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Beyond The High Blue Air: A Memoir



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Synopsis

Ã¢â ¬Å“Like The Year of Magical Thinking by Joan Didion, Beyond the High Blue Air is a spare, sharp memoir about the speed with which a comfortable existence can be blighted by grief.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Bee Wilson, The Sunday Times Lu SpinneyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s memoir Beyond the High Blue Air is at once a portrait of the fearlessness of familial love and the profound dilemma posed by modern medicine. When SpinneyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s twenty-nine-year-old son, Miles, flies up on his snowboard, Ã¢â ¬Å“he knows he is not in control as he is taken by force up the ramp,Ã¢â ¬Â• writes his mother, Ã¢â ¬Å“skewing sideways as his board clips the edge and then he is hurtling, spinning up, up into the free blue sky ahead . . .Ã¢â ¬Â• He lands hard on the ice and falls into a coma. Thus begins the erratic lossÃ¢â ¬â • Miles first in a coma and then trapped in a fluctuating state of minimal consciousnessÃ¢â ¬â •that unravels over the next five years. Spinney, her husband, and three other children put their lives on hold to tend to Miles at various hospitals and finally in a care home. They hold out hope that he will be returned to them. With blunt precision, Spinney chronicles her familyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s intimate experience. And yet, as personal a book as this is, it offers universal meaning, presenting an eloquent and piercing description of what it feels to witness an intimate become unfamiliar. This is a story about ambiguous loss: the disappearance of someone who is still there. Three quarters of the way through, however, SpinneyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s story takes a turn. The family and, to the degree that he can communicate, Miles himself come to view ending his life as the only possible release from the prison of his body and mind. Spinney, cutting her last thread of hope, wishes for her son to die. And yet, even as she allows this difficult revelation to settle, she learns that this is not her decision to make. Because Miles is diagnosed as being in a Ã¢â ¬Å“minimally conscious stateÃ¢â ¬Â• rather than a Ã¢â ¬Å“persistent vegetative state,Ã¢â ¬Â• there is no legal way to bring about his death, a bewildering paradox that Spinney navigates with compassion and wisdom. This profound book encompasses the lyrical revelations of a memoir like Jean-Dominique BaubyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s The Diving Bell and the Butterfly as well as the crucial medical and moral insights of a book such as Atul GawandeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Being Mortal.

Book Information

File Size: 1025 KB

Print Length: 272 pages

Publisher: Catapult (August 15, 2017)

Publication Date: August 15, 2017

Language: English

ASIN: B01MXXLISH

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #53,652 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #16 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Parenting & Relationships > Family Relationships > Parent & Adult Child #44 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Death & Grief #46 inÃ Â Books > Parenting & Relationships > Family Relationships > Parent & Adult Child

Customer Reviews

A mother’s love and battle for her son...from the early days after he suffered a devastating injury, and on through the years as hope becomes determination to help her son achieve peace. The story is so poignant, the writing so lyrical, that Miles becomes every mother’s son. I will not forget this amazing young man and his remarkable family as they take a journey no family should ever have to endure.

A mother’s stirring tribute to her beloved son, Miles. An evocative, haunting, and deeply loving exploration of the frustrations and pain wrought by TBI (traumatic brain injury); it’s effects on both Miles and his family, and the process they must all move through toward a conclusion that is not only acceptable, but in it’s way, welcomed. Measured, eloquent, and sorrowful, this book celebrates the magnificence of both life and death.

An honest and heart wrenching read, Lu Spinney’s account of her son’s life after suffering a traumatic head injury from a skiing accident is a reminder of how a single incident can change not just one person’s life instantly but a family’s. Beautifully written the reader discovers how Lu’s intelligent, healthy and determined eldest son Miles is left immobile and in a minimal state of consciousness after his tragic accident. A compelling and emotional read Lu Spinney has created a worthy memoir for her gifted son that shows the unwavering love a mother has for her son.

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