



The Speed of Light

Elizabeth Rosner



Every family has a story. Every story, eventually, must be told. For most of their lives, Julian Perel and his sister, Paula, lived in a house cast in silence, witnesses to a father struggling with a devastating secret too painful to share. Though their father took his demons to the grave, his past refuses to rest. As adults, brother and sister struggle to find their voices. A scientist governed by numbers and logic, Julian now lives an ordered life of routine and seclusion. My father gave up his language and his homeland. But he carried his sadness with him, under his skin. It was mine now. In contrast, Paula has entered the world as eagerly as Julian retracts from it. An aspiring opera singer, she is always moving, buoyant with sound. Singing was the only gift I could offer to my father. I filled the house with music. I tried to give him joy. . . . Yet both their lives begin to change on a Wednesday, miercoles, the day that sounds like miracles. Before embarking on a European opera tour, Paula asks her housekeeper, Sola, to stay at her place--and to look after Julian in the apartment above. Yet Sola, too, has a story. I want to clean myself like the window of a house, make myself clear for things to pass through. Flat and quiet. As Paula uncovers pieces of her fathers early life in Budapest and the horrifying truth of his past, Julian bears witness to Solas story--revelations that help all three learn how to both surrender and revere the shadows that have followed them for so long. The Speed of Light is a powerful debut about three unforgettable souls who overcome the tragedies of the past to reconnect with one another and the world around them. In an extraordinary accomplishment, Elizabeth Rosner has created a novel of love and redemption that proves the pain of the untold story is far greater than even the most difficult truth. From the Hardcover edition.

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