

# ***Biographies and Memoirs for Teens***

## ***It Happened to Nancy***

by Anonymous

Fourteen-year-old Nancy meets 18-year-old Collin, a gentle, caring young man who appears to be the answer to her dreams--until he rapes her, leaving her HIV-infected. In spite of her rapid decline, explained in a note at the beginning of the book, as the result of her weakened immune system, Nancy leads a full, poignantly happy life because of the loving support of both friends and family.

## ***Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood***

by Ibtisam Barakat

In this groundbreaking memoir set in Ramallah during the aftermath of the 1967 Six-Day War, Ibtisam Barakat captures what it is like to be a child whose world is shattered by war. With candor and courage, she stitches together memories of her childhood: fear and confusion as bombs explode near her home and she is separated from her family; the harshness of life as a Palestinian refugee; her unexpected joy when she discovers Alef, the first letter of the Arabic alphabet. This is the beginning of her passionate connection to words, and as language becomes her refuge, allowing her to piece together the fragments of her world, it becomes her true home. Transcending the particulars of politics, this illuminating and timely book provides a telling glimpse into a little-known culture that has become an increasingly important part of the puzzle of world peace.

## ***Stick Figure: A Diary of My Former Self***

by Lori Gottlieb

In the image-conscious world of 1970s Beverly Hills, 11-year-old Lori knows she's different. Instead of trading clothes and dreaming of teen idols like most of her pre-adolescent friends, Lori prefers reading books, writing in her journal and making up her own creative homework assignments. Chronically disapproving of her parents' shallow lifestyle, she challenges their authority and chafes under their constant demands to curb her frank opinions and act more "ladylike." Feeling as though she has lost control over her rapidly changing world, Lori focuses all her concentration on one subject: dieting.

## ***Almost Lost : The True Story of an Anonymous Teenager's Life on the Streets.***

by Anonymous

Sammy, 15, ran away from home in depression and despair, and this is the story of his return to his family and his road to recovery. The book was written from tapes of his therapy sessions. In eight months, he transformed from being a gang member surviving in the streets to the glue that brought his parents together again.

## ***Annie's Baby***

by Anonymous

Annie, 14, falls head over heels for handsome, wealthy 16-year-old Danny. She lies to her mother to go out with him and he takes her to drinking parties in his red convertible. Annie is soon totally dependent on him despite his frequent bad moods and erratic behavior. When he rapes her, he tells her that she led him on and made him lose control. Upon realizing she is pregnant she has to tell her mother and figure out what to do.

life narrows to a single goal--to be "...the thinnest eleven year old on the entire planet." But once she achieves her "stick figure," Lori really sees herself for the first time in a restaurant bathroom mirror and decides then and there to bring herself back from the brink of starvation.

### ***Diary of a Face***

by Lucy Grealy

At age nine, Lucy Grealy was diagnosed with a potentially terminal cancer. When she returned to school with a third of her jaw removed, she faced the cruel taunts of classmates. In this strikingly candid memoir, Grealy tells her story of great suffering and remarkable strength without sentimentality and with considerable wit. Vividly portraying the pain of peer rejection and the guilty pleasure of wanting to be special, Grealy captures with unique insight what it is like as a child and young adult to be torn between two warring impulses: to feel that more than anything else we want to be loved for who we are, while wishing desperately and secretly to be perfect.

### ***The Burn Journals***

by Brent Runyon

Brent Runyon was fourteen years old when he drenched his bathrobe with gasoline and setting himself on fire. The burns cover 85 percent of his body and require six months of painful skin grafts and equally invasive mental-health rehabilitation. From the beginning, readers are immersed in the mind of 14-year-old Brent as he struggles to heal body and mind.

### ***Within my Reach: My Everest Story***

by Mark Pfetzer

Pfetzer describes his summits of a number of peaks worthy of a climber twice his age (he was 14), including Kilimanjaro, and Cho Oyu. He tells of his two expeditions to Everest, where he reached 25,000 feet from Tibet and 26,000 feet from Nepal. He was well prepared: a karate black belt (at age 11), courses in NOLS (National Outdoor Leadership School) and high-angle rescue, full EMT (emergency medical technician) training (even though he was too young to be licensed), in addition to being in top physical condition, which he rigorously maintained. Located in adult biography.

### ***The Year We Disappeared***

by Cylin Busby

Cylin and John Busby share the challenges they faced after their family was forced into hiding to protect themselves from a killer who had already shot John, a police officer, and was determined to finish the job

### ***Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia***

by Marya Hornblower

The author was bulimic as a fourth grader and anorexic at age 15. She was hospitalized several times and institutionalized once. By 1993 she was attending college and working as a journalist. Her weight had dropped to 52 pounds and doctors in the emergency room gave her only a week to live. She left the hospital, decided she wanted to live, then walked back and signed herself in for treatment. This is not a quick or an easy read. Hornbacher talks about possible causes for the illnesses and describes feeling isolated, being in complete denial, and not wanting to change or fearing change, until she nearly died. Young people will connect with this compelling and authentic story. Located in adult biography.

*Martha Graham: A Dancer's Life*

by Russell Freedman

Graham was a dancer, choreographer, and teacher for more than 70 years, and during that time she changed the landscape of dance forever. An unlikely candidate for a dance diva, she was shorter and more muscular than the principal ballet dancers of her time and she didn't start dancing until age 22--a flower long past her bloom in the eyes of most choreographers. Nonetheless, Graham managed to turn the dance world on its tutu with her innovative approach to movement and teaching and her clear understanding that feelings are not always graceful, but always intense. Located in adult biography.

Portsmouth Public Library - Youth Services Teen List

175 Parrott Ave. Portsmouth, NH 03801

603-766-1740

Created July, 2009