



This Fragile Life: A Mother's Story of a Bipolar Son

Charlotte Pierce-Baker

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Charlotte Pierce-Baker did everything right when raising her son, providing not only emotional support but the best education possible. At age twenty-five, he was pursuing a postgraduate degree and seemingly in control of his life. She never imagined her high-achieving son would wind up handcuffed, dirty, and in jail.

The moving story of an African American family facing the challenge of bipolar disorder, *This Fragile Life* provides insight into mental disorders as well as family dynamics. Pierce-Baker traces the evolution of her son's illness and, in looking back, realizes she mistook warning signs for typical child and teen behavior. Hospitalizations, calls in the night, alcohol and drug relapses, pleas for money, and continuous disputes, her son's journey was long, arduous, and almost fatal. *This Fragile Life* weaves a fascinating story of mental illness, race, family, the drive of African Americans to succeed, and a mother's love for her son.

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