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Marbles by Ellen Forney

An American cartoonist, named Ellen Forney, authored a graphic memoir in the year 2012, which was entitled as *Marbles*. The author has described her struggle with coming to terms with the diagnosis of bipolar disorder, at the age of thirty years. She has described different aspects of her personality, which were different from the general population around her; however, she only accounted that as the crazy side of an artist. She was of the view that it was her distinguished characteristics which had played an important role in making her who she was. At times, she was highly active, motivated and enthusiastic, however, at other times, she was too lazy to get out of her bed, let alone go out of the house and take part in her routine activities. She has shown that how she became frightened at once, however, accepted herself and started leading life from a different perspective. The graphic memoir by the author may have been the source of shedding light on her struggle with the diagnosis of bipolar disorder; however, she has attempted to create awareness about the psychological health and the importance of embracing the differences, as well as making the effort of changing the things which bother a person.

Ellen Forney has presented her graphic memoir in a very bold, funny and engaging manner. She has tried to uncover different aspects of her personality, in order to shed light on the thoughts and feelings of a bipolar person. The society stigmatizes and stereotypes the people who are identified with any kind of psychological disorder or mental health issue. Therefore, the graphic memoir is the attempt by the author to shun such attitudes and stereotyping of the society, by enabling the affected people to accept their differences. She has advocated her point of view through her own example, as she did not try to manipulate her character by giving it some other name. She has used her own name, in order to depict her struggle (Forney, 4).

Being a bipolar, Ellen thought that she was different from others in multiple ways. She was able to fanaticize the pain of the tattoo needle and enjoyed the process, while that same process was excruciatingly painful for other people. The thing that is even crazier is that she always wanted to be photographed after getting the tattoo, while the other people might be crying due to the intensity of pain. Another crazy thing about her personality was that she used to make up scenarios from literally anything and nothing and was clear in her imagination and creativity. She could romance with a wall, see the concert lights in the drops of dripping water and could cry for hours while resting her face on the bark of a tree. At one moment, she would be really excited about her book launch and make extravagant preparations for it, while at the other movement; she would not want to show her face to any other person. Like any other person, she did not give enough importance to these symptoms, until one day her psychologists told her to complete the test for bipolar disorder and she was astonished to realize that she was hyperactive, overly depress and maniac at times. From that point on, her perspective towards life changed and she struggled for a whole year to accept herself, as well as continue living with it (Forney, 15).

Ellen was really worried about compromising her creativity and passion for her work and she thought that the medication would decrease her creativity and reduce her to nobody. So, she decided to save herself by other means and not depend on the medication. She became skeptical about her creativity and art as well, as she used to think that either it was due to her disorders that she was this much creative or the disorder would impact and snatch her creativity from her. She was in a constant fight with her own baseless thoughts and the fear of being nobody haunted her even more. Then she came to know about famous authors and artists, who had mood disorders and still they were able to make their name in the society. She also realized after studying then in detail that her disorder was an opportunity for her to explore the things from a different angle, which is hidden or invisible for the normal public. The character of Ellen is not sympathetic as she does not feel that people in her immediate surrounding are able to understand her point of view and the graphic memoir is an attempt to give them a look in her mind. The character is drawn as full of energy and enthusiastic person, which sometimes become dull and lose the entire spark. She has changed from introduction to last description as she was skeptical initially, however became confident till the end. The other characters are perfectly used to highlight their difference from Ellen. The portrayal of Ellen is realistic, as well as fresh and surprising; because of the way it has been depicted (Cressman, 9).

The character of Ellen in *Marbles* has been depicted in a beautiful and impressive manner. The author has not hesitated to overlook the personal details about the thoughts, actions and feelings and has utilized the opportunity to make the readers aware that they are not alone, if they are passing through similar experience. The character has been described in a very positive, engaging and interesting manner, which not only provides entertainment but information to the readers.

Works Cited

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