

Everything Here Is under Control

Emily Adrian

Blackstone (Jul 28, 2020)

Hardcover \$24.99 (350pp)

978-1-982639-64-8

In Emily Adrian's quirky, resonant novel, *Everything Here Is under Control*, two women resume the intense friendship of their teen years after more than a decade of estrangement and uncertainty.

After giving birth to her first child, Amanda lives in a state of exhaustion, anxiety, and physical discomfort. Though her longtime partner, Gabe, tries to be supportive, he seems removed from the situation and frustrates Amanda with his detachment.

Overwhelmed by these strange, raw emotions, Amanda takes the baby and leaves New York to drive to her hometown—Deering, Ohio—where her mother and her high school best friend, Carrie, still live.

Escaping Deering, with its rich, “smothered” foods and limited political perspectives, had been one of Amanda's goals, but she still misses the town's vast, green backyards, lack of pretense, and even its tornado warning test sirens. And she is in desperate need of help to care for her infant son, Jack, whose tiny, demanding presence terrifies her.

Amanda's relationship with Carrie is complicated and comforting. Theirs is a sisterly bond, though other circumstances, which are introduced with quiet finesse, led to a tangle of issues and involvements. Nonetheless, Amanda and Carrie still feel an innate closeness, “like dogs born in the same litter, programmed to remember each other's scent.”

Amanda's continuing awe of Carrie is clear, and Carrie is indeed impressive: independent, shrewd, and beautiful; a single mother since she was eighteen and a sought-after tattoo artist. As Amanda emerges from her postpartum vulnerability, her own character strengthens. She becomes more confident with Jack and in her relationship with Gabe, and her renewed friendship with Carrie is healthier as well: still bound by the past, but with a better future.

With keen wit and affecting emotion, *Everything Here Is under Control* is a novel about love, family, and motherhood that balances compromises with possibilities.

MEG NOLA (July / August 2020)

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