



Bitter Medicine: A Graphic Memoir of Mental Illness

Olivier Martini, Clem Martini

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In 1976, Ben Martini was diagnosed with schizophrenia. A decade later, his brother Olivier was told he had the same disease. For the past thirty years the Martini family has struggled to comprehend and cope with a devastating illness, frustrated by a health care system lacking in resources and empathy, the imperfect science of medication, and the strain of mental illness on familial relationships.

Throughout it all, Olivier, an accomplished visual artist, drew. His sketches, comic strips, and portraits document his experience with, and capture the essence of, this all too frequently misunderstood disease. In Bitter Medicine, Olivier's poignant graphic narrative runs alongside and communicates with a written account of the past three decades by his younger brother, award-winning author and playwright Clem Martini. The result is a layered family memoir that faces head-on the stigma attached to mental illness.

Shot through with wry humour and unapologetic in its politics, Bitter Medicine is the story of the Martini family, a polemical and poetic portrait of illness, and a vital and timely call for action.



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