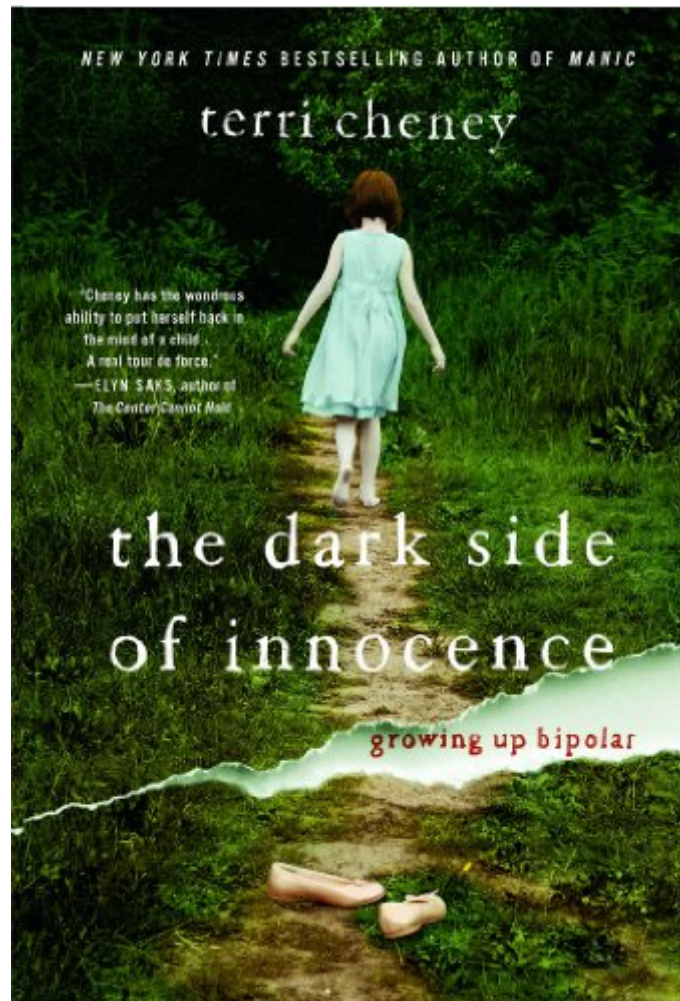


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# The Dark Side Of Innocence: Growing Up Bipolar



## 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

In 2008, Terri Cheney published an honest and moving memoir, *MANIC*, about her life with bipolar disorder. In her introduction to *THE DARK SIDE OF INNOCENCE*, she notes that one of the questions she received most frequently when her first book came out was how old she was when she realized there was something wrong. Though for years she answered "sixteen," she knew that her mental illness manifested much earlier. She came to see that an exploration of her childhood bipolar disorder was an important, if difficult part of her story that needed to be told. *THE DARK SIDE OF INNOCENCE* relates to readers a childhood troubled by mood swings, hypersexuality, intellectual achievement and enslavement to what she calls "the Beast." From an early age, Cheney recalls being at the mercy of a powerful internal force. While it often spurred her to greatness in academics and social success, it also drove her to stab her older brother's hand with a fork over a typical sibling squabble, write morose poetry and contemplate suicide at seven years old. Growing up in sunny suburban southern California in the 1960s and 1970s may have seemed dreamy from the outside, but Cheney's interior life was a nightmarish roller coaster of emotions coupled with dysfunctional family dynamics. At times, the dynamic of her whole family becomes the focal point of the story, and often it is the most interesting component of the book. The members of Cheney's family were clearly divided: her mother and brother on one side, and she and her father on the other. It is hard in her telling to discern if the tension in the house stemmed from her often erratic and dangerous behavior, or if her mental health was just a lightning rod for the problems inherent in her parents' marriage.

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