

### Short Synopsis

The suicide of her father hits Evonne Agnello hard, but when her brother follows suit four years later, she wonders if fate will send her along the same path. With sensitivity, Evonne explores mental illness from both sides—within the mind of the sufferer and of those watching the one suffering—and sends hope for all. She shows that depression is highly treatable and manageable and need not poison your life. One can emerge from the depths of despair and find reasons to dance in the sun.

### Long Synopsis

*Shaking Shame from Mental Illness*, by Evonne Agnello, is a message of hope for anyone who has suffered from trauma or depression or known someone who has.

The main characters are siblings Curt and Evonne who grow up in rural Nebraska and whose parents own the weekly newspaper. Curt's successful career as a political consultant in Boston is suddenly halted by his involuntary commitment to a psych ward at age thirty-three. After two weeks, he is released, becomes homeless, and spends the next twenty years drifting between rationality and mental illness—mania, depression and paranoia.

The suicide of her father hits Evonne hard, but when her brother follows suit four years later, she wonders if fate will send her along the same path. After her brother's death, Evonne seeks answers to why he took his life and if there was any truth to his life-long claim that he'd been framed—that his committal was a conspiracy. To settle her soul, she exhumes his life by reading his letters and writing. New details are also revealed by interviews with his doctors and friends.

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Writing plays a strong role in Evonne's cathartic work as she trudges through mental muck to find peace. Her journey includes remarkable experiences, some spiritual, others whimsical. Insights are gained from a theatrical play, unusual experiences with birds, camping on the Olympic Peninsula, powerful dreams and an orange moonset on Puget Sound.