



## Review: "They Call Me Q" Off-Broadway Play

by [Roopa Modha](#) November 29, 2014 [Featured](#) [Gallery](#)

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If you've been following my posts on Urban Asian, you probably already know that I do reviews! What you may not know, however, is that back when I was an undergrad at Brandeis University, I did theater (shout out to Brandeis Ensemble Theatre). So, when I got a chance to watch and review an off-broadway theater production done by one of our own South Asians, of course, I couldn't say no! After all, whether or not you have done theater yourself, I feel it is important to support this art-form. The play I had a chance to see is called, "**They Call Me Q**," a one-woman play that stars and centers on the life of **Qurrat "Q" Kadwani**, an actress based in NY. The play is co-directed by her brother, **Obaid Kadwani**, and **Claudia Gaspar**. I had a chance to view the 100th show a couple weeks back at St. Luke's Theatre in NY. Read on below for my review of the production!

The first thing that strikes you upon entering the theater, is the simplicity of the set. Even the lighting effects and soundtrack are minimal. As such, the focus remains on **Qurrat** throughout the 55-minutes of the show, and so, the success of the play depends solely on her acting talent to make it all work. The story she relays to the audience takes us on the full immigrant experience in NY – from her childhood to present day. **Qurrat** plays all the 13 characters (Q, Catherine, Mrs. Farley, Mummi, Older Sister, Beenie, Melissa, Saad, Alicia, Abba, Lina, Rayya, and Soraya) in the play herself, using movement, different accents, and slight costume changes (like the addition of a shawl or using a prop) to create the distinctions between them. What is impressive, is how quickly **Qurrat** transitions between one character to another – especially the ones that require complete changes in her accent. The transitions are seamless, and despite all of them being played by only one person, the audience really gets a feel for what makes each character unique.

Each segment **Q** portrays is one that has deeply affected her life and has affected how she interacts with the world around her. Some of the segments are filled with humor, and some with sad tales. Still, each chapter of her life has obviously added and changed the way **Q** perceives the world. Through her story, one can get a sense of all the hardships as well as all the triumphs one experiences growing up as an immigrant in the United States. NY is known to be a state that truly exposes its inhabitants to all sides of humanity – racial tension and co-existence, the mixing and blending of cultures as well as their distinctions, poverty and wealth, and life and death. **Qurrat** does a great job of exposing her audience to all of these dichotomies.

I asked **Qurrat** what inspired her to make this play, and she explained,

“I wrote *They Call Me Q* because I wanted to write the post-immigrant story; the story that involves us feeling a vagueness in between being American and our ethnic culture's beauty. I was inspired by the things my friends would talk to me about and by the way I felt as I grappled with trying to figure out who I am in a urban environment.”

At base-line, the tale she relays is one that is a coming-of-age story that anyone – whether an immigrant or not – can relate to. The play starts off a bit slow, but quickly picks up. The audience cannot help but become immersed in **Q's** story. By the end, you feel like you have lived **Q's** life with her. "**They Call Me Q**" is worth seeing at least once! In fact, some members who saw the play with me, had been back for their 5th or 6th time! So, if you are in New York City, don't ask yourself *kyon* (the reasons above are why you need to go), but be sure to check out **Q!**

["They Call Me Q": Final Dates for 2014](#)

**Off Broadway at St. Luke's Theatre: 308 West 46 St**

**Sunday Nov 30 at 2 pm and Sunday Dec 7 at 2pm**

Buy tickets at: <https://www.telecharge.com/Off-Broadway/They-Call-Me-Q/Overview>

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