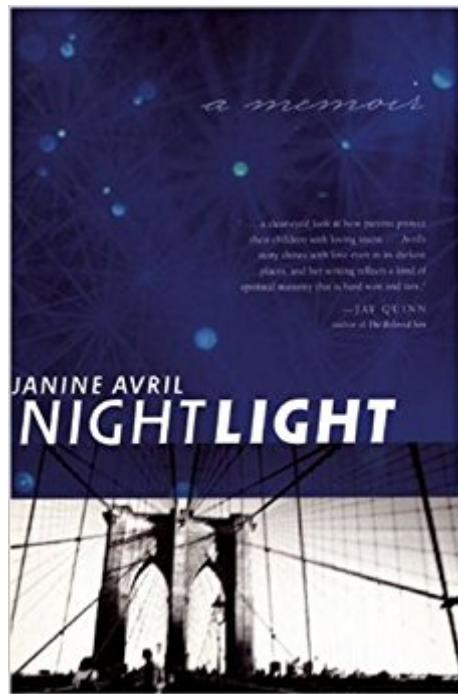


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Nightlight: A Memoir



Synopsis

A spare and beautiful memoir of family secrets and its consequences. While in her twenties, Janine Avril learned a shocking family secret, one that set her on a deeply personal journey into her past. Her earliest memory was of her mother complaining about a bizarre pain in her ankle, one she linked to a ski accident she'd been in as a young girl. When Janine was twelve, growing up in the wealthy and predominantly Jewish suburb of Roslyn, New York, her mother was diagnosed with a deadly cancer and died three years later. While a junior at Cornell University, Janine learned that her father, a popular French chef and entrepreneur, was sick with full-blown AIDS. It was nearly five years later when Janine received an unexpected phone call from her uncle, forcing her to re-evaluate her childhood. Inspired to understand as much as she could about her parents, she finally discovers a powerful link between her father and herself, and her past becomes illuminated like the nightlight that once protected her from the darkness of her youth. Janine Avril teaches high school English and has taught college writing at Brooklyn College and New York City College of Technology. Janine is the founder and host of Girlsalon, a forum for lesbian/queer writers to showcase their talents. She has been published in the Los Angeles Times Magazine, Velvetpark Magazine, and Topic Magazine for her piece "Eavesdropping" and featured in Time Out New York, Gay City News and www.lesbiannation.com. Janine's Web sites are www.janinesays.com and www.girlsalon.org.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Janine Avril teaches high school English and has taught college writing at Brooklyn College and

New York City College of Technology. She has been published in The Los Angeles Times Magazine, Velvet Park Magazine, and Topic magazine for her piece 'Eavesdro

I didn't receive the book until nov. 3rd well after it's release date, but the media reviews were just too enthusiastic for me to not buy it. I read the whole thing in less than 24 hours and took hour naps, when the rest of the world was a sleep, to finish it. Janine wrote about thoughts identifiable during those times of tragedy and crisis. The innocence of childhood colliding with maturity of a not yet adult. I ran through the gamut of emotions wondering where the trails would lead in her discovery. All loose ends were so conscientiously tied up in an ending totally unexpected. She even addressed possible stigmatizing of herself as a child of parents dead from AIDS. It's real, it's raw, it's irrational and rational at the same time.

With Avril's debut comes sincerity, tragedy, confusion, disgust, and strength in literary form. Her story --which seems hard to swallow as her actual life-- promises to shock and inspire, as she navigates through the past and present to find solace within the dysfunction of her family and corresponding upbringing. Avril writes with ease and straightforwardness, thereby balancing out the tension and complexity of her experiences. The alternating structure of the narrative allows the reader to be as confused and infuriated as the author as she discovers the truth behind the lies. Avril's work here redefines the concept of coming-of-age, for she is forced to grow up too fast and under circumstances that are unimaginable. Bravo to this new young author, and please keep your work coming!

It is Avril's questioning personality and her persistent pursuit of the truth, which drives *Nightlight* from the protected innocence of childhood to the disturbing discoveries of adulthood. Avril's narration is honest and without judgment, and her voice is clear throughout. The pain of losing her mom to a rare form of cancer and the anger towards her father are expressed beautifully. The challenging attitude of young adulthood also comes alive on the page. Avril's writing is crisp and at times, wise beyond her years. She has strength for dialogue, letting the characters tell their own stories. Janine Avril has made an admirable literary debut. She brings to light the dark truths that hide in the shadows of childhood with eloquence and courage. Her story shines even when she is faced with death, depression, and doubt.

Like the other reviewers, I could not put this book down once I started reading it. I was forced to

because I went to a wedding and spent time with family members but found that I was distracted during these interactions because I was fully immersed in Avril's world. She describes her experiences and feelings in such beautiful detail that I felt like I was right there with her. Avril shows the range of intense emotions that come with major loss and the devastation that family secrets can create. Through her strength and resiliency, she opened up these secrets leading to hope and self-healing.

I am an avid reader and have read thousands of books. What I feel makes this book stand out is the ability Avril has to make herself strong and vulnerable at the same time. She has a likeable voice and the reader finds themselves wishing the book would never end. I read this book in one day, even missing my stop on the train. Janine's prose is fluid and easy. Her writing style makes the difficult topics she discusses accessible to people. This is a vivid retelling of the struggles of one suburban teenager forced to grow up too quickly. I wholeheartedly recommend this book to anyone who knows how to read.

Although I hadn't planned on it, I read Janine Avril's memoir "Nightlight" in one sitting. Avril's story was so engrossing, I literally could not put the book down until I read the final word. I still can't stop thinking about her harrowing account of the destructive and corrosive effects of family secrets. Avril's memoir is so unflinching and raw that it consumes the reader, but there's also an incredible tenderness to her storytelling that resonates days...and now weeks later. It's an astounding debut, and I'm looking forward to more in the future!

From the first sentence, this poignant and insightful memoir hooks the reader. Told with passion, depth, and humor, the author's straightforwardness and keen insight into herself offer a multi-faceted view into the struggles of a young woman orphaned too soon, her willingness to confront her demons, and her determination to steer her life toward a positive path. Her style balances bluntness with poetic, and her ability to view and analyze from multiple perspectives make *Nightlight* a must read.

Written in a terse, succinct style, this memoir offers a probing account of the unfortunate death of Janine's parents. There were many fine, touching scenes and her family members are painted in vivid, realistic tones. Perhaps most remarkably this memoir managed to be both empathetic and questioning, poetic and direct, sad and playful. In sum an impressive debut from a talented young

writer that tells a very important story...

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