



★ **The Last Pomegranate Tree**

Bachtyar Ali

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In Bachtyar Ali's novel *The Last Pomegranate Tree*, a man's search for truth leads to deep revelations.

After more than two decades in prison, Muzafar has all but been forgotten. Only his old friend Yaqub knows he's alive, and Yaqub wants to keep Muzafar imprisoned in his mansion, allegedly to protect him from what the world has become. But Muzafar, determined to find out what happened to his only son, escapes the mansion and encounters a world more terrible and more beautiful than he imagined.

Before his imprisonment, Muzafar was a Kurdish revolutionary, fighting for freedom and a better life. He emerges with a much clearer idea of what freedom means. Everyone he meets is haunted by the warfare that has long plagued the country. Muzafar plunges through layers of hatred, secrets, and bitterness to find the answers he seeks.

Muzafar's experiences are interwoven with the fairy tale story of Muhammad the Glass-Hearted, whose unrequited love and premature death offer clues to his son's fate. On his journey, Muzafar encounters many different worlds, each rich and vibrant in its own way: the bazaar where a boy who might be his son fought for a better life, the wise and endless desert of his former imprisonment, and the isolated tree that watches over the dreams of several young men whose fates are interwoven.

Despite the solitude and betrayal he endured, Muzafar chooses to be kind and loyal. These qualities strengthen him as he encounters more loss and hardship and embarks on a voyage from which he knows he may never return. For him, it is not the ending or even the journey that matters, but the way that his story can inspire others.

The Last Pomegranate Tree is a transcendent novel about the unbreakable connection between all living beings.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (January / February 2023)

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