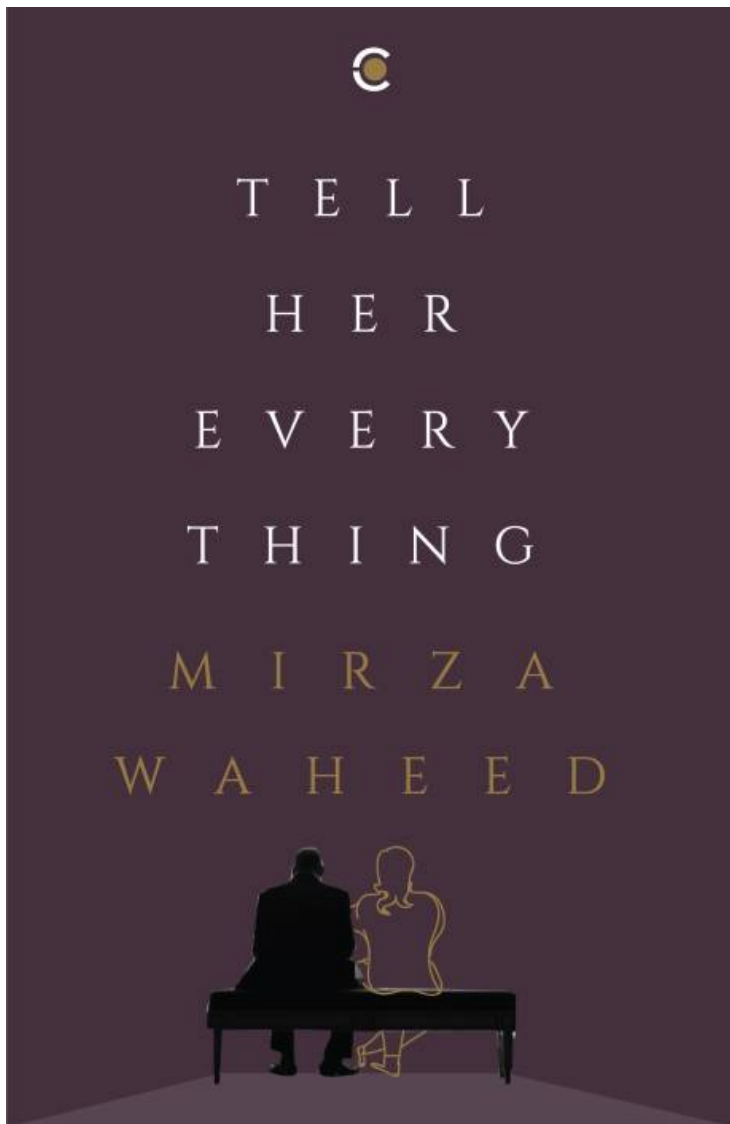


# Tell Her Everything!

A few months ago, I chanced upon this book in the books section of an inflight magazine. I was attracted by the catchy title. I had not read any of Mirza Waheed's earlier two books, but his name seemed familiar. My decision to buy and read this book firmed up when I found out that the protagonist of the book is an Indian Keralite doctor who has migrated overseas – and the title refers to this doctor – incidentally a surgeon – wanting to tell his daughter 'Everything'.



Mirza Waheed is a reputed UK based author, who was born in Srinagar and began his book writing journey with "The Collaborator" – which was a finalist for the Guardian First Book award. 'Tell her Everything', Waheed's third book, is about the life and career of Dr. Kaiser Shah, in an unnamed country probably in West Asia, to which he had migrated, in search of a better and financially secure life.

Today, post-retirement Dr. Kaiser is in his plush London apartment overlooking the Thames and awaiting the arrival of

his estranged 20's something daughter. He is ruminating about his life and career and wants to 'tell her everything'- without hiding anything –about why he made the choices that he had to make and why he sent her to a Boarding school in the US when she was barely 7yrs old.

The book is written in the first person as a flash-back narrative by Dr. K, and he goes back and forth talking about his family and father in Kerala, his marriage, migrating to the unnamed country, and what he happened to do there as a part of his job. To reveal here what he did- or had to do, as he tries to justify his career choices will be giving away the most riveting part of the book- and I will leave that for the readers to discover.

The book is a compelling, *un-put-downable* read – more so for doctors, as they will identify with the reasons and dilemmas of their kind who migrate out of their homeland. The book provides an opportunity to introspect about whether we are consciously making the right choices or are allowing the unpredictable turns of life to tie us down to things we should not be doing.

When Dr. Kaiser tells his daughter everything, will she forgive him? Before I had finished reading the book, I ordered a copy of Mirza Waheed's first book – 'The Collaborator' on Amazon. As I am reading it, I wonder whether the underlying theme in both the books is that of being a collaborator of sorts. In a recent interview, Waheed mentioned that his next dream project is a book about the personal history of his city – Srinagar.