



Title: Loud In The House Of Myself

Author: Stacy Pershall

Description:

Stacy Pershall grew up depressed and too smart for her own good, a deeply strange girl in Prairie Grove, Arkansas, population 1,000, where the prevailing wisdom was that Jesus healed all. From her days as a thirteen-year-old Jesus freak, through a battle with anorexia and bulimia, her first manic episode at 18, and eventual diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder and Borderline Personality Disorder, this spirited and at times mordantly funny memoir chronicles Pershall's journey through hell and her struggle with the mental health care system.

After her 2001 suicide attempt, broadcast live on a webcam, Pershall realized the need to heal her mind and body. She found a revolutionary cure (Dialectical Behavioral Therapy) and a new mood-stabilizing medication. She also met a tattoo artist and discovered the healing power of body modification. By giving over her skin and enduring the physical pain, she learned about the true nature of trust.

Reviews

BUST:

Loud in the House of Myself is a beautifully written sliver of understanding that is frank, self-deprecating, and, at times, funny. This memoir is more than just a tear-jerking page-turner; it's the manifesto of a "strange girl" and could be, for some, a lifeline.

Booklist:

If Pershall's electrifying account is any indication, being inside the head of a person with undiagnosed and untreated borderline personality disorder (BPD) is like a living nightmare. As if the double play of adolescent anorexia and bulimia wasn't enough, this intelligent, high-achieving, and hypersensitive young woman began entertaining bizarre and suicidal thoughts while still in high school. Her deeply religious parents possessed no tools for comprehending the breadth of their daughter's illness. Even as her anorexic behavior improved somewhat due to the efforts of a therapist whom she respected, Pershall's overriding BPD snowballed, overwhelming her with Monty-Pythonesque hallucinations and off-the-chart mood swings. Despite her illness she graduated from college, moved from Arkansas to, ultimately, New York City, and partially supported herself by creating a 24/7-webcam presence, with cameras following her every move throughout her apartment. Following an unsuccessful Worldwide Web-witnessed suicide attempt, Pershall began treatment and has eventually assembled a life that, as long as she is properly medicated, allows her a creative if unconventional lifestyle. This is one whirlwind ride.

Publishers Weekly:

This is a gritty, intimate, and at times very sad story of one young woman's struggle with mental illness.

Martha Stewart's Whole Living Daily:

I recently picked up Stacy Pershall's memoir and could not put it down. Beautifully written and shockingly honest, *Loud in the House of Myself* follows her path from an adolescent outcast in her tiny hometown of Prairie Grove, Arkansas, to an artist in New York City.

San Francisco Book Review:

Art school was full of girls like Stacy Pershall: actresses who never stopped acting, whose hectic lives were a rollercoaster of drama, tears, and food issues. But I'm not sure they were as articulate, smart, and funny as Pershall.

Author Exposure:

Loud in the House of Myself: Memoir of a Strange Girl by Stacy Pershall is one of those rare gems of a memoir that reaches out with brutal honesty about the struggles of living with an either undiagnosed or under diagnosed mental health issue. If you've ever wrestled with anything in your life, even if it's not to the extent of the author, you will find something to identify with in this book. Many times in memoir we can stand next to, in front of, or sometimes even above the narrator. This is not one of those books. This narrator will get inside of you. This voice trying to understand a mental health problem will ring so true you will not be able to put this book down.

There are so many things in *Loud in the House of Myself* that fascinated me. But I think the thing that rang true for me the most, was the bare honesty with which it was told. Pershall did not pretty herself up to write this book. She did not blame everyone around her for her mental health issues. She sat herself smack in the middle of her cutting, her bulimia, and her desperate attempts to self medicate her undiagnosed Borderline Personality Disorder. This to me, but not only this, was one of the most endearing aspects of this book. I didn't want to save her, help her, tell her what she needed to know or what to do; I just simply wanted to take this journey in her shoes, and through her words, to see where it would take her. This is a rare gift in a writer; the ability to pull someone so completely into their story that the reader just wants to hear the writer's voice.

The other thing that I loved about this book is that it isn't pretty. It's strong. It's in your face. It doesn't try to whitewash anything and it's well written. If you have had experiences in your life with people suffering from bulimia or Borderline Personality Disorder you will be able to bring something with you into this journey. If you have never had an experience with someone learning to live their lives while struggling with any type of disorder you won't need anything but this book to understand a little better the frustration and the utter devastation of living your life trying to understand something that grabs a hold of you which you can't control.

