

I Am Watching

Emma Kavanagh

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When Isla Bell is a teenager, she discovers three dead bodies propped against a wall during her morning run. In Emma Kavanagh's *I Am Watching*, there is a lone survivor of the attacks: one of the victims' teenage brothers, Ramsay, has a head injury but is otherwise unharmed. Fortunately, the killer, Heath McGowan, is identified and arrested shortly after the murders occur, and the small town of Briganton begins its long process of recovery.

Twenty years later, Isla is a criminal psychologist, now married to Ramsay. Unable to let go of what she saw, she jumps at the chance to interview McGowan and scan his brain. She believes she's identified what predisposes murderers to kill and believes defining McGowan will finally help her regain a sense of safety and stability.

But then, more victims are found against the wall.

I Am Watching is a taut thriller that twists and turns until the very end. Told from various perspectives—including Isla's, police investigators', and Ramsay's—the story unfolds at numerous angles, resulting in a complex, complete picture of a small town shattered by tragedy. The Briganton atmosphere looms over the novel, almost a character on its own. Clues are perfectly timed, creating plenty of tension without ever revealing too much.

The main characters are scarred by their pasts, yet they diligently try to make a better future for themselves and their community. They are flawed but easy to empathize with. Through their interactions, new depths are explored and individual connections to the past and present murders are revealed.

As it hurtles toward a shocking conclusion, *I Am Watching* reaches a fever pitch of unexpected realizations, bringing forth the question of how well you can ever really know another person. Smart, fierce, and absorbing, this is a novel that begs to be read deep into the night.

ANGELA MCQUAY (March/April 2019)

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