



Cari Moses

Judith Tyler Hills

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Judith Tyler Hills's novel *Cari Moses* is an ensemble psychological thriller set in rural England.

In the unforgiving landscape beyond London, sodden, downcast villagers lead their ordinary lives. At their center is Karen, who names the abandoned baby she takes in *Cari Moses*. Disenchanted by life and detached from reality, Karen is unaware of the consequences of her actions, which bring her into the orbit of a motherhood-obsessed serial killer.

The resultant story is told through the shifting perspectives of characters who have either direct or peripheral connections to the killer or Cari. It's a narrative structured like a net, and it draws tighter as the pages unwind. From a maternal nurse to a police officer who's investigating an attempted abduction, these strangers have more in common than they suspect.

Each chapter explores and enlarges the interconnecting stories of this wide cast. Although their experiences are distinct, their voices blend together; the chapter headings are crucial when it comes to identifying whose perspective is being shared. Small clues, as of a misplaced bag or an overheard line of conversation, are sprinkled throughout, resulting in tension.

The book's details are clear and sharp, evoking the cast's daily struggles, from fatigue to thwarted dreams. Leckie, a young homeless woman, exists in survival mode; when she's sick, she holes up and, "like an animal sleeping itself better, [seeks] seclusion, curling up in her sleeping bag until the symptoms" go away. In this fashion, each person's challenges are made immediate and kept close to the surface. While the narration is economical when it comes to people's back stories, it navigates their individual stories well.

The book's tone is chilling, suggesting that evil is a constant presence that's embedded in ordinary life, and that a killer is within reach at every moment. Periodic thrills, including the attempted abduction of a stranger's child, add punch to its lyrical passages, while local slang is used to infuse color into exchanges. Extensive explanations are few, while immersive descriptions of people's immediate landscapes, whether they're walking into hospitals or riding public buses, are frequent.

Unhurried but enticing, *Cari Moses* is an intricate, winding thriller in which the lives of a community of strangers reveal a primal desire for motherhood.

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