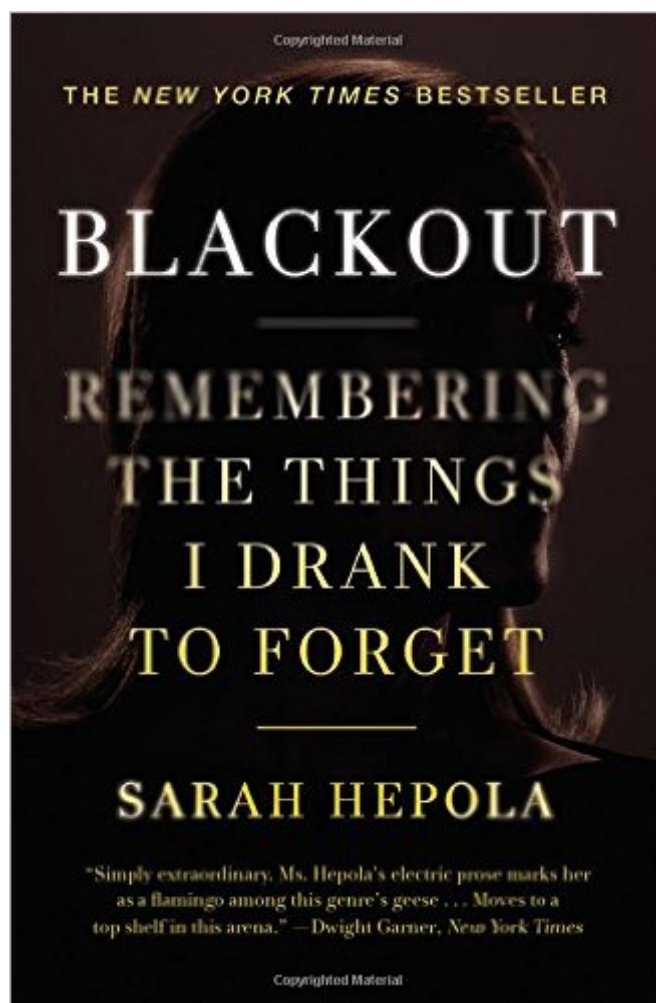


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Blackout: Remembering The Things I Drank To Forget



Synopsis

A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER For Sarah Hepola, alcohol was "the gasoline of all adventure." She spent her evenings at cocktail parties and dark bars where she proudly stayed till last call. Drinking felt like freedom, part of her birthright as a strong, enlightened twenty-first-century woman. But there was a price. She often blacked out, waking up with a blank space where four hours should be. Mornings became detective work on her own life. What did I say last night? How did I meet that guy? She apologized for things she couldn't remember doing, as though she were cleaning up after an evil twin. Publicly, she covered her shame with self-deprecating jokes, and her career flourished, but as the blackouts accumulated, she could no longer avoid a sinking truth. The fuel she thought she needed was draining her spirit instead. A memoir of unblinking honesty and poignant, laugh-out-loud humor, **BLACKOUT** is the story of a woman stumbling into a new kind of adventure--the sober life she never wanted. Shining a light into her blackouts, she discovers the person she buried, as well as the confidence, intimacy, and creativity she once believed came only from a bottle. Her tale will resonate with anyone who has been forced to reinvent or struggled in the face of necessary change. It's about giving up the thing you cherish most--but getting yourself back in return.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As the father of a son in long-term recovery, I have read more than my fair share of books about addiction. In fact, the shelves in my bedroom are filled with addiction-related books. Books about the science of addiction. Twelve-step books. Guides to helping loved ones get clean and sober.

Memoirs written by people in recovery. Etc. (If you're looking for a book on addiction, come on over. Chances are it's on my shelf and you're welcome to borrow it.) Reading about people's struggles with--and triumphs over--addiction is especially fascinating to me. In the world of drug and alcohol abuse, everyone's story is so similar; but at the same time, everyone's story is so unique. When someone is brave enough to put their temporary train wreck of a life down on paper for the world to see, I can't help but get sucked in. Such was the case with *Blackout: Remembering the Things I Drank to Forget* by Sarah Hepola. Hepola started drinking at an early age and fell in love with alcohol. This object of her affection eventually took control of her life, and for years she would drink to the point of blacking out. As you can probably guess from the title, that is the focus of much of this book. And Hepola holds nothing back. "A blackout is the untangling of a mystery. It's detective work on your own life. A blackout is: What happened last night?" In reality, as Hepola explains, a blackout happens when your blood becomes so saturated with alcohol that the part of your brain responsible for long-term memory--the hippocampus--shuts down. Your short-term memory still works, but with the long-term variety on strike, remembering what you did when you were blackout drunk becomes impossible.

Sarah Hepola had me at the first page. By the last page, I felt like we were friends. *Blackout* is a sharply written, brave and thoughtful account of author, Sarah Hepola's journey through shame, self degradation and self destruction during dark and muddled years when she drank to the point of oblivion: blackouts. Blackouts occur when alcohol prevents the brain from recording new memories. Blackouts are not a loss of memory; blackouts occur when there is no memory recorded. It is like the save button in your computer doesn't save. There is a gap. There is nothing. This is the story of the life of an alcoholic woman. Hepola could not imagine a sober life. She said she knew what she wanted. She didn't want to face a day without alcohol and she wanted to not have to face the consequences of having it in her life. She tells about her first sip of stolen beer when she was seven; getting drunk in the sixth grade; her squirm and cringe-worthy (and familiar) adolescent awkwardness; her college years and her first success as a writer. She takes us from Dallas, Texas through college in Austin to New York City: drinking all the way. She gains success as a writer. She has friends: women friends; men friends; boyfriends and she has fun. Alcohol helps her through her shyness. It allows her to do and say outrageous things she'd never do if sober. Hepola knows she needs alcohol to succeed and be someone other than the self that wasn't good enough. "Drinking saved me | it gave me escape | it gave me power | it gave me courage | it gave me the path | when I triumphed it celebrated with me | when I cried it comforted me | and in the end | it

gave me oblivion.â •Blackouts prevented Hepola from remembering the embarrassing and shameful behavior.

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