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BE HERE WHEN IT HAPPENS

*Prediction
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PARROTS

A NATURAL HISTORY



John Sparks and Tony Soper

There is nothing subtle about parrots. They advertise themselves with spectacularly vivid colors and ear-splitting shrieks. They display outsized hooked beaks, flap their wings noisily when flying and, on the ground, waddle and lurch from foot to foot as though drunk. They are endearing creatures, stirring our affections like other popular birds such as owls and penguins.

Parrots are primarily birds of the tropical rain forests. They have been formed by evolution for breaking seeds in the jungle canopy, although some species have adapted and spread into diverse climates, from the arid Australian outback to the sub-Antarctic regions of South America. Parrots have also become involved with people; for nearly 4,000 years they have been valued as pets, as a source of ornamental plumage and, by some, as food. Parrots were among the natural treasures brought back from the tropics by early European explorers — a flock may have led Columbus to land in 1492. Both Australia and South America were first referred to as “the regions of parrots” (discovery, unfortunately, led to extinction for many species).

Parrots covers, in layperson's language, the natural as well as the social history of the more than 330 species of Psittaciformes. It examines the basic evolutionary history, biology and behavior of a bird that is a masterpiece of animal design and whose private life is fascinating.

—from the publisher



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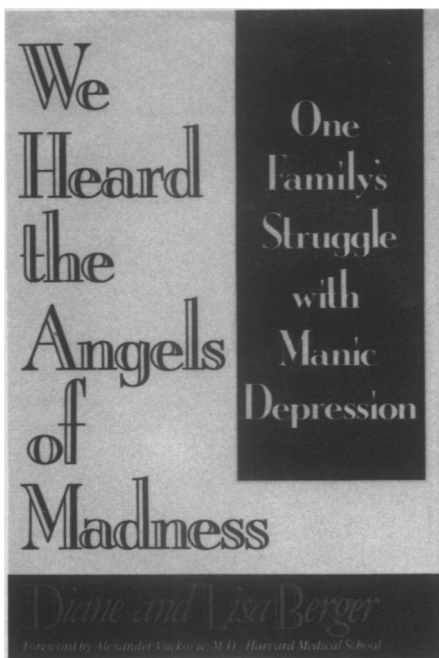
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When 18-year-old Mark returned home from his first semester at college, his family thought he was on drugs. In fact, he was suffering from manic depression, a devastating mental illness that affects millions of Americans and their loved ones.

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