



Dancing on the Edge of Sanity

Ana Clare Rouds

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I am going crazy, I thought. I need to sleep, but I can't. This is awful. This is the worst feeling in the world. Is that John? Did I just hear John? Hypersensitive to every sound in the house, I wasn't sure if I was truly hearing John or simply hearing other noises. He had been crying for so long throughout the day, it was as if the memory of the cry were still ringing in my ears, even if he wasn't crying at that moment. I didn't want to hear any noises from within the house, the house that had begun to feel as small and constricting as a shoebox. Ana Clare Rouds, author of the gripping memoir *Dancing On the Edge of Sanity*, shares her painfully honest journey through the dark labyrinth of postpartum depression and anxiety. Readers will find a friend in Rouds as they explore this engaging tale of early motherhood, maternal mental health and recovery. Rouds has wonderful friends, a supportive family, and a healthy newborn boy. Everything around her indicates that life should be just about perfect. However, soon after the birth of her son, Rouds begins to experience severe panic attacks, anxiety, and obsessive thoughts. These rarely discussed symptoms of a postpartum mood disorder lead her to seek help at her local hospital's emergency room, where her symptoms are grossly misunderstood. While some information about postpartum mood and anxiety disorders has become more available to new mothers, and to those who are in the position of supporting their loved ones who may be affected by it, each case of this disorder can showcase vastly different symptoms. Sleep deprived, insecure about her mothering skills, and troubled by her increasingly intrusive obsessive thoughts, Rouds struggles to find answers about her condition. As her descent into depression, anxiety, and confusion intensifies, Rouds must fight to regain the life she once had. Told with Rouds' trademark warmth and humor, the story explores the complexities of early motherhood while also revealing the utter lack of understanding about, and resources for, the variety of postpartum mood disorders that exist. Through the help of her family and friends, anti-depressants, and outside resources, she is once again able to bring herself back from the edge of sanity. *Dancing On the Edge of Sanity* is a must read for anyone who has experienced, or who knows someone who has experienced, the crushing effects of postpartum depression, anxiety or a related illness. As knowledge about this condition increases, it is important to realize that not all postpartum mood disorders are alike. Rouds authentic memoir is an important contribution towards understanding this vital area of women's health, an area that is often clouded in much unnecessary misinterpretation. This heartfelt, riveting memoir is ultimately one of hope, an uplifting tale of a mother's love that should not be missed. "This memoir is a poignant narrative of the 'lived experience' of postpartum obsessive-compulsive disorder. It speaks to the resilient soul of its author and to the intense need for continuous education for healthcare providers and women to the unique aspects of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders. Continuing to raise the level of awareness will hopefully let pregnant and postpartum women know that they 'are not alone.'" -Jeanne Watson Driscoll "Rouds raises awareness by sharing her very intimate journey with postpartum depression and anxiety. This book is an important reminder that misinformed healthcare practitioners and family members alike can interfere with the recovery process. This is why it is vital that good, accurate information about perinatal mood disorders is available. Rouds brings attention to this important issue." -Karen Kleiman "In her debut memoir, Rouds tells the story of her struggle with postpartum mood disorder... The strength of Rouds' account is her straightforward, honest voice... This energetic memoir has useful knowledge at its heart." -Kirkus Review

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