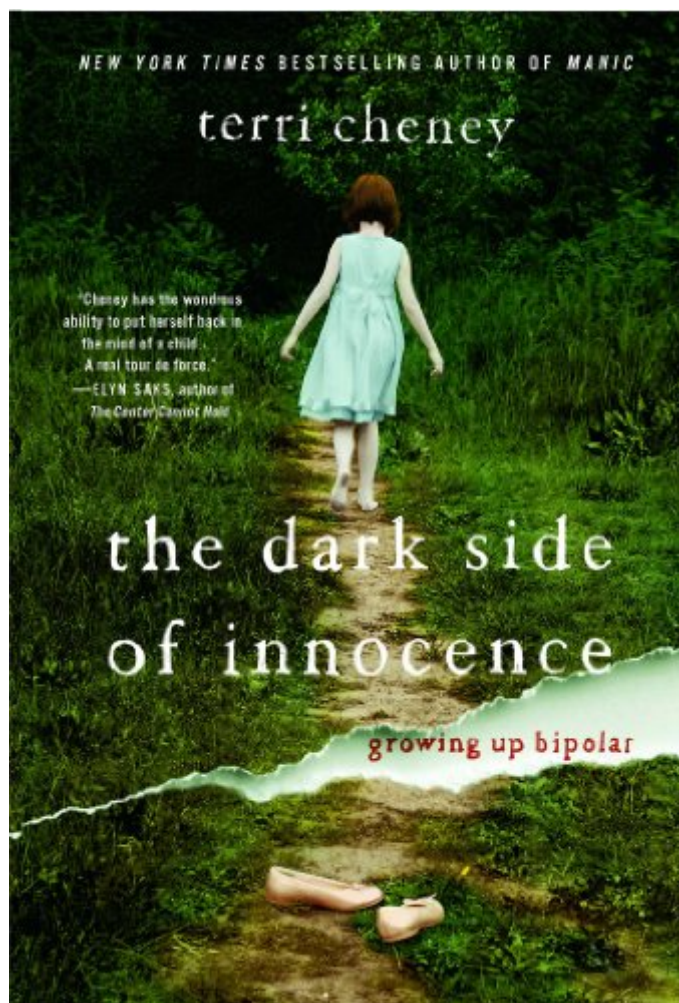


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# The Dark Side Of Innocence: Growing Up Bipolar



## Synopsis

“Killing yourself at any age is a seriously tricky business. But when I was seven, the odds felt insurmountable. As a young girl, Terri Cheney’s life looked perfect. Her family lived in a lovely house in a tranquil Los Angeles suburb where the geraniums never once failed to bloom. She was pretty and smart, an academic superstar and popular cheerleader whose father doted on her. But starting with her first suicide attempt at age seven, it was clear that her inner world was anything but perfect. “There’s something wrong with her,” her mother would whisper, her voice quivering on the edge of despair. And indeed there was, although no one had a name for it yet. Hostage to her roller-coaster moods, Terri veered from easy A-pluses to total paralysis, from bouts of obsessive hypersexuality to episodes of alcoholic abandon that nearly cost her her life. Throughout Terri’s chaotic early years, nothing was certain from day to day except this: whatever was so deeply wrong with her must be kept a secret. Thirty years later, Terri wrote *Manic*, a harrowing memoir that revealed her adult struggle with bipolar disorder. It became an instant New York Times bestseller and received passionate critical acclaim. But it didn’t tell the whole story. The mystery of Terri’s childhood remained untouched – too troubling, too painful to fathom. *The Dark Side of Innocence* explores those tumultuous formative years, finally shattering Terri’s well-guarded secret. With vivid intensity, it blends a pitch-perfect childlike voice with keen adult observation. *The Dark Side of Innocence* provides a heart-rending, groundbreaking insider’s look into the fascinating and frightening world of childhood bipolar disorder, an illness that affects a staggering one million children. This poignant and compelling story of Terri’s journey from disaster and despair to hope and survival will serve as an informative and eye-opening tale for those who would trust a flawless facade.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a retired mental-health therapist and observer-of-life, I have known many people who often struggle alone and silently with having a bipolar diagnosis (and many who don't even realize it yet). Even in our so-called age of enlightenment, having a mental-illness diagnosis (which is really a physical diagnosis of the brain chemistry, which is still not broadly understood) can cause one to be an "outcast" in our society. Telling the average person that you live with "bipolar" may cause friends or acquaintances to leave or judge with ignorance. Thankfully, there is more accurate press coverage (and well-done movies) educating people nowadays, and because it is more prevalent than commonly-believed, more people are gaining first-hand knowledge about it. What remains less understood is that it also causes physical, emotional and psychological pain that often feels very mysterious to those who have it. I have worked with and known many intelligent, kind, thoughtful, deep individuals with bipolar. There are several "variations" of a bipolar diagnosis and most are very treatable with proper medications. I am grateful that Terri Cheney has written about children with bipolar illness. It is more common than people think and mostly misunderstood and wrongly-diagnosed. It is confusing to the child and often to the families, until it is understood and proper treatment followed. It is not a "life sentence." My hope is that more people continue to become properly educated and get to know these individuals for who they are. Yes, some have behavioral and relational challenges, but who among us doesn't?

