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These book summary sites contain information about the author, release date, characters, plot, and then move on to the summary. Kiera here recounts her struggle with mental illness, first undiagnosed and indescribable, marked by episodes of self-harming, frantic attempts to avoid abandonment (such as writing a boy a letter in her own blood), alcohol and narcotic abuse, among other things. Then she recounts how she was finally diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder (definition) and her struggles to recover from this difficult mental illness usually caused by a combination of brain chemistry and trauma in childhood. Kiera recounts her experience with the most effective treatment for BPD-Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). She honestly discusses her struggles to encounter and interact with the world and establish relationships, often utilizing online dating websites. Finally she brings us to her final step in the recovery process, her embracing of Buddhism, which much of DBT's therapy techniques are based upon. Review: Many memoirs talk about events in a person's life, but the thing about mental illness, is the person writing the memoir must somehow be able to show her audience what it is to be inside that person who perceives the world in her own unique, albeit messed-up, way. It takes a certain level of brutal honesty with yourself to be able to do so. Kiera achieves this with flying colors here. BPD is an illness that, unless you have encountered it in your own life either by having it yourself or caring deeply for someone who does, is often difficult to clearly describe in a sympathetic manner. Popular culture wants us to believe that these, by and large female, sufferers are akin to the femme fatale or the main character in Fatal Attraction. But people do. A visual Kiera uses throughout the book that I believe is quite apt is that a person with BPD is like a person with third degree burns all over their body. A touch that wouldn't hurt a non-injured person makes the burned person makes the burned person with third degree burns all over their body. A touch that wouldn't hurt a non-injured person makes the burned person makes the burned person makes the burned person cry. That's what emotions are like for people with BPD. Kiera depicts what it feels to suffer from BPD with eloquent passages such as these: I am always on the verge of drowning, no matter how hard I work to keep myself afloat. (Location 236-240) In an instant, I shift from a woman to a wild-haired girl kicking furniture to a balled-up weeping child on the bed, begging for a touch. (Location 258-263) Similarly Kiera addresses topics that non-mentally ill people have a difficult time understanding at all, such as self-injury, with simultaneously beautiful and frightening passages. I grew more mindful as the slow rhythm of bloodletting rinsed me with clarity. It wasn't dramatic; it was familiar and reassuring. I was all business, making sure not to press too deep. (Location 779-783) But of course it isn't all dark and full of despair. If it was, this wouldn't be the beautiful memoir that it is. Kiera's writing not only brings understanding to those who don't have BPD and a familiar voice to those who do, but also a sense of hope. I cheerleader who made it and is now rooting for you. Kiera speaks directly to fellow Borderlines in the book, and as she proceeds through er recovery, she repeatedly stops and offers a hand back to those who are behind her, still in the depths of despair. Having BPD isn't all bad. People with BPD are highly artistic, have a great capacity for love. I become determined to fight-for my survival, and for my borderline brothers and sisters. We do not deserve to be trapped in hell. It isn't our fault. (Location 1672-1676) So while it's undeniable that BPD destroys people, it can also open us to an entirely new way of relating to ourselves and the world-both for those of us who have it, and for those who know us. (Location 5030-5033) Ironically, the word "borderline" has become the most perfect expression of my experience-the experience of being in two places at once: disordered and perfect. The Buddha and the borderline are not separate-without one, the other could not emerge. (Location 5051-5060) Combine the insight for people with BPD reading this memoir, and it becomes abundantly clear how powerful it is. Add in the intensely loving encouragement Kiera speaks to her fellow Borderlines, and it enters the category of amazing. I rarely cry in books. I cried throughout this one, but particularly to anyone who has BPD, knows someone with BPD, or works with the mentally ill. It humanizes and empathizes a mental illness that is far too often demonized. 5 out of 5 stars Source: Amazon Buy It

