



Hold Still: A Novel

Lynn Steger Strong

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“Lynn Steger Strong paints a portrait of familial love that is real, visceral, and all the more dangerous for being unconditional.” ?Alexandra Kleeman, author of *You Too Can Have a Body Like Mine*

Maya Taylor, an intense, gifted English professor, has a tendency to retreat when she is needed most, escaping on long morning runs or finding comfort in the well-thumbed novels in her library. But when she sends her daughter Ellie to Florida to care for a friend’s child, it’s with the best of intentions. Twenty and spiraling, Ellie is lost in a fog of drugs and men?desperately in need of a fresh start. Her life with this attractive new family in Florida begins well, but Ellie is crippled by the fear that she’ll only disappoint those around her . . . again. And in the sprawling hours of one humid afternoon, she finally makes a mistake she cannot take back.

The accident hangs over both mother and daughter as they try to repair their fractured relationship and find a way to transcend not only their differences but also their more startling similarities. In Maya’s and Ellie’s echoing narratives, Lynn Steger Strong creates a searing, unforgettable portrait of familial love and the tender heartache of motherhood?from the sweltering Florida heat to the bone-cold of New York in January. Churning toward one fateful day in two separate timelines, *Hold Still* is a story of before and after and the impossible distance in between.

Heralding the arrival of a profoundly moving new talent, this novel marks a taut and propulsive debut that “builds to a perfect crescendo, an ending that is both surprising and true” (Marcy Dermansky). *Hold Still* explores the weight of culpability and the depths and limits of a mother’s love.

“Hold Still is an unblinking examination of family, the mother-child bond, and the storms it must withstand. Lynn Strong pulls no punches in considering not just how deep, but also how misguided a mother’s love can be.”?Elisa Albert, author of *After Birth*

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