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Divided Minds: Twin Sisters And Their Journey Through Schizophrenia



Divided Minds

Twin Sisters and Their
Journey Through
Schizophrenia

Pamela Spiro Wagner and Carolyn S. Spiro, M.D.



Synopsis

Growing up in the fifties, Carolyn Spiro was always in the shadow of her more intellectually dominant and social outgoing twin, Pamela. But as the twins approached adolescence, Pamela began to succumb to schizophrenia, hearing disembodied voices and eventually suffering many breakdowns and hospitalizations. *Divided Minds* is a dual memoir of identical twins, one of whom faces a life sentence of schizophrenia, and the other who becomes a psychiatrist, after entering the spotlight that had for so long been focused on her sister. Told in the alternating voices of the sisters, *Divided Minds* is a heartbreakingly frank account of the far reaches of madness, as well as the depths of ambivalence and love between twins. It is a true and unusually frank story of identical twins with very different identities and wildly different experiences of the world around them.

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. This harrowing but arresting memoir—written in alternating voices by identical twins, now in their 50s—reveals how devastating schizophrenia is to both the victim and those who love her. The condition, which afflicts Pamela (an award-winning poet), can be controlled with drugs and psychiatry, but never cured. When the twins were young, Pamela always outshone Carolyn. But in junior high, Pamela was beset by fears and began a lifelong pattern of cutting and burning herself. After the two entered Brown University, Pamela's decline into paranoia accelerated until she attempted suicide. During the ensuing years of Pamela's frequent breakdowns and hospitalizations, Carolyn became a psychiatrist, married and had two children. Empathetic and

concerned, Carolyn nonetheless conveys her overwhelming frustration, and occasional alienation from her sister, when she is unable to help. Pamela's schizophrenia caused their father to sever his relationship with her. Remarkably descriptive, Pamela's account details how it feels to hear voices and to suspect evil in everyone. Though she struggles with her medications, Pamela remains a committed poet and is now reconciled with her father and close to her twin. 8 pages of b&w photos not seen by PW. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

For many, the idea of being one of identical twins--and possibly the possessor of telepathic communicative powers--sends chills up the spine. Add certifiable schizophrenia to the potent emotional state of identical twinship, and the potential for nightmare magnifies. In their disturbingly powerful memoir, however, the Spiro sisters reveal all this as the stuff of their everyday reality. Explosive encounters with one another, other family members, friends, and medical professionals are recounted with jarring straightforwardness. Alternating recollections about being half of a pair of youngsters growing up in the 1960s highlight the sisters' individual personalities while they relate sisterly connections, competitiveness, and co-option. When Pamela's illness emerged at the beginning of adolescence and subsequently spiraled out of her control, it became a virtual separate entity that taxed the limits of the sisters' relationship and continues to test their endurance. This memoir probably afforded its authors great therapeutic value, but readers struggling with schizophrenic family members may find it too graphic. Donna ChavezCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I was so drawn into this book, I felt as if I knew the sisters. Very well written.

Very compelling and well-written, this book was a easy read, yet disturbing, which I actually love! As a psych major with an affection for all things weird, I connected with this book rather quickly. Highly recommended,

Started reading this book a few weeks ago. It was alright, kind of lagged in the beginning, but got really good and intense in the middle and at the end. Definitely a page turner and finished the whole thing. Very intense story and loved how it was between two separate views of this horrible illness. Makes you realize that it's not just the one person who suffers, but the whole supportive circle of the

person, meaning siblings, parents, nursing staff, etc. In this case, it was her twin. Proves that a twins connection is inseperatable and that they are truely linked together for life. Very good read!

I actually ordered this book only to hold me over while I waited on another to arrive of a similar topic but I found this one to be so much better! It was very easy to get into and I found myself not wanting to put it down.

Incredible to realize how brilliant Pammy is as she describes her episodes of mental illness, even the catatonic state that plagued her. I gave it three stars because the two voice writing was disappointing, reading about her sisters jealousy and self absorption took the focus off the main story, Pammy's increasing dive into the world of schizophrenia. Quite a window into the world of mental illness.

This is a really good book. The ups and downs of Pam Spiro's mental illness (Schizophrenia)can really be felt while reading this book. She has endured so much because of her illness. Her identical twin sister Carolyn "Lynnie," who ironically became a psychiatrist, is Pam's main support, but she also endures so much because of her sister Pam's illness, and you can also feel her pain for her sister and for herself.Coping with a family member that has a mental illness can be unbearable at times, and this is what the sisters demonstrate in this book with the details of their lives. Having someone special in my life newly diagnosed with a mental illness, I can relate to these sisters. Actually, this is the reason I bought this book, and I am glad I did. However, this book is a good read for anyone. It is very interesting, and it is very well-written.

This book was a chronological story of the journey of a girl's suffering with one of the worse cases of a mental health disease and the loving support of her twin sister. It was well written and a must read for anyone who has a desire to learn more about schizophrenia. It is also a story which shows the disruption of the life of people who deal with a loved one with this disease. This book also shows how important the support to persons suffering with mental illness is.

I enjoyed this book. I came away with an inner experience of the struggles of the sisters. And the advances in treatment was clear. Most important was the few people who finally were able to hear the sisters suffering and ask the questions to help her break through her delusions. After 30 plus years, finally someone listened and ask the quewstions with the suffering person in mind. Then they

were above to truly change and begin to move on. The tragedy is all these other trials of treating symptoms and managing the illness, before the human - divine touch was reached. I would hope that we could receive more training in active listening and truly being with the suffering person.

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