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Caste Away: Growing Up In India's "Most Backward" Caste

CASTE AWAY:

GROWING UP IN INDIA'S
"MOST BACKWARD" CASTE



HILL KRISHNAN, PH.D.



Synopsis

#1 Best Seller in "Historical India & South Asia Biographies," "Two Hour History Short Reads," and "Ethnic and National Biographies." "Growing Up in India's 'Most Backward' Caste" is a coming of age story told through the eyes of a "Most Backward" boy growing up in Tamil Nadu, India. Its pages are ripe with shame, honor, and survival-based decisions, such as a father killing his own daughter to preserve the family's reputation, a grandfather stealing a goat to feed his family and burying its bones in the night, and women employing natural poisons to kill their female infants in order to avoid the devastating costs of dowry. Perhaps it is also a story of how to survive as a "Most Backward" boy in a society that values light skin more than education, designated by British colonizers as "habitually criminal," where ancient caste rivalries persist even into an era of rapidly unfolding modernity. Is it possible, one wonders, for a boy to leave his caste identity behind and adopt new ways of seeing himself, shattering hundreds of years of prejudice? "Growing Up in India's 'Most Backward' Caste" illustrates the potential for faith, effort, and vision to overcome even the cruelest of abuses and biases. Its author, Dr. Hill Krishnan, later took on multiple identities disallowed by his roots: engineer, movie actor and performer, political scientist, professor, candidate for public office in the United States, motivational speaker, and now, as an author telling his story. In "Growing Up in India's 'Most Backward' Caste," one observes the earliest, most pivotal moments in which he first defies oppression. "Growing Up in India's 'Most Backward' Caste" is truly eye-opening – a brave, intimate portrayal of life as a "Most Backward" child resisting all categorization, inspiring the rest of us to challenge our own perceived limitations.

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Customer Reviews

This book is many wonderful things in a single package: a vivid, compelling narrative that you won't be able to put down once you start; an autobiographical account of everyday life in a lowly caste in Tamil Nadu, India, where even the smallest detail amazes you with its difference from a typical American life; a transformational journey that takes the author from his birth through major turning points in his life; an inspiration to all as the author painstakingly tells how he achieved his goal, once set, at great personal cost, with incredible perseverance; and an intricate telling of the many facets of life in this "most backward caste". You will gasp in horror at the tremendous suffering of women in this society, and the deprivations that come with being born into one of the lowest castes in India. Yet you will be uplifted by the remarkable ability of the human spirit, once ignited, to overcome innumerable obstacles and unswervingly focus on attainment of an educational goal previously thought unreachable, due to the author's early indifference to obtaining good grades and the influence of his lowly caste. Read this and realize how privileged we are as Americans and how difficult life is in many other societies. Read this and learn the importance of role models in family, friends, and education to help one set and achieve worthy goals. I look forward to reading Dr. Krishnan's succeeding autobiographical books, which I hope will discuss the next segments of his estimable life.

I have been a spectator to Thirumalai's story in many ways. I grew up in Coimbatore, the city his family moved to practically as refugees, I recognize the names of his teachers and of course, like him, I vied for a seat at one of the prestigious schools. There the similarity ends. I grew up privileged and soft, I never experienced at first hand the difficulties that he beautifully describes were part of his infancy, and I never had what he calls his brutal strength (and I think of as a most singular purpose) in breaking down his barriers. What an inspiring story. Reading through the first few chapters again, it seems as if he and his family did not merely escape from a casteist village, but traveled centuries forward to do so. More than his personal victories I admire his parents for having done so much with so little, setting up Thirumalai's ladder so that he can scale the well and the

world. I hope he continues to write and meet with every success along the way.

Krishnan's beautiful memoir *Caste Away* is charming and inspirational--I was fascinated by his childhood memories of family and friends in India, and enthralled to read about his struggles against societal expectations as he achieved his goals. A must read!

Mr. Hill Krishnan's book *Caste Away* is a journey into the Most Backward Castes of India. The book is penned so well, that the reader would feel like he/she is taken on a journey to a different era altogether. I could relate to various incidents in the book being from India. The book made me forget that I am in the western world while reading it. The struggles and journey described in this book will be a true inspiration to any one who has their roots back in India! Simple writing that will touch every soul in the most beautiful way! I strongly recommend this book! Way to go Mr. Tirumala (Hill Krishnan) Looking forward to more of your work!

A fascinating and truly inspiring story that you will not be able to put down. This book inspires the reader to reexamine what they perceive to be their own limitations, both those imposed by others and by oneself. I've had the good fortune to meet Dr. Krishnan. In-person he is just as personable, passionate, intelligent and inspiring as his book conveys. 5 stars! - Carolyn Wright

Once I started reading Dr. Krishnan's memoir, I couldn't put it down. His story is quite inspiring: It is a testament to the strength of the human spirit in its ability to transcend any obstacles or limitations that society tries to put in its way. I highly recommend reading this book!

Dr. Krishnan's memoir is inspirational, moving, and informative! The childhood memories he writes about are both funny, yet poignant; his writing is bound to evoke various emotions in readers. If you're interested in learning a bit about how the caste system in India operates, his memoir is a great source. A quick, yet very enjoyable and engaging read. I highly recommend!

I started reading this book not expecting much, but after a few pages, I was hooked! Thoroughly entertaining and enjoyable. It's been awhile since I enjoyed a book this much! Dr. Hill is a very admirable and inspiring man.

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