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Waking Up Eve

Darci Knowles
Unknown $15.95 (324pp)
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Like a cross between Daphne du Maurier and V. C. Andrews, Darci Knowles whips up an intriguing tale of repressed memory, hidden identity, suspicion-induced family members, and kind strangers that find themselves in the middle of trouble. It sounds like a familiar mix, but the author adds new twists by introducing new age philosophy and political intrigue.

Eve is the only daughter of a rich and powerful figure in a small town, and as part of her daily life, she stops at her psychiatrist's office before going into her law office. Rather than chat about her sorrows and tribulations, however, she undergoes a treatment that causes her memory to be muddied and pushed down, leaving her as passionless and innocent as a young child. Early in the novel it's revealed that the psychiatrist and her father are planning on continuing this unethical and harmful treatment indefinitely. When Eve has feelings of attraction toward a client, the treatment and the motives behind it gradually become exposed, and Eve is caught between those who want to save her and her overbearing father.

Knowles unravels the story line gradually, allowing Eve to blossom and stand out among the ensemble of characters. Her writing is sometimes as straightforward as a detective novel, quickening the pace when needed; and sometimes akin to a moody romantic novel in which the characters stand looking out at rainy landscapes. A passage in which Eve is waiting for her psychiatrist starts out with a dreamy quality: "Except for the singing robins and the swish of Peter's careful footsteps on the thick oriental carpet, the room was hushed. This room swallowed sounds and muffled them. Eve lay down on cue, enfolded by the quiet."

It's a combination that works well, especially with her gift for believable dialogue and ability to describe a complicated scene in a few sentences. The awakening of Eve is an interesting journey.
ELIZABETH MILLARD (December 16, 2000)

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