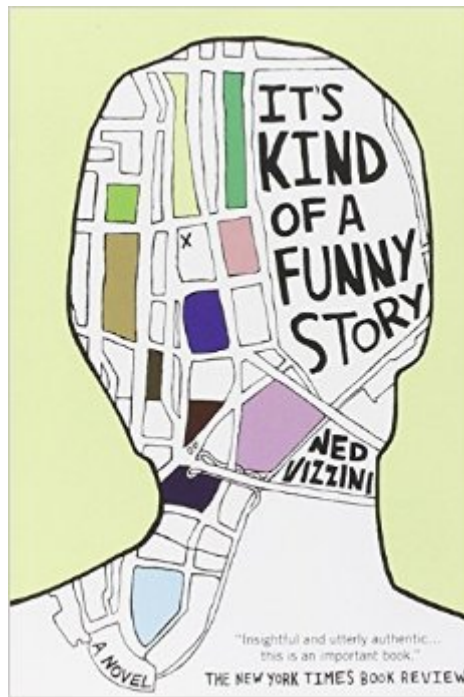


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# It's Kind Of A Funny Story



## Synopsis

Like many ambitious New York City teenagers, Craig Gilner sees entry into Manhattan's Executive Pre-Professional High School as the ticket to his future. Determined to succeed at life-which means getting into the right high school to get into the right college to get the right job-Craig studies night and day to ace the entrance exam, and does. That's when things start to get crazy. At his new school, Craig realizes that he isn't brilliant compared to the other kids; he's just average, and maybe not even that. He soon sees his once-perfect future crumbling away. The stress becomes unbearable and Craig stops eating and sleeping-until, one night, he nearly kills himself. Craig's suicidal episode gets him checked into a mental hospital, where his new neighbors include a transsexual sex addict, a girl who has scarred her own face with scissors, and the self-elected President Armelio. There, isolated from the crushing pressures of school and friends, Craig is finally able to confront the sources of his anxiety. Ned Vizzini, who himself spent time in a psychiatric hospital, has created a remarkably moving tale about the sometimes unexpected road to happiness. For a novel about depression, it's definitely a funny story.

## Book Information

Paperback: 464 pages

Publisher: Miramax (April 3, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 078685197X

ISBN-13: 978-0786851973

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.9 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (568 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #3,943 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Depression & Mental Illness](#) #15 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Humorous](#)

## Customer Reviews

When I moved back to New York City a decade ago, I was drawn immediately to the pages of the free alternative weekly "The New York Press". Why? Back then it had a terrific stable of eloquent columnists, ranging from Jonathan Ames and Melissa de la Cruz to fellow Brunonian Amy Sohn. But I thought the most remarkable person writing for them was a young high school student, Ned Vizzini, who would soon become a fellow alumnus of our prestigious New York City public high

school, Stuyvesant High School, which is of course best known for its Nobel Prize-winning alumni, other distinguished scientists, doctors, engineers and lawyers, legendary Hollywood movie stars like James Cagney and Tim Robbins, and a certain former member of its faculty, one bestselling memoirist by the name of Frank McCourt. Although I haven't been following his subsequent career as diligently as I should, I was quite impressed back then with Vizzini's crisp, clear prose, and fine ear for clever dialogue. All of these are amply present in his latest novel for adolescent kids, "Its Kind Of A Funny Story", which I think will interest many adults too. Vizzini offers an eloquent, memorable fictional description of teenage clinical depression in his latest novel; one which is the most honest, and truly - on occasion - humorous accounts I have come across. It is also one firmly rooted in reality, since he had suffered from clinical depression too, shortly before writing this novel. Craig Gilner is a new student at a prestigious New York City high school which is a fictionalized, business-oriented version of Stuyvesant. One night he begins thinking of suicide, and ultimately checks himself into the emergency room of his Brooklyn neighborhood hospital. It's the start of an engrossing - and as I have noted before, an occasionally hilarious - journey through the hospital's adult mental ward, where he soon encounters recovering drug addicts and people with multiple personality disorders. Craig does his best trying to retain his sanity while dealing with his fellow patients, the hospital's staff of superb doctors, nurses and other medical attendants, his family, and his small circle of high school buddies. You will find yourself smiling, perhaps laughing, as you read Craig's encounters, which will, of course, end on a triumphant note. Having established himself as one of our finest writers of adolescent fiction, I am truly looking forward to the time when Ned Vizzini joins the ranks of our best adult fiction writers too.

Before I read this book, I bought it for a friend as a birthday gift. About two, three years later, I finally decide to pick it up and read it myself. It was about October when I started and I finished it sometime before December. There was one line in the book that really changed my life. It was Craig was first checked into the hospital and when he's having a discussion with Humble. Humble says something along the lines of how he's afraid of living and not dying. When I read that I really understood what it's like to have a mental health disorder. The way this book was written can resemble a memoir because Vizzini wrote this book after he was released from a hospital himself. And that's what makes it more realistic for the reader. As a young adult myself who is still in school, active in various extra curriculars, and dealing with relationships, this book is very relatable and shockingly real. This book is a great read for that reason. If you know someone who has a mental health disorder, whether it be depression, DID, schizophrenia, or bipolar disorder, you would greatly

benefit from this book because you take the time to step inside their mind.

Ned Vizzini, cult author who has been relatively successful although not blown up yet, was depressed. In December of 2005 he had suicidal thoughts and went into his local hospital's recovery program. He was there five days, and it took him a month to write this novel afterwards. The main character, Craig, is starting to feel the pressures of life. Recently accepted into the most prestigious high school, things start building up, however instead of dealing with them he just keeps stacking his problems in the corner. While he's fallen into some shady friendships and into some pretty heavy pot use, his grades slip and he realizes he's not perfect. The thoughts nearly drive him to suicide, but thank God, he checks into his local hospital instead. This story aside from some setup, mainly are the chronicles of Craig Gilner's 5 day stay. As he forms friendships with some of the patients he meets a girl, which leads to the development of one of the best and most touching romances I've read in a story since I read *Feed* about four years ago. Through depression this narrative shows that there are reasons to live, and should help many teens through rough times. Although it's sad Ned Vizzini had to suffer through those times, it was now for the better since he has written this wonderful work which we can all learn from. I expect this book to explode on the YA media, even though there are some adult themes (drugs, sex, language, etc.) it's nothing worse than you run into during the average day of life. Although the book is about 440 pages long, you would never know it. I read this book in a day and a half, and I plan to read it several more times. I highly recommend this book to anyone and everyone. Whether you're depressed or not, young or old, that doesn't matter, because this book is about something we all have in common: life.

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