Loud in the House of Myself is a memoir that will take you inside Pershall's journey. There is so much more to this book than I can even say here. The language is beautifully crafted. The dark episodes are written so well you will feel them on your skin. In her epilogue Pershall states: "I was the girl in whom most saw nothing and some saw everything (228)." I believe that Pershall has shown us everything in this book. Read it

with an open mind. Read it with an open heart. But more importantly, pass this book on to someone you know who needs to hear the truth.

Nick Flynn, author of *Another Bullshit Night in Suck City*:

Loud in the House of Myself is full of surprise, humor, and insights into the particular cruelties of not fitting into small-town America. Stacy Pershall is living proof that the outcasts among us are ignored or crushed at our own peril, and that even a seemingly broken spirit can find a place.

Marya Hornbacher, author of *Wasted*:

An utterly unique journey down some of the mind's more mysterious byways ... ranges from the shocking to the simply lovely.

Janice Erlbaum, author of *Girlbomb*:

Stacy Pershall has a dazzling way with words and an exceptional capacity for self-awareness and honesty. The insight she provides into her own behavior and the behavior of other hurting girls is tremendously valuable. A knockout.

The Half King:

Taking the reader on a whirlwind journey that is spirited, frightening, and at times mordantly funny, *Loud in the House of Myself* is a searing and ultimately uplifting book about self-discovery. Pershall's story will resonate with young people -- those who have or are struggling with eating disorders or mental illness -- or those simply finding themselves strange among the masses.

Barnes & Noble:

To call it a troubled adolescence doesn't describe the half of Pershall's experience, but this spirited memoir does.

HipsterBookClub.com:

There has been very little mainstream literature written about borderline personality disorder (BPD), but Stacy Pershall illuminates the emotional chaos of this mysterious illness in her funny, touching, and powerful memoir *Loud in the House of Myself*. Pershall's strength and humor will be a clarion call to people everywhere struggling with mental illness.

Pershall writes with an enticing mix of the clinical and the dramatic -- and there is a lot of drama. But never does Pershall seem like a drama queen while she revisits these treacherous territories with readers -- she's very honest about her feelings and her mania and how out of control she was, literally. Pershall tells her story like she's talking to the reader directly, by dropping in occasional second person pronouns, and it makes for a very affecting way to tell the story, as if this extraordinary woman has chosen the reader to tell her story to. Presumably, the reader will be a person like Pershall -- a "strange girl" -- or know someone just like her.

Pershall is a compelling writer, and readers will willingly follow whether she is writing about a crush on her church's youth group leader, or about her struggle with

anorexia. Pershall doesn't treat herself with kid gloves in the more gruesome chapters.

Loud in the House of Myself is the sort of book that works as a memoir and as a study of mental illness. It's a shame that the talented and intelligent Pershall had to struggle for so long with borderline personality disorder and bipolar disorder, but her book will serve to help and soothe others who are suffering, and illuminate mental illnesses for those non-sufferers.

Blogzella on Open Salon:

If you are at all interested in mental health, anorexia, tattoos, mothers & daughters, fathers & daughters, small town life, misfits or memoirs, you should read this book. It reads like a case study, but with better writing and more of a storytelling feel. It's punctuated with humor but this is not a lighthearted book. Pershall's description of her first manic episode is somehow simultaneously dreamlike and realistic, which I think is maybe how it felt to her at the time.

Her descriptions of the things she put herself through -- or that her illness put her through -- will make you cringe just reading about them, so you can imagine how it must have felt to actually live through them. Or barely live through; I don't want to spoil it, but there's an infamous suicide attempt in there, and when you read it you may say, "Oh wow, this is *that* girl!" She's still alive, though, to write and to manage her illness (through behavioral therapy, which seems to be working beautifully) and to find comfort in her own skin.

It's telling that there's a butterfly on the cover of the book. Self-hate once directed the author to both punish herself and try to transform her body into something she could love, by starving it. Now she's still doing the same thing, but with tattoos, which her mother hates but which are at least healthier than starvation. Yes there's pain, yes there's transformation, but now it's toward something beautiful -- a self that she can love.