

Book Title: His Bright Light: The Story of Nick Traina

Author: Danielle Steel

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Book Review by Barb Berg

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His Bright Light is Danielle Steel's story of the son she lost to manic depression. From the day he was born, Danielle Steel thought her son, Nick, was "incredible." Steel shares the love, guilt, fright, and frustration she felt for her son. Throughout her story, she shows the desperation of a parent and the daily struggles of having a child with a severe psychiatric disorder. The story also shows a young man with a pain raging inside of him from boyhood. This was a pain he didn't know how to handle, and it eventually killed him.

As I read, I felt the author's frustration and helplessness. From Nick's infancy, she felt that there was something different about him, yet she could not find a professional to validate her concerns. Many psychiatrists told her that Nick was "spoiled" and needed more discipline. When the school eventually acknowledged a problem, the family was blamed. Danielle was fiercely protective, offered excuses, and defended Nick throughout his life.

At times, I felt that the family's celebrity status and way of life might have added to Nick's feelings of being overwhelmed and stressed. As a parent, I may have dealt with some of the situations differently. However, I also recognize that it is easy to judge others. Unless I walk in another person's shoes, it is difficult to say how I would react. I was inspired by the way Danielle Steel kept trying to find help for her son. It was a lesson in advocacy for all. The story was a reminder to never give up, no matter how helpless a situation may seem.

His Bright Light is a true story that helped me understand young people who suffer with mental illness. It is definitely one that I would recommend to others. It tells of a mother's love and heartbreak. It provides a true account of an illness that few people want to discuss. *His Bright Light* is "a good read."