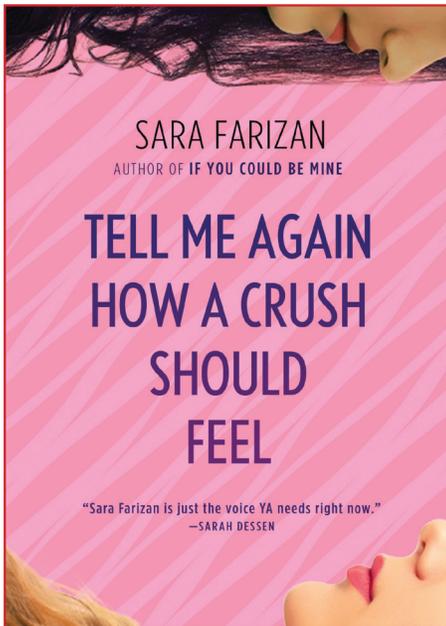


# *Tell Me Again How a Crush Should Feel*

by SARA FARIZAN



**OCTOBER**

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Ages 14 and up, Grades 9 and up

304 pages, 5" x 7"

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## BOOK TALK

High school junior Leila has made it most of the way through Armstead Academy without having a crush on anyone, which is a relief. Her Iranian heritage already makes her different from her classmates; if word got out that she liked girls, life would be twice as hard. But when a sophisticated, beautiful new girl, Saskia, shows up, Leila starts to take risks she never thought she would, especially when it looks as if the attraction between them is mutual. Struggling to sort out her growing feelings and Saskia's confusing signals, Leila confides in her old friend, Lisa, and grows closer to her fellow drama tech-crew members, especially Tomas, whose comments about his own sexuality are frank, funny, wise, and sometimes painful. Gradually, Leila begins to see that almost all her classmates are more complicated than they first appear to be, and many are keeping fascinating secrets of their own.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sara Farizan is the award-winning author of *If You Could Be Mine*. The daughter of Iranian immigrants, Sara lives in San Francisco, but Boston will always be home. She is an MFA graduate of Lesley University and holds a BA in film and media studies from American University. *Tell Me Again How a Crush Should Feel* is her second novel.



## PRAISE FOR *Tell Me Again How a Crush Should Feel*

"Both personal and universal, this is a compelling story about high school, family, and owning up to who you really are. Farizan is just the voice YA needs right now. Trust me, you'll be glad you listened."

—Sarah Dessen, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Moon and More*

"Deftly balancing Leila's unique cultural background and experience with more universal coming-of-age struggles, Farizan fashions an empowering romance featuring a lovable, awkward protagonist who just needs a little nudge of confidence to totally claim her multifaceted identity."

—*Booklist*, starred review

"Farizan exceeds the high expectations she set with her debut, *If You Could Be Mine*, in this fresh, humorous, and poignant exploration of friendship and love, a welcome addition to the coming-out/coming-of-age genre."

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"A warm and uplifting coming-out story. An appealing cast of well-drawn characters . . . makes the story shine. Funny, heartwarming and wise."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

## *Tell Me Again How a Crush Should Feel* DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In chapter 1, Mrs. Taylor asks her class if it's possible for a character in *The Color Purple* to be both married and attracted to another woman. Why did Sara Farizan choose to begin *Tell Me Again How a Crush Should Feel* with a discussion of Alice Walker's novel? How would you answer Mrs. Taylor's question?
2. Based on Tomas's comments, when Leila first joins the tech crew, she assumes all of the girls will be lesbians. In fact, none of them is. Have you ever had a similar experience with stereotypes? How did you handle the situation?
3. On page 138, Tayrn says, "Look, Leila, high school sucks for everybody." Is this true? Do certain people have an easier time in high school than others? If so, why?
4. Throughout most of the novel, Tomas seems comfortable with his sexuality. But on pages 148–49, we learn how difficult it was for him to come out and how hard he finds high school. Tomas suspects that Leila will have an easier time coming out than he did. Why does Tomas believe it's easier to come out as a lesbian than as a gay man? Do you agree with him?
5. When did you first notice that Saskia might not be who Leila thought she was?
6. *Tell Me Again How a Crush Should Feel* is set in an affluent northeastern prep school. How might Leila's coming out have been different if the novel were set at a public school, or in another part of the country or world? Would the story have been different if Leila had been another ethnicity?
7. In *Tell Me Again How a Crush Should Feel*, Sara Farizan layers her love triangles. For example, Tess has a crush on Greg, but Greg has a crush on Leila; Leila has a crush on Saskia, who may or may not reciprocate. Did you expect the characters to couple up in the way that they did? Why or why not?
8. Why did Leila's mom want to be the one to tell Leila's dad that Leila is a lesbian?
9. When Saskia tells the school that Leila is a lesbian, the only person who seems upset by the news is Greg. Why do you think that Greg has the reaction that he does? Why is Tess's reaction so different from Greg's?
10. By the end of the novel we learn that most students at Armstead are keeping secrets about themselves. In most cases, when the secret is revealed, it doesn't have the negative impact that the secret-keeper anticipated. Is there ever a case when it's best to keep something about your identity a secret? How do you know when it's a good time to reveal something unexpected about yourself?

