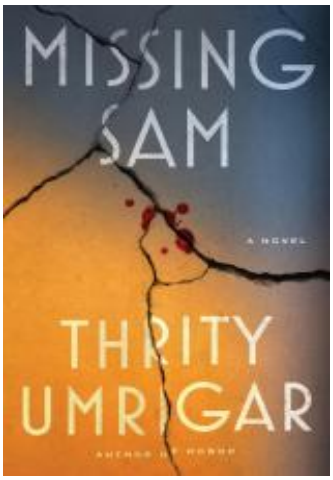
Missing Sam

by Thrity Umrigar



About the Book

A tense and twisty story of a woman who goes missing on a morning run and her wife's determination to both find her and clear her own name --- from the bestselling author of HONOR.

One night after a party, old grievances surface between married couple Aliya and Sam, and the night ends badly with a heated argument. Sam goes for a run early the next morning to clear her head --- and doesn?t come back.

Aliya reports her wife missing, but as a gay Muslim daughter of immigrants, she can't escape the scrutiny and suspicion of those around her. Scared and furious, and feeling isolated as strangers and acquaintances alike doubt her innocence, Aliya makes one wrong choice after another. She must fight to prove her innocence in the public eye even as she is torn between her fear that Sam is dead and her desire to find and save her wife. But is safety ever truly possible for them?

A provocative examination of suburban mores, MISSING SAM captures the terror manifested in today?s political climate, and the real dangers, both physical and psychological, of being brown and queer in America.

Discussion Guide

1. Ali and Samantha have different interpretations of the argument they have on their way home from the party and why they are arguing. Who is right? How do their family dynamics play a role in their warring positions?

2. Have you found yourself repeating your own family dynamics in arguments with your significant other? What makes it so difficult to move beyond that pattern?

3. Samantha's tripping and falling the morning after the fight with Ali seems to echo the rift between the two women. Is there a symbolic way of reading her fall? Does that change your reading of the novel?

4. At one point, Ali realizes that although she might see herself as American, not everyone around her sees her that way. What does this say about self-image and the formation of identity?

5. How does the novel chart what trauma does to an individual and to a couple? What are the obstacles that Sam and Ali face to having a happy marriage?

6. How does setting the book in 2019 affect the plot and character development? What was happening in the world at that time? How do you think the story might have played out if it were set earlier in the 2000s?

7. To what extent does social media affect what happens to Ali? In what ways has social media affected your perceptions of an incident?

8. What do you think of George's character? Without excusing his actions, do you feel any pity for him?

9. Thrity Umrigar has described the novel as "a social critique disguised as a mystery novel.? Do you agree or disagree? How does MISSING SAM differ from other mystery novels that you have read?

10. What role does reconciliation and healing play in the novel?

11. What does the novel say about the importance of allyship? How do we apply that to our everyday lives?

Author Bio

Thrity Umrigar is the bestselling author of such novels as HONOR, which was a Reese's Book Club pick, as well as three picture books and a memoir. Her books have been published in over 20 countries and in several languages. A former journalist, she has contributed to the *Washington Post*, the *Boston Globe*, the *New York Times*, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and other newspapers. She is a recipient of the Nieman Fellowship to Harvard, and winner of the Cleveland Arts Prize, the Seth Rosenberg prize and a Lambda Literary award. She is currently a Distinguished University Professor of English at Case Western Reserve University.

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