

Tell Her Everything

Mirza Waheed

Melville House (Feb 7, 2023)

Hardcover \$26.99 (240pp)

978-1-68589-043-8

In Mirza Waheed's novel *Tell Her Everything*, a father prepares to tell his only daughter the truth about his life.

Kaiser hasn't seen his daughter Sara since her mother died and he sent her to boarding school. Now that she is grown, he longs for the chance to share his life story with her. In his loneliness, he begins to rehearse what he might say. The tale he relates to imaginary Sara is filled with his love and devotion for her, but that may not be enough to overcome the many mistakes he made, or the distance that has come between them since.

In the safety of his own mind, Kaiser reviews his struggles as an immigrant, a husband, a father, and a doctor. He recalls the pain of losing his wife at a young age and the horrifying ethical dilemma that he spent years justifying to himself. Explaining things to the real Sara is another matter. As Kaiser goes over his life, he imagines how she might respond to his revelations. The further he gets into his story, the more anxiety he betrays about whether or not his beloved daughter can accept his past decisions, flawed as they were.

Kaiser's mistakes are made all the more tragic by the good intentions behind them. As he tells it, he was an ordinary man caught up in unexpected, extraordinary circumstances, emphasizing the fact that anyone could have made the same decisions and been forced to live with the same regrets. Evil became mundane in his world while love grew distant, and yet he remains compassionate, thoughtful, and ready to engage with both his experiences and Sara's.

Tell Her Everything is a novel about how the choices we make affect those we love in ways we could never imagine.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (January / February 2023)

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