

Runaway Mind
My Race with Bipolar

by

Maggie Reese

SAMPLE CHAPTER

Chapter 7

DESPERATE

Though I was back at home, I was a basket case. Mom was trying everything she knew to make me happy again. After a few days of crying all day, I got a call from Angie, my sorority sister at Idaho. She said, “Mags, you just got to come back. We all miss you so much. I know we can make things work up here for you. I just know it. Come on, Mag, please!” After her phone call, I thought maybe she was right. Maybe I could make everything work after all. I could go back and fix everything that I had abandoned. I could make it right again. Mom was against that plan, and Dad did not agree at all and said I should wait the semester out and work on getting my strength up. Against their wishes, I packed just my clothes into a few suitcases and headed north to what turned out to be a desperate, dark, and lonely place.

I had hoped that my three weeks away was enough to make it work again in Moscow. I should have listened to Dad and stayed home.

As I walked into the sorority house, I knew I had made an extremely bad mistake. I went upstairs and started unpacking my things. I immediately burst into tears. I tried to stop but couldn't. My sobs got louder and deeper.

“Maggie, you're going to be okay. Trust me,” Angie said. “No, my life is over. I just want to go home and sleep. I need my mom and dad,” I wailed. Some other girls came in to comfort me, but I just waved them away. I went to class, but just stared into space. I could feel myself slipping more and more into an abyss I could not escape. For two days, I just wandered around the campus, hardly talking with anyone, not sleeping, eating hardly at all, and staring into the abyss. It all came to a head when I began to have

thoughts of wandering into a snowstorm and freezing to death. I couldn't get these horrible images out of my head. I called Dad and cried, "I feel like I am going to die. I can't go to school anymore. You were right. I made a mistake by coming back here. Please come get me!"

My poor father. Just a month ago, he drove all the way to Idaho to move me out of there. Two weeks ago, he came down to San Luis Obispo to rescue me. And now, I needed him to get me out of Idaho again. Dad doesn't fly. He actually hates the idea of traveling by airplane. But after my call, he was on a plane in two hours. (I was told it took a lot for him to get on the plane.) When Dad arrived, he gathered me into the rental car and took me over to a Travelodge motel to decide what to do next. He could tell I was in terrible shape and figured he would talk to the school's doctor. The doctor told my father it was not worth the risk to my health for me to try toughing it out for the remainder of the semester. He suggested taking me home and getting me to see a doctor and a counselor. So Dad did just that. We packed my things in boxes and took them to the post office to ship home. After that, we jumped in the car and headed for the airport. I was so upset that I don't remember the trip home.

Amy's View - A Flying Trip with My Dad

One day after Christmas, I got a frantic phone call from my dad. He had just talked to Maggie and was afraid for her. There had been a major winter storm in the Pacific Northwest, and he didn't think he could make the drive to pick her up in time. I asked, "In time for what?" "She wants to die, Amy," my dad said frantically. "I have to get up there now!" One of the perks of my job is free travel, and at that time, free travel for my parents. My dad had never taken me up on my offers because he hated to fly. I checked on the loads, and they were great, plus I had the day off—so I told him I would meet him at the gate. I have flown now for fifteen years and have never had a passenger like my dad that day. During the entire two-hour flight, he gripped the armrests. His face was bright red, he was hunched over, and half the time, his head was between his knees. He wouldn't talk; but since flying was not an ordeal before his tour of Vietnam, I suspected that he was having flashbacks to the TET offensive in 1967. I served him

Bloody Mary's and just tried to be reassuring. I saw such dedication in my father that day. He was tackling an impossibly large fear to take care of his family.

Published by Transmedia Books at Smashwords

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