FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Foreword Review GENERAL FICTION

The Almond in the Apricot

Sara Goudarzi
Deep Vellum Publishing (Jan 18, 2022)
Hardcover $22.00 (252pp)
978-1-64605-109-0

Immersed in her grief, a woman becomes unable to handle the complexities of worlds beyond her own in Sara Goudarzi's affecting novel *The Almond in the Apricot*.

When her best friend Spencer was alive, Emma's world made sense. She could work hard at her dull, respectable engineering job, go on occasional romantic trips with her stable, handsome boyfriend, Peter, and always know that Spencer would soon pop up to inject some magic into her days. But a hit and run ended Emma's tidy compartmentalization; now, she's splitting at the seams.

When Emma begins dreaming about Lily, a girl in an unknown, war-torn country whose own senses of joy and normalcy have been upended by falling bombs, it's more of a mental splinter that she can handle. She seeks a psychologist's help to deal with her grief, but suspects a more fantastical explanation: that she's slipping through the multiverse, and that Lily's connection to her is real. An attractive physicist gives her the loose support to pursue this wild theory, which she hopes may result in a second chance at saving a life.

More about mourning than it is about the multiverse, the novel follows Emma as she stumbles past her manageable, ordered routines into light chaos. Internally, she keens for Spencer at a continual, high volume; externally, her life proceeds at a pace so normal that it maddens her. Second-tier friends and steady Peter become sources of irritation, rather than comfort; she begins to behave in abominable, compromising ways. While her decisions are unsympathetic, particularly when they're allowed to outweigh the troubles of sidelined Lily, the authenticity of her selfish, consuming grief is an empathetic constant.

Loss sends a woman's life into disarray in the emotive novel *The Almond in the Apricot*.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (January / February 2022)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.