



# The Tiny One: A Novel

*Eliza Minot*

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## **The Tiny One: A Novel** Eliza Minot

With clarity, sensitivity, and striking authenticity, Eliza Minot adeptly captures the voice of a vibrant, intelligent child swept into a sea of sorrow and confusion in **The Tiny One**.

Via Mahoney Revere is eight years old when her mother is killed in a car accident. Confused by anguish, bewildered by her mother's absence, and mystified by the notion of death itself, Via retells the day of her mother's death in minute detail, trying to discern the crack in the world through which her mother must have slipped. She takes us through the seemingly ordinary moments of her day, from a cold-cereal breakfast to math class, when she is called to the principal's office to hear the news. Every small event of the tragic day calls up earlier memories from Via's young life, resulting in a beautifully patterned portrait of a comfortable childhood guarded by a warm and loving mother. Via attempts to grasp "how something so big could fit into such a little thing as a day."

## **The Tiny One: A Novel Details**

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# **From Reader Review The Tiny One: A Novel for online ebook**

## **Peggy Schuster says**

Beautifully captures the agony and confusion experienced with a sudden loss...or so I thought. It started to ramble a bit and I'm thinking "well, it's supposed to be an eight year old working through the death of her Mother so, okay" but then it starts getting a little weird but, okay, I'll keep going...until she talks, in vivid detail, about putting her finger in her "butt hole" which in my book has little to nothing to do with grieving for your dead Mother. The book started off as four stars and just went to one. And that's just a pity star.

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## **Carolyn says**

At times, the voice of the young narrator sounded so realistic it drew me right back to my own childhood and the kinds of thoughts and observations an eight year old would have. Yet there were many instances when Via, the narrator, sounded much older than an eight year old should. She mentioned being advanced in school, but that didn't seem enough to explain how she would be so precocious. I was distracted by that discrepancy and by the constant avalanche of memories from Via's life -- less could have been more in this case. The author is the sister of Susan Minot, and the story line roughly follows that of Susan's Monkeys told from the point of view of the youngest child, but without Susan's more effective sparse writing. The third person point of view used in the first and last chapters seemed odd and unnecessary. As Via recounts the day before her mother's death in much detail, it seems to me that her memories would've been interrupted, at least occasionally, by the shock of the present reality. Overall, enjoyable and moving but flawed.

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## **Sarah says**

The author does an absolutely phenomenal job nailing the thoughts and observations of children--I felt like she had mined my 8 year old brain at several points. For instance: "The cinder-block walls are painted yellow and when I run my finger along the track between each block it's smooth and fits perfectly like I've made the line with my finger on frosting." So I wasn't the only one thought that exact same thing, huh?

The book is incredibly poignant, but considering the subject matter, it's not a weeper.

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## **Komal says**

This book begins promisingly, but it soon becomes utterly tiresome. It repeats over and over the formula of one passage from the present and one from the past until it becomes almost idiotic. Eventually one loses every shred of sympathy for the little girl because she is, to be frank, not making much sense.

The book reads like someone thought every single thing they think is deep if they sequin it with metaphors and similes.

There is also far too much mention of American products from various brands that are completely lost upon me as a non-American.

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### **Carolyn says**

I hated this one. I understand that it's supposed to be from the perspective of an 8 year old, but I couldn't get into it at all. The author probably did a great job of emulating the inner workings of an 8 year old's mind (kind of bouncing all over the place, very slow to get to the point, lots of filler words), but I couldn't stand it.

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### **Kerry says**

4.5 stars

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### **Lee says**

Tells essentially the same story as *Monkeys* (written by the sister of *Monkey's* author) but from the perspective of the youngest child in the family. I had trouble with the first person narrative supposedly told in "real time" - - although the story was well written and interesting, it was not a successful representation of a third grader and I found that detracted for me by breaking the willing suspension. It was a masterful as a remembrance and reflection on childhood. The ending was written as third person and was absolutely beautiful.

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### **Kirsty says**

I love stories which feature child narrators, and Eliza Minot's *The Tiny One* was almost perfect. The book's blurb ticked a lot of boxes for me, and I was very much looking forward to immersing myself within the story. Via is only eight years old when her mother is killed in a car accident; her voice from the outset is believable, and has been constructed both with sensitivity and an outpouring of emotion. She springs to life almost immediately; she is made up of naive quirks and complexities. The structure which Minot has utilised within her novel is the age-old formula of fragmented memories, which build a full picture of both Via and her mother. Once I began to read *The Tiny One*, I could barely put it down. It is as transportative as Kaye Gibbons' work, and is a must for anyone who enjoys reading about trauma in fiction, or seeing serious occurrences from the viewpoint of an unreliable or biased narrator.

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### **Shana Dines says**

This is a beautiful book written from a child's perspective. It is very descriptive, which I know some people

don't like, but I do. I highly recommend it although it is rather sad.

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### **Patti says**

Via's a smart young girl who lost her beloved mum, shares her memories growing up in Massachusetts ( my own home state). It brought me back to my own childhood. So many very familiar references to song lyrics, musicians, posters of Bobby Orr on her brothers wall, brand names such as NuForm milk, Necco wafers, Hoodsie cups of ice cream. Good memories. A pleasure to read.

