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Skinny



Synopsis

Find your voice. Hopeless. Freak. Elephant. Pitiful. These are the words of Skinny, the vicious voice that lives inside fifteen-year-old Ever Davies's head. Skinny tells Ever all the dark thoughts her classmates have about her. Ever knows she weighs over three hundred pounds, knows she'll probably never be loved, and Skinny makes sure she never forgets it. But there is another voice: Ever's singing voice, which is beautiful but has been silenced by Skinny. Partly in the hopes of trying out for the school musical - and partly to try and save her own life - Ever decides to undergo a risky surgery that may help her lose weight and start over. With the support of her best friend, Ever begins the uphill battle toward change. But demons, she finds, are not so easy to shake, not even as she sheds pounds. Because Skinny is still around. And Ever will have to confront that voice before she can truly find her own. Donna Cooner brings warmth, wit, and startling insight to this unforgettable debut.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (104 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #819,053 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #34 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Health > Weight #480 inÂ Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Performing Arts #615 inÂ Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Self Esteem & Reliance

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

Customer Reviews

I judged SKINNY by its cover for a long time. The publicist who gave it to me was very enthusiastic, but I wasn't sold enough on the cover to even crack it open. I assumed it was similar to Laurie Halse Anderson's WINTERGIRLS, and would be about some girl dealing with anorexia or bulimia. There's

nothing wrong with stories involving anorexia or bulimia, but I've read several - and reviewed several. It's an important issue but not one that resonates much with me. But that's not what SKINNY is about. Ever Davies is fifteen and weighs more than three-hundred pounds. She is not that slender girl on the cover of her story. Ever's a tough protagonist to like. She is a mean girl. She's very aware of her weight and constantly on the offensive so that she can hurt others before they hurt her. She believes that she can hear what everyone thinks of her. She calls that voice in her head that calls her ugly and unlovable and other terrible things "Skinny." But while it may be hard to like Ever due to her abrasiveness, she's an easy character to understand and you do feel for her. Plus, her inability to see the problems of those around her can partially be chalked up to the fact that she's fifteen. SKINNY mostly focuses on why Ever chooses to have gastric bypass surgery and what her life is like in that first year after the surgery. Donna Cooner has had gastric bypass surgery herself and does not dismiss it as an easy fix. Ever often struggles with her new diet and exercise requirements and wonders if she made the right decision. Losing weight doesn't instantly fix her self esteem either, nor does getting a makeover from a popular girl. Ever has to learn to accept and love herself, which isn't easy for anyone.

There are two things I consider when writing my reviews: What I felt while reading and how I feel once I've finished the book. But I'm not sure what to do when these two feelings don't fit, like with Skinny. I really liked it while reading, but now that I think about it, lots of it is pretty bad. And I still can't decide which of those things is how I really feel about Skinny. If you hate everything predictable and cliched, Skinny is definitely not for you - it is Cheese Central. Skinny has all of the typical high school scenes, like Ever being accepted by the popular crowd and abandoning her loyal but nerdy old best friend - we all know exactly what's going to happen. It doesn't get much cheesier than all of these Cinderella references, or the whole storyline of Ever finding her voice on stage, complete with an excessive load of musical references. The family storyline is cliched, too, and very underdeveloped - I wanted much more depth to Brielle's character, not to mention Lindsay, the other stepsister, whom we never get to know. The body image message is a little weird. I didn't notice while reading, but now, it bugs me how much it seemed like weight loss solved all of Ever's problems. Ever's self-worth is based pretty much only on other people's opinions, and I wish the character growth had focused more on Ever learning to take care of her body for herself, not just to make people like her. It also frustrated me how Ever losing her mom was never really explored we never got to feel her grief, how that was only used as the motivation for Ever's overeating. But while reading, I didn't mind most of that, and that's because of the writing. Donna Cooner's style is very

honest and it flows so nicely.

I was so torn over this book, both while reading it and after when trying to decide on a rating and review. There were parts of the story that I absolutely loved. Ever's thought process about food and her self-image, including the voice of Skinny are so real and I know I've had very similar thoughts and feelings. I completely identified with Ever in this portion. She has all of these dreams for her life, yet feels they are impossible simply because of her weight and the way she is perceived by society. And she's right. Weight is probably one of the few things people of all races, gender, and orientation openly discriminate against (this of course is based on my own scientific analysis of personal experience:). The first part of this book is where Cooner's writing shines. There is a depth of understanding for what Ever is going through that feels very personal. The story though takes a turn so fast my head spun. One minute Ever is struggling with the physical impact her emotional response to her mother's death has on her weight and then suddenly she's getting major MAJOR elective gastric bypass surgery!! I don't have anything against weight loss surgery. I think it is a viable option for people who's life is at risk. Who are unable to do physical activity due to their weight. Who have gone through all options. Who have determined that their weight problems are due to physical issues and not emotional. Ever is physically able to exercise. Ever has tried a few diets, but earlier in the book confesses to binging and hiding food, purposely sabotaging her diets and eating for spite. Ever has emotional problems. Her weight gain was a direct result of her mother's death. Yet no one suggests she get some grief counseling or therapy.

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