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Mortal Rituals

By Matt J. Rossano

Columbia Univers. Press Aug 2013, 2013. Buch. Condition: Neu. Neuware - On December 21, 1972, sixteen young survivors of Uruguayan Air Force Flight 571 were rescued after spending ten weeks stranded at the crash site of their plane, high in the remote Andes Mountains. The incident made international headlines and spawned several bestselling books, fueled partially by the fact that the young men had resorted to cannibalism to survive. Matt Rossano examines this story from an evolutionary perspective, weaving together findings and ideas from anthropology, psychology, religion, and cognitive science. He ties their story to our story, seeing in the mortal rituals of this ten-week struggle a reflection of the very essence of what it means to be human. During their ordeal, the Andes' survivors (re)created a primitive yet complex social system embodying the efficiency and flexibility necessary to meet the challenges of a harsh environment. They broke 'civilized' taboos to fend off starvation and abandoned 'civilized' modes of thinking to maintain social unity and personal sanity. These young men established daily routines and rituals that perpetuated their survival while sustaining their morale. Finally, through the power of ritual, they accessed the mind's ability to endure severe emotional and physical...

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