



The Body Myth

Rheea Mukherjee

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Mira is a teacher living in the heart of Suryam, a modern bustling in city India, and the only place in the world the fickle Rasagura fruit grows. Mira lives alone, and with only the French existentialists as companions, until the day she witnesses a beautiful woman having a seizure in the park. Mira runs to help her but is cautious, for she could have sworn the woman looked around to see if anyone was watching right before the seizure began.

Mira is quickly drawn into the lives of this mysterious woman Sara, who suffers a myriad of unexplained illnesses, and her kind, intensely supportive husband Rahil, striking up intimate, volatile and fragile friendships with each of them that quickly become something more. A moving exploration of loss, Mukherjee delivers an intense and unexpected modern love story as Mira reconciles reality with desire.

The Body Myth Details

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Rohini says

A disclaimer: I've known Rhea since we were spotty bratty teenagers, and so I have no objectivity. I went into this book knowing that it would be good, and I came out of the book confirmed in that view.

Is this a love story? How do you know someone, how do you KNOW them, where do you find their core authentic self - and what if there is no such thing as an authentic self?

Mira is a widow, falling in love with Sara and Rahul. Who is Sara, really? Why is she ill, what is wrong, can it be fixed? What is Rahul doing there, do his devotion and support hide something deeper?

Mira has spent years with her grief as a widow, with the consolations of philosophy. With Sara she cannot hide behind those abstractions. Together we see these three people navigate the difficult path of trust and honesty.

With beautiful, shocking prose, Rhea Mukherjee asks us how we see ourselves, our bodies, how we navigate sickness and health in a concrete world. This concrete is literal - developing urban cities in India are hard edges and shiny surfaces - and metaphorical - what are you? What are you *allowed* to be when you live here?

Pitting western philosophical thought against Sufi spiritual consciousness - perhaps pitting is the wrong word, this is a conversation, an argument, a forgiving. When you love someone, whom will you set free, and whom will you cage?

The Body Myth is a nuanced, gentle narration of healing, finding and losing your self and another's. Mira, Sara and Rahul work through their journey, privately and publicly negotiating their relationship with themselves and each other. Each event is inevitable; each moment is a complete shock. Rhea Mukherjee's control over her narrative is flawless. I highly recommend this book - get hold of a copy as soon as it launches and thank me later.

Indrayudh Ghoshal says

I got hold of an ARC.

The storytelling was so fluid, and vivid, that it made it hard to put down. I rarely feel that way about literary fiction.

The characters, their inner clocks, their motivations and machinations, elevate the seemingly plain setting of the book almost to thriller level, without ever losing flow.

This makes it my best fiction read of the last couple of years.

Satyavrat Krishnakumar says

DISCLAIMER: I got an ARC of the book.

The art of the review, if it possessed any to begin with, has like many other things gone the Zomato way. Mr. Shah liked the ambience, but the waiter's lack of an antebellum sense of servitude left a lot to be desired. What we are left with is a hackneyed, threadbare grocery list, colored with splashes of rococo prejudice serving as the only reminder that there is indeed a person typing all this out. This review endeavors to be no more than that. The brief review is that I implore you to buy this book, the economy of it is an attractive proposition in this respect, at 200 odd pages, Mukherjee packs in an engaging narrative that you MUST see to its end (trust me, you'll feel the same way at page 1) while not sparing us with sterner themes to ruminate about once you've kept the book away. Despite its economy, one is reeled in, to the milieu, the mood, the malaise, eventually finding oneself fully complicit in this universe. Anything that does that and looks so good deserves to be on your shelf.

Brittany | brittanyfiasco says

(@unnamedpress #partner)

sitting here, having just finished this book, i know i have a lot to process. from the start, this story grabbed me with the same intensity that Mira was grabbed by Sara and Rahil. there were moments where i found myself as enthralled by their sickly sultry life, despite knowing how potentially toxic and maladaptive it was. for a moment you question, wait, am I Mira? this book will draw you in to the story and have you questioning how you feel throughout its unraveling.

i valued the various elements of diversity within this book, as well. whether it be diversity of culture, relationships, or approach to medicine/medical system, i loved the varying perspectives towards each. the writing weaves in such a lovely, philosophical perspective, sometimes while even discussing philosophers. overall, i feel impressed by the writing, the story, and the overall experience of this soon to be released novel.

so grateful to @unnamedpress for sending this one my way. this has set a great tone for start of the year fiction, and i couldn't be happier about it.

4/5 ??
