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**I
INVITED
HER
IN**

and she took everything...

ADELE PARKS

THE SUNDAY TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

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Adele Parks



ONE PLACE. MANY STORIES

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PRAISE FOR ADELE PARKS

‘Gripping, twisty and heartbreaking, this standout story is a triumph’ Isabelle
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Woman

‘Twisty, unputdownable and utterly engrossing’
Jenny Colgan

‘The secrets, lies and suspense kept me engrossed’
Daily Mail

‘Convincing, sensitive and rich with emotional intimacy’
Daily Express

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Prologue

Becoming a Single Mum, for the first time, is like someone has just thrown you out of a car that's travelling at high speed on a motorway. Door flung open, a gush of blustery, sharp wind, a mean, forceful shove and there you are, face down on the tarmac in the middle of the fast lane. You scramble to your feet, cling to your offspring. Both of you are in utter peril.

The thing is, you do not have time to be outraged at the fact you've just been shoved out of the car – a car you'd assumed would comfortably, carefully take you on your life's journey to a destination unspecified but simply and certainly lovely. A future that included a nice home and the active participation of the father — however, no time to dwell. You're too busy dodging the on-coming traffic.

The cars zoom past – swoosh, whizz, honk – you duck, dive, dart, and dodge. A small Fiat speeds by and the driver winds down the window to shout, 'Children of single parents are more likely to do badly at school.' You do not have a crystal ball that would show you the day he picks up his stonking GCSE results, so you panic. Next, a big family saloon (which is basically insulting because it is a big *family* saloon) drives by. The parents lean out of their windows and yell, in unison, 'Children who grow up without fathers are more likely to end up unemployed, homeless, or imprisoned, you know?' You kiss your baby's head and promise him you won't let that happen. Vehicle after vehicle speeds by. People are crying out about a new government report that insists kids from lone-parent families are more at risk of poverty, poor health, depression. Other drivers add that they're also more likely to run away from home, drink, and smoke heavily. Then, finally, a juggernaut of a vehicle tries to flatten you. A paunchy, smug fella wearing a vest top and tattoos toots on his horn then screams, 'Kids from lone-parent