An amazing story, it is astounding what people go through with this condition. I couldn't stop reading. I wish Terri the best and thank you for sharing your story. It is important for all of us to understand that people who suffer with bipolar disorders are not "choosing" to act the way they do but are at the mercy of something they can't control. I pray that science and medicine will catch up soon with the causes of these disorders and come up with better solutions than drugs that may or

may not help and certainly come with their own set of problems.

I can only judge by the author's own words. I have no personal experience with this disease. However, based on the writing here, I too might be bipolar. Honestly, other than the fork incident, she could be telling my story. I felt like she wasn't describing anything all that unusual in terms of family dynamics, sibling rivalry, teenage angst in the time period that she grew up in. Ms. Cheney's writing style is superb, but I felt the story to be inauthentic. I'm curious as to how those suffering from this illness related to this book.

In "The Dark Side of Innocence," bestselling author Terri Cheney draws us into the tumultuous inner world of a bipolar child. Like her first book, "Manic," "The Dark Side of Innocence" is an important resource for those interested in understanding manic-depression. Also like Manic, the power of this book ultimately derives from the beauty and honesty of the writing. Cheney's imagery sparkles. Cheney writes that the monster (which she calls the "Black Beast") that controlled her moods left "little room for hope or joy or any emotion lighter than sorrow." At other times, the Black Beast brought "Disneyland days," when "one minute the prick of a tag on the back of her sweater would make [her] writhe and scream, and the next she'd "be roaring at laughter at [her] own private jokes." Cheney's mastery of the language lets the reader feel on an emotional level the gut-wrenching, hidden turmoil that she experienced as a child. Because of the remarkable writing, "The Dark Side of Innocence" is more than an essential resource for those seeking to understand the disease (and it certainly is that). It's also an outstanding work of literature. '

I really, really, REALLY enjoyed this autobiography. I felt like I learned a lot about bi-polar disorder, particularly in children and young adults. I run an advice blog on tumblr (EMP Advice) and I have used quotes and information from this book several times when replying to questions. I enjoyed this memoir so much that I purchased Terri Cheney's other book, which was also quite good (though I preferred this one).

Would definitely recommend this book on your reading list if you have daily dealings with a bipolar child. Explains many of the odd behaviors exhibited by bipolar people such as ritualistic practices they are compelled to repeat to set their world right once a mania has made it go helter skelter once again and then they have to try and deal with the aftermath it creates. Everything is cause and effect, but these three words have a profoundly different meaning in a bipolar person's world.

A riveting account of a seemingly impossible childhood; of undiagnosed and then misdiagnosed mental illness, trapped in a brilliant mind. You will fall in love with this troubled child; you will admire and take joy in her victories if you read *Manic*, the book Terry Cheney wrote preceding *The Dark Side of Innocence*. Adrienne

I enjoyed the book very much! I understood about bi-polar disorder in adults, never realizing it can terrorize children. I can't believe what seemed an obvious problem to me - was never acknowledged by her parents. I read the book in a day - it was very enthralling! No bitterness, no judgement - it was the best!

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