



A Wild Ride Up the Cupboards: A Novel

Ann Bauer

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Edward is nearly four years old when he begins his slow, painful withdrawal from the world. For those who love him -- his father, Jack, and mother, Rachel, pregnant with their third child -- the transformation of their happy, intelligent firstborn into a sleepless, feral stranger is a devastating blow, one that brings enormous ramifications not just for Edward and his parents, but also for their younger son, Matt, and soon-to-be-born daughter.

A Wild Ride Up the Cupboards follows this nuclear family as Rachel and Jack try to come to terms with their son's descent into autism (or something like it) and struggle to sustain their marriage under this unanticipated strain. Threaded through the novel, too, is the story of Rachel's deceased uncle Mickey, who may have suffered from a similar disorder at a time when parenting, pediatrics, and ideas about child psychology were entirely different from today's. As Rachel delves into her own family history in search of answers, flashbacks to Mickey's life afford moving insight into the nature of childhood disorders and the coping mechanisms of different families.

A spellbinding, brilliantly nuanced portrait of a marriage and a family, this compelling drama also poses provocative, real-life questions: How much should a mother sacrifice for her children? How much intervention is too much? When do parents' ambitions for their offspring become counterproductive, even destructive? Who should decide what is best for the child? Is it ever worth sacrificing a marriage for a child?

A Wild Ride Up the Cupboards is a carefully crafted, compulsively readable, emotional page-turner that reveals a remarkable gift for language and storytelling and enormous insight into the complexities and dilemmas of domestic life and parenthood. It is a striking exploration of love, faith, and sacrifice that will resonate with readers everywhere.

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