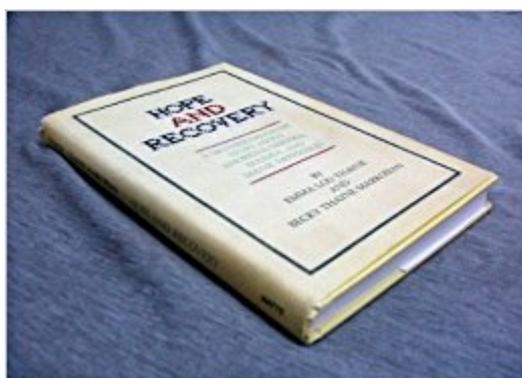


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Hope And Recovery: A Mother-Daughter Story About Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia, And Manic Depression



Synopsis

Becky Thayne and her mother alternate in describing how Becky suffered as a young woman from manic depression, anorexia, and bulimia and how she eventually recovered.

Book Information

Age Range: 11 and up

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Customer Reviews

Grade 6 Up-- A harrowing and earnest personal account that will be of limited interest to most young people. A mother and daughter each describe the development of Becky's illness, a combination of chemical imbalance, manic depression, and bulimia/anorexia. Her three-year period of recovery is marked by agonizing setbacks and hard-won advances. The extensive and tedious details are irritating; the irrelevant intimacies are embarrassing. The mother's narratives are convoluted and melodramatic. ("I was wrung like a wet chamois to limp nothingness.") She also shares generous portions of her journals and samples of maudlin poetry. Readers may feel uneasy about the happy ending; there is a continued rigidity within the family that bars any of its members from breaking away or achieving independence. A major, but unexpressed issue is control over the lives of adult children and the proper role of women. Once a young man appears on the scene, Becky and her mother see marriage as a "way out." His willingness to assume control of her life and acceptance of dependence on him is seen as the answer to the family's prayers. A single ray of hope is Becky's professed desire to share her experiences with others who may be at risk. --Libby K. White, Schenectady County Public Library, NYC
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Nearly 20 years after their grueling bout together with mental illness, Becky and her mother revisit Becky's plight in hope of alerting others to the dangers of "the altar of 105 pounds." Both are good writers, and the diary format here is enriched by letters and poems from their three years of crisis. Even more arresting than the instructively graphic descriptions of eating disorders are the menaces of bipolar depression. On the edge of her first major breakdown, Becky could rush through four dates in one day, plan to buy and renovate 20-room homes, and tell her mother she was the best water-skier in the country. Why it is hard to get a manic person to take medication becomes abundantly clear: being able to walk on water feels good, and the manic is oblivious to the danger of trying. A consistently engrossing account in which the ups and downs of mental illness in a real family are especially well portrayed (the father is furious over wasted food; in the midst of crisis, mother needs back surgery; siblings are perplexed). Happily, Becky suffered just when effective medications began to come on the scene and eventually got her biochemistry back in control. B&W photos and list for further reading not seen. (Nonfiction. 12+) -- Copyright ©1992, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

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