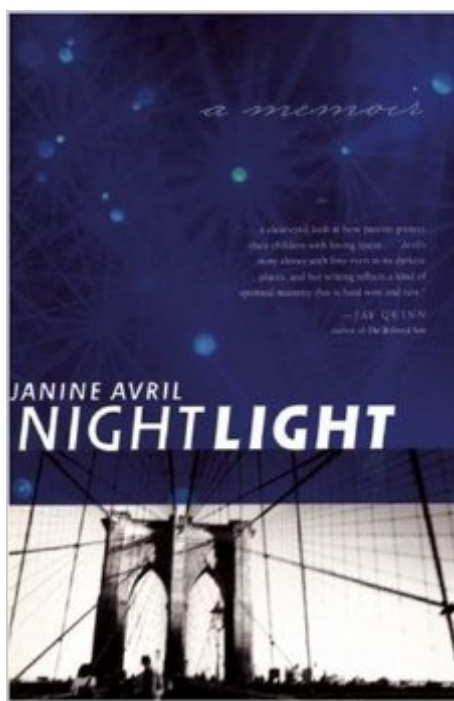


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# Nightlight: A Memoir



## 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](http://www.lesbiannation.com). Janine's Web sites are [www.janinesays.com](http://www.janinesays.com) and [www.girlsalon.org](http://www.girlsalon.org).

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (10 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

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.

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!

I didn't receive the book until Nov. 3rd well after its 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 asleep, 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.

**Nightlight: A Memoir** This book is riveting. I started it and couldn't put it down. Though Avril describes a tale that seems too difficult to bear, she left me with a sense of her hope and strength. Her descriptions of her childhood and adolescence ring true in a way that is often funny and always real. Read this book!

I found this book to be an incredibly honest and touching memoir. It was such a compelling story that

I ended up reading the entire book in one night. It makes you think about all the secrets and lies families hold tight in the name of love. I think this book would make a great movie.

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