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### **Julie Ivens says**

This is by far my all time favorite book. I think I have read it a hundred times since I bought it as a hardcover in 1999 (and you can tell by taking a look at it that it is well loved, well worn). It is so full of pure feeling and pure memory. It is comforting and hopeful and vibrant. Can't really put it into words, and I know it's not for everybody, but I love it immensely. :)

Two of my favorite parts:

"One night Marly and her friend June go skinny-dipping in the rain in the Emersons' pool and they bring me with them. Marly takes my hand and speeds way up so I get pulled. The pavement's gravelly on my feet and wet with the rain. June's in front of us in the dark and she starts to run. We're almost there. Marly undoes the hitches at the fence and reaches underneath a thing and suddenly the pool lights up like some sort of show. It's so blue in the dark. It's so blue. The rain rains. Each drop's lit up on the water because of the light inside the pool so they're lit up all over the place and they look like sparks. They look like live things. June jumps in and her splash sparks around. June comes up from underwater. Her curly hair's smoothed down. 'Look how it's all lit up,' Marly tells us. 'Like mercury. It looks like little mirrors getting splashed around.' A big burst of wind blows around. I'm not sure I want to go in anymore. 'Ready, V?' Marly squeezes my hand. She squeezes my hand tight and then gently jumps in while she's still holding my hand so I go with her. We're under and shapes warp around. When I come up the rain's on my face. The wind's blowing the trees around above us but I can't see them I just hear them. I swim to Marly and hold on to her neck. 'See?' she says. The wind's on my face. I can see the drops in my eyelashes. 'See?' Marly says again and hugs me closer. Her face is lit up too.

Marly sways us over toward the edge of the pool. 'Look,' says Marly, 'they look like little ants.' 'Where?' I ask, my mouth open. I don't see them. Then I do. On the bricks on the side of the pool little raindrops dart around. They're beaded and shooting around across the wet brick. 'Oh, yeah,' I say, and then I hold on tighter around her wet neck to hug her."

and

"Then we're in the boat heading back home to Sky Island from Brimstone. My skin's all salty and the sun's going down. I'm sitting on the seat with Mum with a towel around me. I'm eating a peach. There are some clouds over near the sunset. They're pink and orange swipy swirls that go up to the middle of the sky. They look like glowing tails of a horse that are flared. I love this day. I love peaches. I love the way the ocean's so dark blue and the sky's so pink and orange. I love the way I feel the vibration of the boat's engine and that we're in a boat moving across the water, going home.

Mum's next to me. I feel like I wish I could say something but I don't know what it is. Ethan's sitting down on the floor in front of us rolling a nerf ball under his bare foot. He's whistling to himself but I can't hear the whistle because of the humming engine and the wind. I can see it from his lips and the way he's moving his head. I'm leaning into Mum and her arm's around me. My peach is so good. The sunset's so big. The water's blue and, like, long. I shake my head around in the wind. I want to do something like gulp it all in or get it and catch it somehow.

'Look, Mum,' I say, 'look,' meaning the sunset. I point at it with my foot. I know she sees it because we're heading straight for it, but I can't help it, I want to point it out to her. I want to show her more but I don't know what. I want to get everything and have her see it. 'Take a bite of this,' I tell Mum. I want her to taste the peach too. It's a perfect one. I want to take everything and put it all together somehow but I don't know how.

Mum smiles at me. She's smiling at me because she knows how I feel. She lowers her head toward my ear so I can hear her over the engine. 'You must always remember, my pumpkin, that there will always be days like this,' she's smiling. 'Always,' she says again."

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## **Maria Barci says**

Kind of boring. The story is okay, but it just had way too much unnecessary detail. The only thing I will say I really enjoyed was it had me reminiscing about a lot of things taking me back to my child hood as a little girl growing up when I did. A sad story and all in all relatable, but kind of a waste of time too.

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## **Jericha says**

I have complicated feelings about this book.

The first two and last three pages of the book I found to be incredibly clumsily written. The rest of the book was an absolutely joy to read. Eliza Minot's similes are a dream; I was reading this simultaneously with The Marriage Plot, which has some of the *worst* similes I've ever encountered, and the contrast was kind of delightfully shocking. The book itself is a little, I don't know, fluffy. A young girl whose mother has just died is recalling the day she learned of her death in a novel-length stream of memories that spark other memories, a kind of nested sequence of recollections that present what seems to me to be a pretty accurate portrait of a fairly privileged eight-year-old's life experience and way of seeing. What made the book extraordinary for me was the perfection of the author's imagery; at times it read like a linked series of prose poems. I kept finding myself thinking *yes, that's exactly what it's like* -- with more and more surprise, because she just *kept doing it*, page after page, these jewel-like images conveyed with the precision of poetry.

They worked, I think, because her narrator is a child with a believable child's voice, and what makes the images glow is their simplicity: things are perceived and described vividly and plainly, in language that would never work from an adult narrator. I love that she manages to evoke the feeling of wonder that we feel as kids (or, at least, \*I\* felt) and then lose, somehow, when we reach adulthood; it seems to me that our ability to perceive the world as magical fades as we grow more self-aware, and Minot's narrator Via is perched just on the cusp of awareness, old enough to be articulate and young enough to still see things fresh and unclouded.

