



The Locked Ward: Memoirs of a Psychiatric Orderly

Dennis O'Donnell

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Shocking, moving, and controversial, this is an extraordinary account, by an orderly, of life behind the locked doors of a secure psychiatric ward

Dennis O'Donnell started work as an orderly in the Intensive Psychiatric Care Unit of a large hospital in Scotland in 2000. For seven years, he cared for patients with serious mental disorders. In his daily life he encountered fear, violence, and despair, but also a considerable amount of care and compassion. Recounting the stories of the patients he worked with, and those of his colleagues on the ward, he examines: the different major mental disorders and their symptoms and manifestations; various methods of treatment including medication, therapy, and conversation; how religion, sex, wealth, health, and drugs can bear influence on mental health; and the prevailing attitudes to psychiatric illness—the authorities, the professionals, and society. What emerges is a document of humanity and humor, a remarkable memoir that sheds light on a world that still remains largely unknown and hugely feared.



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