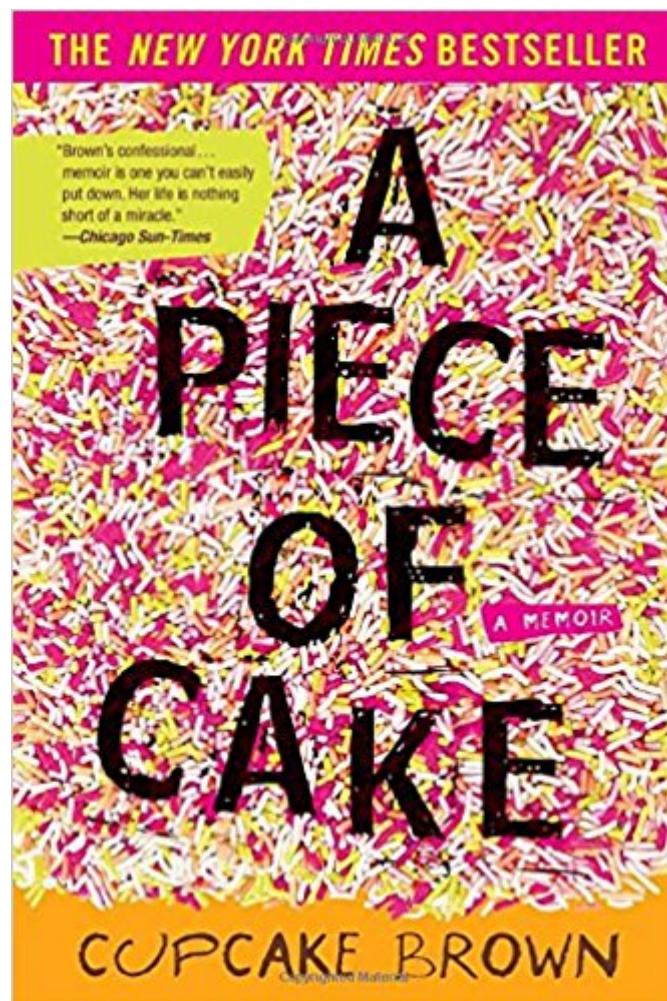


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A Piece Of Cake: A Memoir



Synopsis

There are shelves of memoirs about overcoming the death of a parent, childhood abuse, rape, drug addiction, miscarriage, alcoholism, hustling, gangbanging, near-death injuries, drug dealing, prostitution, or homelessness. Cupcake Brown survived all these things before she'd even turned twenty. And that's when things got interesting... You have before you the strange, heart-wrenching, and exhilarating tale of a woman named Cupcake. It begins as the story of a girl orphaned twice over, once by the death of her mother and then again by a child welfare system that separated her from her stepfather and put her into the hands of an epically sadistic foster parent. But there comes a point in her preteen years—maybe it's the night she first tries to run away and is exposed to drugs, alcohol, and sex all at once—when Cupcake's story shifts from a tear-jerking tragedy to a dark comic blues opera. As Cupcake's troubles grow, so do her voice and spirit. Her gut-punch sense of humor and eye for the absurd, along with her outsized will, carry her through a fateful series of events that could easily have left her dead. Young Cupcake learned to survive by turning tricks, downing hard liquor, partying like a rock star, and ingesting every drug she could find while hitchhiking up and down the California coast. She stumbled into gangbanging, drug dealing, hustling, prostitution, theft, and, eventually, the best scam of all: a series of 9-to-5 jobs. But Cupcake's unlikely tour through the cubicle world was paralleled by a quickening descent into the nightmare of crack cocaine use, till she eventually found herself living behind a Dumpster. Astonishingly, she turned it around. With the help of a cobbled together family of eccentric fellow addicts and "angels"—a series of friends and strangers who came to her aid at pivotal moments—she slowly transformed her life from the inside out. A Piece of Cake is unlike any memoir you'll ever read. Moving and almost transgressive in its frankness, it is a relentlessly gripping tale of a resilient spirit who took on the worst of contemporary urban life and survived it with a furious wit and unyielding determination. Cupcake Brown is a dynamic and utterly original storyteller who will guide you on the most satisfying, startlingly funny, and genuinely affecting tour through hell you'll ever take.

