang addresses people both with and without chronic mental illness about her experiences. Who do you think would most benefit from reading this book? How do you think reading this book is different for those with chronic mental illness compared to those with no experience with it?
6. The book is a mix of memoir and research. Do you feel like this made it more or less effective than if it had been solely a memoir? Why?
7. A doctor tells Wang: "Someday, we'll be able to trace all mental illnesses to autoimmune disorders." (172) What's the difference between how society treats mental illness and physical illness? Do you have different attitudes toward them?
8. Wang cites being involuntarily committed as one of the most traumatic experiences in her life yet she thinks it might still be necessary. How does she balance the need to be in control of her own life with the concerns of her family?

