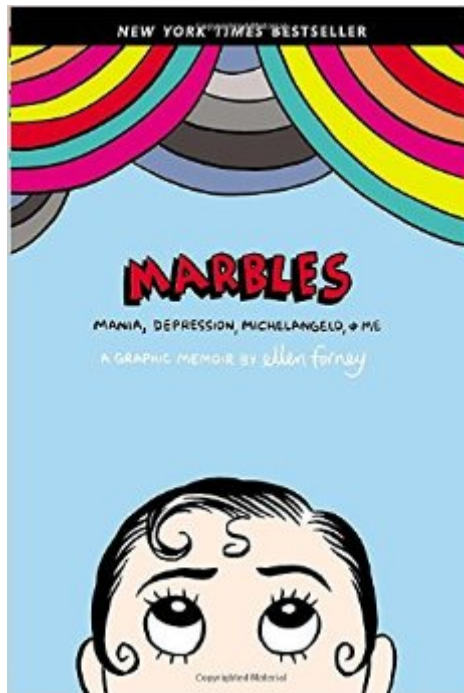


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Marbles: Mania, Depression, Michelangelo, And Me: A Graphic Memoir



Synopsis

Cartoonist Ellen Forney explores the relationship between "crazy" and "creative" in this graphic memoir of her bipolar disorder, woven with stories of famous bipolar artists and writers. Shortly before her thirtieth birthday, Forney was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Flagrantly manic and terrified that medications would cause her to lose creativity, she began a years-long struggle to find mental stability while retaining her passions and creativity. Searching to make sense of the popular concept of the crazy artist, she finds inspiration from the lives and work of other artists and writers who suffered from mood disorders, including Vincent van Gogh, Georgia O'Keeffe, William Styron, and Sylvia Plath. She also researches the clinical aspects of bipolar disorder, including the strengths and limitations of various treatments and medications, and what studies tell us about the conundrum of attempting to "cure" an otherwise brilliant mind. Darkly funny and intensely personal, Forney's memoir provides a visceral glimpse into the effects of a mood disorder on an artist's work, as she shares her own story through bold black-and-white images and evocative prose.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (142 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Ellen Forney's graphic novel *Marbles: Mania, Depression, Michelangelo, and Me* is one of those that instantly appealed to me. I enjoy graphic novels, and for some reason, I really enjoy memoirs in the comic format (I don't particularly like memoirs in other formats). I don't know much about mental illness, so I thought reading about it from the POV of someone who deals with it on a daily basis

would be a good way for me to learn more. The book is about a bipolar woman struggling to be normal. She is diagnosed with bipolar disorder right around the time she reaches age 30 and shares a very intimate story about her struggles with it. Forney is an artist, and a lot of the medication prescribed for bipolar disorder can inhibit creativity. Forney doesn't want to lose her edge or her inspiration, so she isn't sure that she wants to be medicated. But at the same time, she hates the ups and downs of manic-depression and wants very much to get healthy. Forney does a lot of research into artists that struggled with mental illness, pointing out that many of the world's great artists struggled with some sort of disease while working at their art. Edvard Munch's *The Scream* is an iconic painting that could be a visual representation of a horrible hallucination. Sylvia Plath's writing was heavily influenced by her stay in a mental hospital. Etc., etc. Forney wonders if she will lose her edge by getting better. This is an intensely personal memoir, sometimes uncomfortably so. Forney tells her story in simple, black and white drawings (though the art she shares from her personal journal is much more detailed and complex), but the events themselves are not at all simple. Bipolar disorder has many, many symptoms.

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