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Cupcake Brown (that's her real name) was 11 in 1976 when her mother died. Custody of Brown and her brother was given to a stranger—their birth father—who only wanted their social security checks. He then left them with an abusive foster mother who encouraged her nephew to rape Brown repeatedly. Brown got better and better at running away. A prostitute taught her to drink, smoke marijuana and charge for sex. Her next foster father traded her LSD and cocaine for oral sex. Eventually she went to live with a great-aunt in South Central L.A., where she joined a gang. Almost 16, having barely survived a shooting, she decided to quit gangbanging. Drugs were her new best friends. A boyfriend taught her to freebase, but then there was crack, which was easier. Before long she was a "trash-can junkie," taking anything and everything. It wasn't until she woke up behind a Dumpster one morning, half-dressed and more than half-dead, that she admitted she needed help. Brown conveys this all in gritty detail, and her struggle to come clean and develop her potential—she's now an attorney with a leading California firm and a motivational speaker—ends her story on a high note. Booksellers, watch out—Cupcake's gonna sell like hotcakes. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Cupcake (La'Vette) Brown went from the relative security of life in a working-class neighborhood of San Diego to hardship and uncertainty when, at the age of 11, her mother died. Her estranged biological father lost interest when an expected insurance payout didn't materialize, and Cupcake and her brother were left with a merciless foster mother and her abusive son. Unable to take the mistreatment, Cupcake drifted into a life of prostitution, drug addiction, gang affiliation, stealing, homelessness, and any available means of survival. Her salvation comes in an unlikely group of fellow addicts who encourage her to change. Brown takes the same fortitude it took to survive the streets and uses it to become a lawyer. Her story of survival and triumph is incredible and often

rough. Readers who like gritty, urban nonfiction will enjoy this book. Vanessa BushCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

I thought this book was engaging and well-written. Although it is difficult to read about the things that Cupcake went through as a child I feel it is important to expose yourself to this type of information in order to maintain empathy for those around you. As a former social worker, I was taken back to my days as a child abuse investigator and the frustrations that I had with the system. I would like to say that it has improved a lot since the 70's and 80's but much of what Cupcake experienced still goes on. Hopefully reading this book will help others empathize with those in the foster care system, or products of it, and maybe spark some to advocate for change or become foster parents themselves. I would like to see an epilogue that updates what Cupcake has been doing with her life and her law degree.

One of the best memoirs I've ever read and certainly the most inspirational one. Incredibly well written, full of great insights and wisdom, it shows that a person can really overcome ANY obstacle in life. Thank you for sharing your story Cupcake, your honesty and wisdom will help more people than you'll ever know :)

The first half of the book kept me interested in reading on, but the second half drags. I love reading and normally finish every book that I start, but I just couldn't with this one. I put this book down 2/3 of the way finished and I have actually read 3 other books while this one sits unfinished. Sad. :-/

This was so good and so inspirational. I kept forgetting this was a memoir as I was reading it. It's hard to believe one person could go through so much and come out the other side and survive much less succeed.

One of those books I find I can't put down. Some of the stuff can be hard to read because of the painful experiences described but I always want to read on to see how she overcomes each tragic situation

Very good read! Her story is quite heavy and can be difficult to read about as it was for me (simply because of what she had to go thru) but I kept on reading and was inspired. What a testimony!

It was a very interesting story. The saddest part is the whole lack of love she received during the second half of her childhood, but rather abuse and cruelty. You can totally understand the path she goes down. Although the ending is somewhat predictable - in that she wrote the book - you do believe she had some inherent characteristics that helped her get to a place of recovery. The writing is not at all great literature, rather a reflection of her limited education. It does seem exaggerated in places, but for someone who has not suffered from any addictions to drugs or alcohol, it is an eye-opener into how people can so easily get sucked into drug abuse.

This is a very sad, and mostly depressing memoir. The horrors that "Cup" endured were painful to read. The book is a little long and not very well written. But I guess the quality of the writing is not the point of this book. Having read a lot of books written by substance abusers I found the last third of the book a bit "been there/read that." However, her story is very inspirational and has its uplifting moments. To have gone through what she went through and come out the other side - doing what she's doing now - is truly miraculous. Keep some kleenex nearby.

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