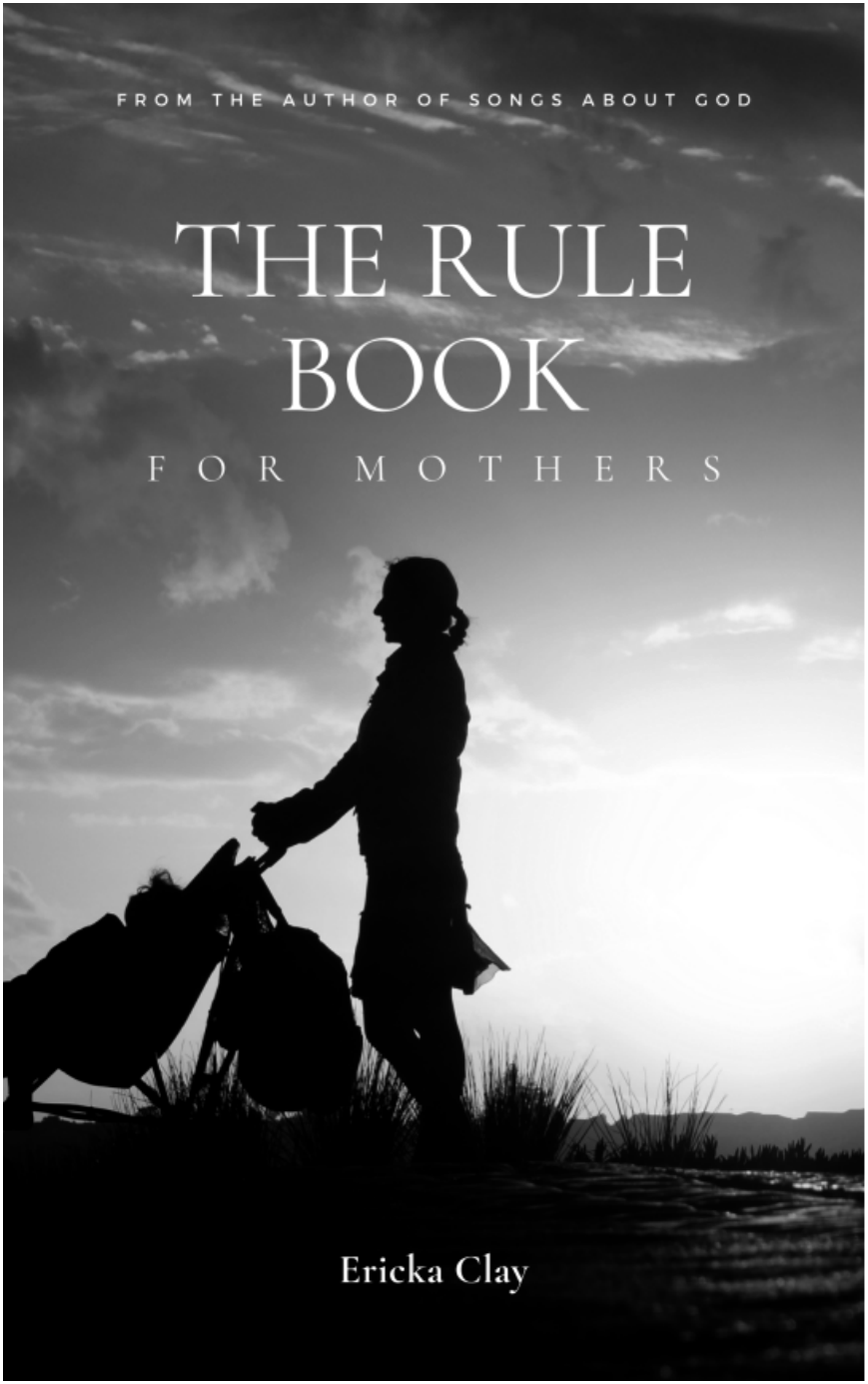
FROM THE AUTHOR OF SONGS ABOUT GOD
THE RULE BOOK
FOR MOTHERS
Ericka Clay

The Rule Book for Mothers

Ericka Clay

Published by Ericka Clay, 2023.

This is a creative work. Similarities to real people, places, or events are entirely coincidental.

