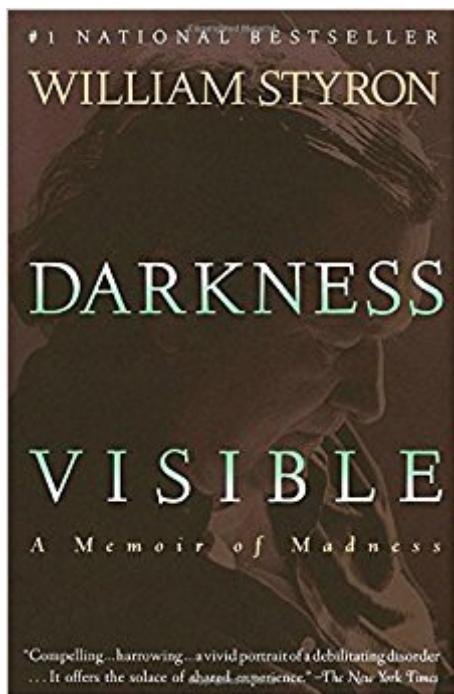


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# Darkness Visible: A Memoir Of Madness



## Synopsis

A work of great personal courage and a literary tour de force, this bestseller is Styron's true account of his descent into a crippling and almost suicidal depression. Styron is perhaps the first writer to convey the full terror of depression's psychic landscape, as well as the illuminating path to recovery.

## Book Information

Paperback: 84 pages

Publisher: Vintage; 1 edition (January 8, 1992)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0679736395

ISBN-13: 978-0679736394

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.3 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 492 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #7,692 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Mental Health > Depression #48 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Authors #359 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Memoirs

## Customer Reviews

In 1985 William Styron fell victim to a crippling and almost suicidal depression, the same illness that took the lives of Randall Jarrell, Primo Levi and Virginia Woolf. That Styron survived his descent into madness is something of a miracle. That he manages to convey its tortuous progression and his eventual recovery with such candor and precision makes *Darkness Visible* a rare feat of literature, a book that will arouse a shock of recognition even in those readers who have been spared the suffering it describes.

A meditation on Styron's ( *Sophie's Choice* ) serious depression at the age of 60, this essay evokes with detachment and dignity the months-long turmoil whose symptoms included the novelist's "dank joylessness," insomnia, physical aversion to alcohol (previously "an invaluable senior partner of my intellect") and his persistent "fantasies of self-destruction" leading to psychiatric treatment and hospitalization. The book's virtues--considerable--are twofold. First, it is a pitiless and chastened record of a nearly fatal human trial far commoner than assumed--and then a literary discourse on the ways and means of our cultural discontents, observed in the figures of poet Randall Jarrell, activist Abbie Hoffman, writer Albert Camus and others. Written by one whose book-learning proves

a match for his misery, the memoir travels fastidiously over perilous ground, receiving intimations of mortality and reckoning delicately with them. Always clarifying his demons, never succumbing to them in his prose, Styron's neat, tight narrative carries the bemusement of the worldly wise suddenly set off-course--and the hard-won wisdom therein. In abridged form, the essay first appeared in *Vanity Fair*. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

An amazing work, from a writer who obviously suffered the tortures of the damned while he was depressed. Reading what William Styron went through was actually heartbreaking. He did not understand it himself, as so many others who have this condition also don't understand WHY it is happening to them. What I loved about this work was that for those who DO want to understand, it is a must-read. Painful in parts, but also honest and straight-forward. Some of the details about those AROUND Styron who did not "get" what was going on brought me to tears. This book is just more proof that so many do not understand depression, or how horrible its effects can be on any given human being. Highly recommend it.

Admittedly this is my first William Styron book and after writing this review, I will be off to purchase more....! He's a beautiful writer, which I guess is why he has won so many awards and is such a world-famous author. This book was recommended to me by a friend and I am so glad that I took her up on it. Best book about depression I have ever read in my life. I appreciate him sharing his personal journey with the world.

William Styron is a great writer. Most readers and movie-goers are familiar with his book 'Sophie's Choice'. Most readers, however, are not familiar with the fact that William Styron had been battling with depression for most of his life. This book is only 80 pages long but it is very deep. It deals with Mr. Styron's battle with depression. It discusses his self-medicating with alcohol. He also uses prescription medication to combat his depression related insomnia (ambien). The sleeping pills made his depression even worse. He faces a despair so profound that he is unable to motivate himself to attend an event where he is to be presented with a prestigious literary award. For anyone who has suffered depression, who has a loved one or friend with depression, or for anyone interested in what depression is, this book will be highly recommended.

Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness is a case study described by William Styron about his

depression. True depression, not the imaginary, this is not confused with a bad mood or autumn doldrums. With this book you will learn more than the definition of mental disorders.

This is a short book with the highlights of his illness. Most of it covered his descent into depression. Not enough of it, in my opinion, was spent on the arduous task of getting back on track. Recovery is a very long, painful process and I don't think he explained in depth enough the process one goes through before one can say, I'm going to get better, no matter what it takes. You don't wake up one day and feel that way. Those of us reading these books on behalf of loved ones going through severe depression need more inspiration about the long road to recovery than this. Overall, though, it was well written and opens up one's eyes to the fact that anyone, anywhere can suffer from depression. It crosses all intellectual, cultural, and economic barriers.

Absolutely, essentially excellent book (to me). Author Styron describes, expertly, the nature and experience of depression as no one can except one who has suffered it. It gave me such a leap forward and a depth of understanding of depression itself in regards to myself that i shall appreciate for the rest of my life. I will reread and share the contents, I'm sure, with everyone who will listen. Its a short book and for some reason I got a Kindle edition at a discount. But it's worth buying the hardcover which I will. If I could find an autographed copy I would be grateful. As it is I'll be grateful I found it.

This book, by the famous writer William Styron, is absolutely essential to those who think no one understands their trauma and pain, and for loved ones wishing to understand this invisible crippling disease. This was the first book I read in which I saw my pain in the writer's words. It is also a beacon of hope, for Styron wrote this years after the fact; he died 21 years later of pneumonia. He largely conquered his depression, which gave me hopes regarding my future.

It is hard to imagine what depression looks and feels like. Even when you experience it, your judgment is sufficiently clouded to prevent articulation of the problem. The ability to do all three of those things is what makes William Styron's brief memoir so remarkable. No one can afford to miss reading this book.

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