

Everything Is Ori

Paul Serge Forest

David Warriner, Translator

QC Fiction (May 1, 2023)

Softcover \$29.95 (438pp)

978-1-77186-317-9

New arrivals and fresh discoveries rock a wealthy family's dependable existence in Paul Serge Forest's novel *Everything Is Ori*.

The Lelarges own a successful fishery business that has only continued to grow in profits and prestige since the family patriarch died. Still, the Lelarge clan has much less control over their lives than they would like to believe. After a very public display of mass food poisoning threatens their future, strange events spell doom for their dysfunctional dynasty and turn their entire world on its ear.

Everyone's fate hinges on Laurie Lelarge, whose parents' exaggerated fears regarding her alleged shrimp allergy fuel her own interest in shellfish. She retreats into her own world while the adults around her become caught up in their all-too-human vices, including sex, greed, and drugs. Meanwhile, Mori, a mysterious visitor from Japan, arrives with vices, secrets, and delusions of his own that he plans to use to bend nature to his will—with Laurie's unwitting assistance. As the adults in her life stumble and fall, Laurie's only refuges are her books and her bizarre relationship with Mori.

Sly, understated humor pokes fun at people's foibles and at narrative conventions. These characters often deserve the mockery they receive, yet there is an undeniable sense of grand tragedy about their collective downfall. Later, there's a haunting exploration of the price of Mori and Laurie's work that shows just how much the world has changed since their first meeting. Those who survived the shift may feel better for it, but with further upheavals on the horizon, the question of who benefits—and who deserves to benefit—from this new dimension of human consciousness may never be settled.

Everything Is Ori is a mind-bending, offbeat exploration of the worth and true nature of human life.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (May / June 2023)

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