

High Strung



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出版者:Washington Square Press

出版时间:2004-7

装帧:Paperback

isbn:9780743470193

Years after running away from America and the mysteries surrounding her mother's death, Merle Winslow winds up editing trash novels at X Publishing in West London and shackled up with a drug-addled diplomat's son. Shaky and defeated, she heads home to Florence, Ohio, with no money and no idea of what to do next. Meanwhile, Merle discovers that her brother Olin, rich and successful from marketing Marilyn Monroe meat thermometers, is poised to embark on a dubious performance art career, and that her stodgy father might be falling in love after years of living alone. As Merle looks for clues about her mother's life she uncovers disturbing new truths about her own romantic failings. She suspects she's never really escaped her old life; she's simply dragged it along with her, "like an outfit that was ill-fitting and too revealing, but impossible to get rid of." But with the help of her tough-talking grandmother, free-spirited brother, and a pilot who nurses a failing plane, Merle finally begins to face her family's checkered past and her own uncertain future. In vivid cinematic prose, High Strung balances humor on the rough edge of loss, regret, and wounded family love. Merle is an unforgettable creation in an exhilarating debut novel from a young writer to watch.

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