



Especially to Those Who Suffer: A Memoir of Truths and Miracles

Julija Rudolf

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Especially to Those Who Suffer is a hopeful memoir about healing and overcoming trauma through therapy and spirituality.

Covering pain but also hope, Julija Rudolf's memoir *Especially to Those Who Suffer* is about the power of faith, therapy, and hypnosis.

Rudolf spent most of her life struggling with unexplainable, overwhelming fear. This manifested in her aversion to conflict, in her shaking hands whenever someone watched her, and in a nicotine addiction that she couldn't shake for decades. Eventually diagnosed with both bipolar disorder and schizophrenia—conditions that worsened her already severe phobias—she began medical treatment and hypnosis therapy, taking her back to the origin of her fears. Those fears started to retreat.

Impactful journal entries make Rudolf's sorrow and fear tangible, as well as her determination to heal. Spiritual themes abound: hypnotic regression is a key element in Rudolf's recovery, and she has multiple visions of the Virgin Mary, God, and her late father. These visions always appear when she is close to losing all hope, propelling her toward healing. The dogged manner in which she seeks answers through regression therapy and journaling infuses the book, even at its bleakest moments, with hope and strength. Despite her memories being marked by the immense trauma of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, Rudolf is direct in confronting them, hoping to understand her fears and tackle them head-on.

Its language clear and colloquial, the book captures the anguish and mental paralysis that are part and parcel of mental illness. Rudolf is deft at depicting the pain of feeling trapped by her illness, while still being obligated to work a full-time job in often toxic environments. She recalls constant bullying from professional peers and superiors, all of which contributed to her year-long psychotic breakdown.

However, the book's pacing is uneven, with key moments mentioned only in passing, provoking confusion as to their importance. While the book refers to Rudolf's bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, it is unclear about when they were diagnosed and what medical measures were taken to control them, and the absence is jarring. Tenses mix, and as the book jumps between incidents without clear delimitation, its significant conflicts, including Rudolf's husband telling her that he's no longer interested in her, are obscured or left unresolved; in that case, the next time her husband appears, their relationship seems fine again.

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CAROLINA CIUCCI (September 23, 2020)

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