



South Haven

Hirsh Sawhney

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"A vivid portrait of second-generation immigrants living in suburban New England...Sawhney is pitch-perfect when describing the uneasy relationship between adolescents and their parents...There is much emotional truth in the author's sensitive portrayal of the despair and rage that can simmer away throughout adolescence...Hirsh Sawhney's quietly devastating conclusion is both unexpected and deeply moving."

--*Times Literary Supplement*

"[T]his luminous debut...captures precisely the heartache of growing up."

--*Library Journal*, Top Spring Indie Fiction

"Sawhney's debut novel, a coming-of-age tale mixing grief, violence, and extremism, follows the life of Indian-American teen Siddharth Arora as he deals with the death of his mother, political tensions at home, and attempts to fit in amongst the bored and troubled youth of his Connecticut suburb . . . With shifting teen angst colliding with his new, upturned reality, Sid becomes aware of his failings and mistakes as he discovers what it means to be loyal to the ones you love. This is a fantastic debut about growing up as an outsider in a divisive environment."

--*Publishers Weekly*

"A powerful story...a universal look at the complexity of how people wrestle with guilt and blame amid tragic loss."

--*New Haven Independent*

"[A] sensitive, poignant, resonating novel."

--*Bookslut*

"A raw portrait of a motherless family . . . poetic . . . [Sawhney's] characters are distinctive: They open up differently, more ominously, than American fiction's best-known South Asians of the Northeast — Jhumpa Lahiri's . . . [and] exhibit an outsider-ness without glamour."

—*The Village Voice*

"An unforgettable and unnerving tale of grief and migration."

--*Largehearted Boy*

Included in John Reed's list of Most Anticipated Small Press Books of 2016 at Big Other

"Sawhney's portrait of childhood grief is complex and explosive, and it challenges the definition of 'victim.'"

--*Minnesota Public Radio*

"A son of Hindu immigrants from India grows up in a New England suburb, where he struggles to find his way after his mother dies, while his father becomes immersed in anti-Muslim fundamentalism."

--*World Wide Work*

Siddharth Arora lives an ordinary life in the New England suburb of South Haven, but his childhood

comes to a grinding halt when his mother dies in a car accident. Siddharth soon gravitates toward a group of adolescent bullies, drinking and smoking instead of drawing and swimming. He takes great pains to care for his depressive father, Mohan Lal, an immigrant who finds solace in the hateful Hindu fundamentalism of his homeland and cheers on Indian fanatics who murder innocent Muslims. When a new woman enters their lives, Siddharth and his father have a chance at a fresh start. They form a new family, hoping to leave their pain behind them.

South Haven is no simple coming-of-age tale or hero's journey, blurring the line between victim and victimizer and asking readers to contend with the lies we tell ourselves as we grieve and survive. Following in the tradition of narratives by Edwidge Danticat and Junot Díaz, Sawhney draws upon the measured lyricism of postcolonial writers like Michael Ondaatje but brings to his subjects distinctly American irreverence and humor.

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Beverly Brown:

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