



Something Close to Nothing

Tom Pyun

Amble Press (Nov 12, 2024)

Softcover \$19.95 (260pp)

978-1-61294-299-5

In Tom Pyun's biting novel *Something Close to Nothing*, two exes learn to accept the imperfect but wonderful world as it is.

Wynn and Jared seemed to have it all: a nice house, a successful long-term relationship, and, thanks to a Cambodian surrogate, a baby on the way. But at the last minute, Wynn bails to fulfill his lifelong dream of being a professional dancer, leaving shocked Jared to face parenthood alone. Navigating grief, anger, and regret, each of the men comes to an important realization about his life.

Moving between Jared and Wynn and the continents that separate them, the wry yet candid prose unearths the factors that combined to destroy their once-passionate love. Their class and racial differences are widened by a mutual sense of entitlement and a lack of self-awareness, preventing either from understanding the other or attempting honest communication. Illuminating flashbacks—some touching, some horrifying—reveal their differing personalities and the depths of their dysfunction as people and partners. Sometimes unlikable but always fascinating, they never cease to grow and reveal more about themselves.

In the months following their dramatic break-up, Wynn and Jared learn painful but necessary lessons about living mature, meaningful lives. Through fleeting, ill-fated romances and public errors both amusing and catastrophic, they come to see their relationship in a new light and accept that aspirations, as fortifying as they can be, are not reality. With this relatable, universal truth at last in hand, they try to live by the implications: that the realities they tried so hard to ignore are all they can depend on.

Something Close to Nothing is a poignant novel in which two expectant fathers learn that letting go of their former dreams doesn't have to be a tragedy.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (November / December 2024)

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