THE RULE BOOK FOR MOTHERS
First edition. January 20, 2023.
Copyright © 2023 Ericka Clay.

Written by Ericka Clay.
Cover design by Ericka Clay.

SEEDLINGS

The worst thing about anyone is being a child
and knowing everything about love
and nothing about the loss of it.
So, when you're two people
and the little things fester
like the way his eye twitches
when words skip through your teeth,
you think about the tomorrow,
how this is just a blip.
How love plants deep like
little seedlings in the ridge of your spine.
But you don't even think
about watering them
with tears.

LOSS

We are all
That little girl
Whose mother
Dies,
And the loss
Is potted,
Another
Good plant
Set in the sun
But won't
Turn its face
To drink.

LITTLE BUD

It's budded
and blooms
at the most
unfortunate time.
And when people
look at you,
they think of church
breaking your soul
and society tangling
its fingers in your hair
and men kissing at your mouth
and women scouring you off.
But you, little bud,
aren't evil. It's just
an evil thing that's
birthed, stretching your gut,
and we all have those things
that threaten to break through
and swallow
what
we
are.

THE GARDENER

Sweet,
Simple,
Little girls
That love You
But we all know
That's like planting
And watering a lie.
A strong stalk,
Born sky high,
And I've been
Made to cut it down,
Unroot what's rooted
And to hide my heart
When she comes
To hate me.

DAUGHTER

When we were on
The bridge
I saw our lives
Like a flash bulb
Light
And God's
Great hands nowhere
To be seen.
Your scream was
Set to the tune of
My angry fingers
Seeking revenge on
A wheel that could
Rip us infinite,
Scraps of metal
And concrete
Like a beautiful cosmos
Built by no maker.
"Take her away" was
Written on my mind.
But I ask you now,
Who else was there
Elbowing out that inky
Phantom
And its silk-strung voice
And the bursting nebula
That lit my pupils
Like your smile
Lights my heart?

SUPER GIRL

She flew
Into all forms,
A pecking order
That started with
My
Mother's coiled heart
And ended in her unraveled
One.
And all my time has been
Spent braiding
And knotting
What's come
Loose
And only
When I look down
Do I realize
The world has
Removed
My fingers.

OR

Here's what will happen:
You'll hate me for a lifetime
Or
A moment.
And I will visit you at the church
where you work
or in the prison
near my house.
And you will love God
or learn the world according to Satan.
And maybe you will have children
or know the ways of an untrained womb.
And maybe you'll be happy on your own accord
or shear every inch of yourself to wear another woman.
And you will remember all my sins
and stack them up against me.
Or you will love me
and let memory rot
and forget the day I screamed
until both our throats ran dry.

THE RULE BOOK FOR MOTHERS

Look,
this is the way
a mother should
be,
hair combed
and the teeth
slick from the minutes
it takes to brush
them
and showered skin
that smells
like apples.
And she's never hurried
almost lethargic
in her sanguine
fashion.
The skin that smells
like apples
and the teeth
slick
to the touch
should never
have the harsh
scent of glass bottles,
old man's Jack,
V is for vodka
or the ever-telling
red wine stain.
No, mothers
should be like

the time
I saw that woman
with the baby shoved
snug against one hip
And a happy face
clutching the other
And she looked
like a painting,
breathing,
walking,
talking,
through
Target.
And loving
those children
Like love
never comes
at a cost.
Like love's
a drug you drink
until it stains
your teeth.

WHEN WE GO TO THE BUTCHER

When we go to the butcher,
I'll hold your hand so hard
my memory will seep
through your pores
and you'll be looking
down on your little eyes
and little nose
and two lips glued
tight into a cherub's smile
and you will hear my heart
at your ear
and the way it says, "I'm sorry."
When we go to the butcher
your father will be sitting
at my right and at my left,
an empty place where fear
resides, and if I could
be a something better.
we'd never be riding
in the first place.
When we go to the butcher
remember all those times,
but not just the good.
Remember me, a little
monster,
a fly off the handle,
hellish time of a girl
turned woman
turned something
turned and pickled

with fear's empty space.
But when we go to the butcher
also know about my brave
little heart.
How courage is what lights
it a-thump.
And alights yours, too,
with my hopelessly
hopeful prayers.

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below