



No Other World: A Novel

Rahul Mehta

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From the author of the prize-winning collection *Quarantine*, an insightful, compelling debut novel set in rural America and India in the 1980s and '90s, part coming-of-age story about a gay Indian American boy, part family saga about an immigrant family's struggles to find a sense of belonging, identity, and hope.

In a rural community in Western New York, twelve-year-old Kiran Shah, the American-born son of Indian immigrants, longingly observes his prototypically American neighbors, the Bells. He attends school with Kelly Bell, but he's powerfully drawn—in a way he does not yet understand—to her charismatic father, Chris.

Kiran's yearnings echo his parents' bewilderment as they try to adjust to a new world. His father, Nishit Shah, a successful doctor, is haunted by thoughts of the brother he left behind. His mother, Shanti, struggles to accept a life with a man she did not choose—her marriage to Nishit was arranged—and her growing attachment to an American man. Kiran is close to his older sister, Preeti—until an unexpected threat and an unfathomable betrayal drive a wedge between them that will reverberate through their lives.

As he leaves childhood behind, Kiran finds himself perpetually on the outside—as an Indian American torn between two cultures and as a gay man in a homophobic society. In the wake of an emotional breakdown, he travels to India, where he forms an intense bond with a teenage hijra, a member of India's ancient transgender community. With her help, Kiran begins to pull together the pieces of his broken past.

Sweeping and emotionally complex, *No Other World* is a haunting meditation on love, belonging, and forgiveness that explores the line between our responsibilities to our families and to ourselves, the difficult choices we make, and the painful cost of claiming our true selves.

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