



Confessions of a Bi-Polar Mardi-Gras Queen

Marie Etienne

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In her second memoir, *Confessions of a Bi-Polar Mardi-Gras Queen*, Marie Etienne tells the chilling story of mental illness inherited by generations of her family. Her grandmother spent more than thirty years in a mental facility, a brother committed suicide, and another died under questionable circumstances. Her parents, both on medication for mental illness, were emotionally unavailable during her childhood, and in her forties, Marie herself was diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

The author tells stories of feeling unworthy and unloved, of discovering dark secrets in her family's past, and of times when she suspected that she, like her parents and many of her eight siblings, could be affected by mental illness. But she also tells stories of finding strength, coming to terms, and overcoming her past.

After a divorce and the death of her parents, Etienne discovered that she could temper her dramatic mood swings and grief with art classes, then a writing class. With writing, she found the outlet that would prove most meaningful for her. Etienne's story is touching. "In conjunction with therapy, writing about my personal struggles helped me to unclog the pipes and flush all the bad stuff away," she writes. *Confessions*, written in short essays which provide glimpses into the author's life, is revealing and enjoyable.

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