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Packer, Ann. The Dive from Clausen's Pier

Published in 2002, Ann Packer?s book deals with young adults transitioning from college to adult life. In Packer?s story, the group has been together since high school. Consisting of Mike and Carrie, the high school sweethearts, and their mutual friends, the group remains in their hometown of Madison, WI to attend the University. Since graduation they?ve seen some changes including getting jobs in their fields, and the engagement of Mike and Carrie. Still, they have their rituals, one of which is driving to Clausen?s Lake each Memorial day and diving off the pier into the cold water. This time, the day doesn?t go as planned and a diving accident leaves Mike paralyzed and his future uncertain.

Most of the book deals with Carrie struggling to figure out her future and what she owes Mike. She alternates between wanting to run away and wanting to remain by his side and eventually she bolts for New York City where she finds a very possible and very different future awaits. Packer is careful to keep Carrie realistic. She?s young, inexperienced, and has her selfish moments. She?s neither sinner nor martyr, and is naturally confused as she considers what could be and what might have been.

This book got excellent reviews, and won an Alex Award which is awarded to books written for adults that have special appeal to young adults. I highly recommend it for both teen and adult readers of women?s psychological fiction. There?s also a film version that you?ll find playing on the Lifetime Network.

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