The book is flawed in a few ways, one of which, for me, is the fact that it's supposedly about her mother's death but nowhere, at no point, did I feel any actual sense of loss. The place where Minot's descriptive abilities fell flat for me was right in those moments where Via is dealing with death, and the book as a whole does not read to me as the believable paean to loss and remembrance that I think it's supposed to be. What works is simply the transcendence, the evanescent feelings Minot manages to capture that have to do, instead, with joy and pleasure and comfort and wonder, the fragments of Via's experience that rang absolutely and startlingly true with my own memories of childhood feelings about sunsets on boats, or rain, or paint on the side of buildings -- the sensory world and its satisfactions. Read the book for the touching story of a girl dealing with death and you may be disappointed; read it for an intense evocation of the sensuous moments that make up a childhood and you'll be richly rewarded.

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### **Jean says**

I LOVE the writing style of this book. It's something like stream of consciousness, and is very much like the direction our thoughts take as we daydream, or even night-dream. As the main character in the book experiences the day of her mother's funeral, she remembers the day her mother died, and those memories recall other memories. Memories within memories within memories. So fascinating!

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### **Christine Crawford says**

My sister gave me this book b/c she knows the author. It is not the type of book I usually pick up (not that I know what that type is), but I did think it was very sweet. It is told from the perspective of an 8-yr-old girl whose mother has been killed in a car accident. It is stream of consciousness and the author does a really wonderful job of channeling a child's thoughts. It's impossible to read this and not be reminded of your childhood self. It is totally authentic to the point that I felt like maybe I had some of those exact same thoughts. On the other hand, that same characteristic of the book also makes it a little hard to read. Every listen to an 8 yr old talk for an hour or so straight? Well, that's what you're reading each time you sit down with this book. The thoughts are all from a child and do jump around like a child's thoughts would. There is not really a story arc, just a collection of thoughts and memories, which I could imagine bothering some people. But if you can get past that, the story really is authentic, sweet and touching.

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### **Katie Lowry says**

Are you allowed to review a book you couldn't finish? It was painful to read, and not for the reasons you'd expect from a book about a little girl's mother dying. It just rambled about randomness with no destination as far as I could see. I've never not finished a book on purpose before and yet here I am.

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### **Wendy Wax says**

I wanted to like this memoir--especially since the author grew up at the same time I did. But her descriptions were a little too exaggerated. The author seemed more connected to how cute she must have been than to who she was on the inside.

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### **Stephanie says**

The story line of this book is great, but it was not written well. I had a hard time connecting with the 8 year old narrator. Her character outline never seemed to match up. She was very sporadic and confusing. I was not fond of the character development at all.

The plot became repetitive and lack luster. The only reason I continued reading was because I was waiting for the "awe-haw" moment where topics came together and emotion was felt. Sadly, that never happened. The last chapter of a good book will leave you with a magical feeling of wonder. This book did not do so. Concept is beautiful, book is disappointing.

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### **Carolina Zapotitla says**

The book *The Tiny One* by Eliza Minot is a book that takes you along with the author. The story is told by the little girl, Via. She tells you about every memory she has ever had with her mother who has just recently died. She tells her memories with great detail. She makes it seem like as though you were actually there. The way she tells the story of how she goes through every thought and memory she ever had is very descriptive and it shows what going on inside the mind of an eight year old girl. This story has almost everything a good book needs. It has a good setting. Which is basically the same throughout the whole story, it has main characters. Via is the main character along with her mother, father, brothers, and sister. There are also other people who help create the story and many other great features. I think that the best part of the book to me was the fact that I felt as though I was actually there with Via when she told the stories. It had a great feel to it. It was a book that had me turning the pages nonstop. I enjoyed this book very much. I would recommend this book to a friend just because of the fact that it is a good plot and told very well. I think whoever was to read this would understand the emotions and situation through the books point of view. The author did a good job at explaining what she wanted the readers to feel. It was well put together and was very detailed and descriptive. The one thing I might change though is the ending. Maybe i'd add more closure because I thought the ending was a little too simple and not yet finished. But other than that this book was great!

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### **Robin says**

The stream of consciousness style that this is written in took a little getting used to. At times it seemed to jerk you from one subject to another. But that is the mind of a seven year old. She's finding comfort in remembering the day her mother died- every single detail of it. She even relives the flashbacks she had that day. So there are memories encased within other memories. Sometimes I felt like 'Get to the point already,' but most of the time, it was fun to just float along with the memories. Some of them I could totally relate to and made me think of my own childhood. Others were just plain disturbing and some seemed really far-fetched. I find it hard to believe that a seven year old thinks about sex as much as this kid seems to, but maybe that's just me hoping that my own nine year old doesn't think about it all the time.

So FYI: there are some references to sex and some mild language. Nothing I consider very bad- this is from the point of view of a child, after all- but just enough to make me think 'Really? Was that necessary? Come



on!

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