



Mad House: Growing Up in the Shadow of Mentally Ill Siblings

Clea Simon

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In classic books such as *Girl, Interrupted* and *When Rabbit Howls*, the mentally ill depict their own harrowing worlds. In **Mad House** we have an account of the devastating effects of mental illness on the lives of those who share their world—the healthy siblings of those afflicted. Clea Simon was shattered when her older brother, Daniel, a freshman at Harvard, began hearing voices, making it impossible for him to function. He later committed suicide. Schizophrenia next claimed her sister, Katherine, who has moved from one institution to another after refusing any help from her family. Simon, who spoke with hundreds of other siblings of the mentally ill and with experts in the field, confronts the issues healthy siblings face, from guilt (Why do I deserve to be okay?) to fear (Will illness claim me or my children next?) to anger at being neglected by parents overwhelmed by the needs of the mad child. Part memoir, part practical guide, **Mad House** is a compelling and compassionate book destined to help many people come to terms, as Simon has, with the unique pain of living with a sibling's mental illness.

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