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Autobiography & Memoir

Frozen Teardrop: The Tragedy and Triumph of Figure Skating's 'Queen of Spin'
Lucinda Ruh
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Swiss national Lucinda Ruh was on top of the world when she made an international name for herself in the world of figure skating as the Queen of Spin. Ruh, who is in the Guinness Book of World Records for the longest spin on ice, may have been beautiful and happy on the outside, but her new memoir reveals the chilling truth.

For years, Ruh suffered from unexplained illnesses and severe pain that was only compounded by the abominable treatment she received from those whom she trusted. Ruh admits that she never questioned authority and always did what she was told, often with detrimental results.

Her father was primarily absent, traveling the globe for work. When it became clear that Ruh was an extraordinarily talented skater, her mother became her constant companion, traveling with her to Japan, China, Canada, and the United States for different training and skating opportunities.

Readers will no doubt have strong opinions about Ruh's mother's role in her daughter's illness. While Ruh constantly professes love for her mother, she acknowledges that her mother physically and emotionally abused her for years, though she makes many excuses for her. Interestingly, Ruh's mother weighs in at the end of the book with a short but apologetic passage. Ruh also describes how she was mistreated by a number of her coaches, who were only seeking glory by representing her, by teammates, and by the unscrupulous politics of figure skating, particularly in her home country of Switzerland.

The book is almost painful to read, and the reader can tell that it was painful to write. In a particularly moving passage, Ruh writes,

> *"I was not afraid of fainting and dying. I was afraid of living. I was afraid to be who I was. I was not afraid of being mediocre. I was afraid of having power beyond measure. I was afraid I would erupt and destroy everything around me with my strength. I was*

so used to living a life of feeling powerless that I did not know what would happen if I did wake up my powers."

In a way, the book is a coming-of-age story. Many factors contributed to Ruh's delayed onset of puberty as well as her delayed adulthood and dependence on her mother. Throughout the book, Ruh says she is attempting not only to come to terms with major mistakes but also to help others live their truth.

While Ruh's writing can at times be florid, it is forgivable in a story that is as fascinating as it is horrifying, as shocking as it is compelling.

Hilary Daninhirsch