



Bright and Dangerous Objects

Anneliese Mackintosh

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From the depths of the sea to neighboring planets, no destination is off limits in Anneliese Mackintosh's thrilling feminist adventure novel.

Solvig cannot be contained. Since childhood, she's been restless to go farther, try harder, do more. Her boundary testing led her to a career as a diver, working on the floor of the North Sea—a career forty times more dangerous than any job above the waterline. So it is little surprise that, when Solvig hears that a private organization is accepting applications for a civilian team that's set to colonize Mars, she's primed to submit her name.

In addition to her boundless dreams, Solvig lives with James, a very tattooed tattoo artist whose quirks complement hers. They've been together for three years, and James is starting to talk about babies. Solvig is ambivalent about parenthood, though she finds the idea of making a family with James appealing. She tells him “yes” to trying for a child—and says nothing about the fact that she's a finalist for the Mars colony.

Bright and Dangerous Objects plays with contrasts: its language is wispy and alluring, while its possibilities are sobering and sharp. Solvig, who defies death in a needful way, butts against social limitations on a near constant basis, learning that modern womanhood may offer more, but it is still subject to constraints. She loves, but she longs for freedom; she can imagine herself as a mother, but she needs to believe that adventures are still possible postpartum. Even when she mourns, she does so fully: “My whole world is in the palm of my hands. My whole world is a glob of blood, a slice of liver, a butterfly wing. Nothing else matters.”

In the resplendent novel *Bright and Dangerous Objects*, a heroine longs for a one-way ticket to space.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (September / October 2020)

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