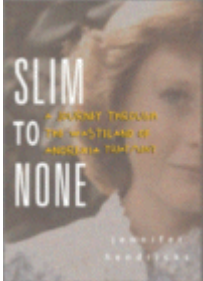




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Slim to None
A Journey Through The Wasteland of Anorexia Treatment
Jennifer Hendricks/Gordon Hendricks

McGraw-Hill/Contemporary Books

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"A hideous disease of both mind and body, anorexia . . ."

"Jennifer's journal entries . . . give rare insight . . ."

My bones are my security blanket. When I don't feel them, I'm lost.

Jennifer Hendricks--daughter, sister, horse-lover, class valedictorian, and friend--lived a mercifully short, tortured life. Suffering from anorexia, she worried constantly about becoming fat and bloated, yet seldom in her adult life did she weigh more than 70 pounds. A hideous disease of both mind and body, anorexia stole more than just her flesh--it robbed Jennifer of her identity, her feelings of self-worth and, ultimately, her very soul.

In *Slim to None*, Jennifer's journal entries through the ups and downs of psychiatric therapy give rare insight into how truly ugly the disease is, and how very little was known about its causes and treatment in the 1970's and 1980's. Jennifer's journey is indeed a hellish and baffling trip, for she literally traveled in circles at times, checking in and out--and in again--of one psychiatric institution after another, desperately searching for a ray of hope. She bared her psyche to a bewildering series of mental health professionals only to wind up at a virtual dead end, just as determined to starve herself as when she first began looking for help.

Emotionally exhausted at age twenty-five, she made her final decision by forgoing further psychological interference and moving into a nursing home to prepare herself to die with a modicum of dignity. She weighed 45 pounds at her death.

The strength of *Slim to None* lies in the raw pain and anger of Jennifer's words. "I hate myself!" she penned almost daily. Confused and depressed, to eat was to make herself feel panicked and "dirty," yet to starve was to destroy herself and hurt those around her. The weakness of the book lies in the fictionalized accounts written by her father, Gordon, who attempts to fill in the blanks with what he perceived went on

"... it is in her valiant struggle she will be remembered."

in her private therapy sessions with her psychiatrists and doctors. These scenes lend an unevenness in tone that distracts from the impact of these memoirs.

Fortunately, Jennifer's determined voice shines through. She lived; she loved; she suffered terribly. She tried hard to understand what was happening to her and to accept it for what it was--a part of her character that was incomprehensible but uniquely her. Most importantly, she took responsibility for what was happening to her. And it is in her valiant struggle she will be remembered.

—Reviewer Cindy Appel

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