



Almost Eden

Anita Horrocks

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It is the hot prairie summer of her twelfth year and Elsie is at a crossroads. Her beloved mother who is mentally ill has been hospitalized, and Elsie thinks that the breakdown is all her fault. Mental illness is simply not discussed in Elsie's close-knit Mennonite community and she is rudderless. Nothing Elsie does seems to go right: there's no pleasing her bossy older sister; she forgets to feed the cat, so her father gives it away; she's supposed to watch out for her younger sister, but she lets her come home alone from the swimming pool (despite the lurking menace of a weird stranger around town); and she bargains with God to make her mother well again — to no evident avail.

Elsie's conversations with God, her struggle to overcome guilt, and her honest desire to prove herself are laced with a wicked wit and clarity of vision. *Almost Eden* is a beautiful portrait of a town, a family, and a young woman willing to challenge the things that don't make sense to her, and to fix the things that don't seem right.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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