

Description

Book Review: Closure by Becky Read and Nadine Edwards

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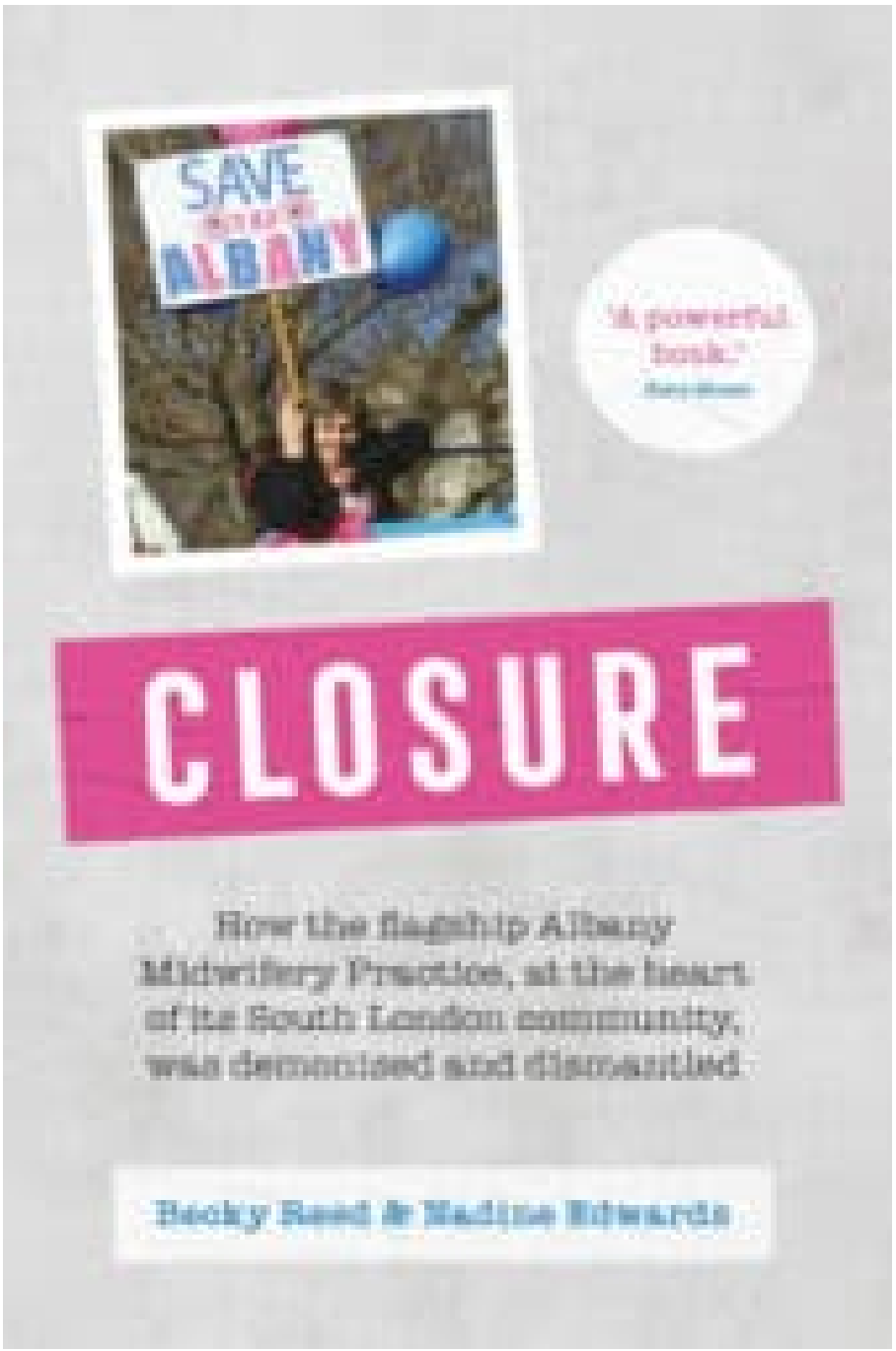

Closure is a story that has been told before. Like other witch- hunt narratives, it is heart-breaking reading. The story of the Albany Midwifery Practice in England, with its continuity of care model and unparalleled outcomes, will be familiar to many. You may remember the shock of its closure and the subsequent protests. It is only now that we can be privy to the whole story, thanks to the midwives who, despite grief and despair, carefully stored away every email, letter and report.

And it is that treasure trove of primary evidence that made Closure possible. Many of these communications are quoted verbatim in the book, but don't think for a minute that this makes it a dry read. The story unfolds with polished aplomb; each section written from a different perspective, with many contributing voices adding context, evidence and emotion. If you believe in the power of relationship-based care and human rights in childbirth, if you care about midwives having true job satisfaction and the support of their colleagues working in a true community, this story will rip your heart out. Because at its core this is an ancient story of empowered women being burned at the stake. Seen through the lens of patriarchy, it is not surprising the uppity women of The Albany had to be silenced.

Despite the damage done by the powers that be at King's College Hospital maternity service in London, they have not

won. This book is testament to the tenacity of Reed and Edwards who refused to be silenced and to the Albany mums and midwives who spoke truth to power. I hope Closure brings some element of closure for all the Albany midwives whose lives were turned upside down. For the rest of us, living through the unravelling of so much that is good about NHS maternity services, this history is a salient lesson for today. **TPM**

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1. Book reviews
2. News & Views
3. TPM Articles
4. TPM Journal

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1. 2023
2. book review
3. midwifery

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