

SKIN AND BONES



Young Adult

By Sherry Shahan

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Book Summary:

A sixteen-year-old boy falls in love with a girl in his inpatient mental hospital.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains obscene sexual activities; sexual nudity; excessive/frequent self-harm including eating disorders; profanity; and alcohol and drug use by minors.

4 /5

Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

| Page | Content |
|------|---|
| 1 | <p>The room was in the corner wing of a hospital that treated all kinds of patients- in the wing that housed a program for people with major food issues, the Eating Disorders Unit (EDU).</p> <p>"Welcome to the loony foodie bin," said the orderly.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Unibrow's job was to make sure no one smuggled contraband into the hospital. And that didn't mean cigarettes, drugs, or razor blades taped between butt cheeks.</p> |
| 4 | <p>Jill had bought him paperbacks from a used bookstore, cheesy novels with sexy women on the cover. As if she thought he should have a different date every night to keep him company. No way these books were safe to read.</p> <p>..."Don't do anything stupid."</p> <p>"Like I'll have a chance," he'd said. "It's a hospital."</p> <p>Jack had sobbed a little. More leakage. He couldn't wait to weigh himself.</p> <p>"No laxatives."</p> <p>"I stopped using them after, you know-" he'd paused, embarrassed all over again remembering the day he didn't make it to the bathroom in time.</p> <p>"No diuretics either," she'd said. "No ipecac syrup. No enemas. And, please, promise me, no fingers down the throat."</p> |
| 5 | <p>No one likes to be sick. Any more than a heroin addict likes sticking a needle in his arm or a chronic masturbator likes having all that free time on his hands.</p> |
| 6 | <p>He stared into the glass and flexed a bicep, roughly the size of his wrist, and wondered if he'd ever be brave enough to get naked in front of a girl.</p> <p>Then he blushed because he was really thinking, A skinny girl like me. But with curves and bumps where curves and bumps are supposed to be.</p> <p>...Anorexics got such a bad rap; people often assumed they threw up after eating. Although he'd met an anorexic girl in his last therapy group who'd stuck her finger down her throat after her mom forced her to eat a cup of vegetable broth.</p> |
| 10 | <p>"Anorexic. Sometimes in denial, sometimes not. Promising candidate for the program," Lard said all official-like.</p> <p>..."My dad is some guy who had sex with my mom and she doesn't remember who he was because it was during her hippie-druggie-commune period," Lard said. "And the reason I eat half a dozen pizzas at a time while glued to the Food Channel is because it fills the hole in my gut from not knowing my sperm donor."</p> |
| 12 | <p>"You wouldn't believe what they do with chocolate laxatives," Lard said. "Put them in brownies- shave it over ice cream."</p> <p>Bones believed it. He'd gone through boxes of them since that fateful day in the sixth grade.</p> |
| 18 | <p>"Anyways, I entered the program as a chronic bulimic, but I haven't purged since I've been here."</p> |
| 31 | <p>"One sick fuck."</p> <p>"Aren't we all?"</p> <p>"Some more than others, and some of us are just regular guys who wanna get laid."</p> <p>...The contents of the bag may have looked like dried oregano, but even a guy who'd led a pathetically sheltered life knew better than that. Lard took out a packet of Zig-Zags and brushed it off. He smoothed out the thin sheet of paper.</p> <p>Bones watched while Lard pinched and sprinkled and dried stuff with precision. He</p> |

| Page | Content |
|------|---|
| | <p>licked a seam, rolled it easily, and twisted the ends. "Are you crazy? Smoking that up here?" Lard struck a match in reply. He lit up, inhaling. The tip glowed red. A seed popped, hitting his T-shirt, hurning a tiny hole. So those weren't dots of Worcestershire sauce on his shirt after all. He held the joint out to Bones. "That stuff's bad for your health," Bones said. "It gives you the munchies." "Pot is one of your basic greens," Lard said, exhaling smoke. "It has all kinds of nutrients, even omega fatty acids. Pot, my friend, is part of the fucking food pyramid."</p> |
| 32 | <p>"Have you been smoking? I told you, if you get caught-" "This is Bones," Lard said quickly. "In case you can't tell, he's anorexic." "Pure?" Gumbo turned to study him. "Or purge?"</p> |
| 35 | <p>Bones couldn't shake the vision of Alice in the tight-fitting leotard and tights, like a thin layer of extra sexy skin.</p> |
| 36 | <p>She reminded Bones of a fat girl he met in a group therapy meeting a year ago. She'd beeso depressed about her weight she'd quietly swallowed pills, chasing them down with Kaopectate to keep from throwing up.</p> |
| 38 | <p>"That means he's going to force calories down you," Eve said th obvious disgust. "I could loan you a bra for weigh-in. Stuff it with something heavy so the scales show a gain. Then maybe he won't raise your calories so much."</p> |
| 42 | <p>"Her parents check her in, she puts on a few pounds, almost looks normal. I mean normal for her, but then she goes home and bakes laxative brownies. I love her like a sister, man, but I sure don't understand her." ...Bones let himself be overwhelmed by the kind of desire he'd only seen in movies and wondered if couples really did have sex while feeding each other Lean Cuisine-lying entwined afterward, making up poetry on ly they could understand. He wanted to stretch out beside Alice, count her freckles, play connect the dots with his tongue. ..."I still can't figure out how he smuggled beer in here. But you don't have to worry about him. Alice always makes fun of his man boobs."</p> |
| 54 | <p>"I, uh, I didn't want guys to like me. I didn't want anyone to touch me again. Ever. Like that dirtbag who used to live next door. I babysat his kids...and this one night he came home early without his wife. I was on the couch watching a rerun of a dumb show about models. He stood behind me, which was creepy enough. Then he started rubbing my neck, asking me about school and stuff. I was terrified..." ..."He took something away from m, and my mom let him do it."</p> |
| 58 | <p>The truth was Bones didn't trust himself to be around diet pills, diuretics, and laxatives, knowing he could probably hide them in his shoes or socks.</p> |
| 65 | <p>She'd tied a sheer skirt over her leotard. Her nipples pressed against the tight material. ...He tried not to stare, thinking how little she wore- just three thin garments- and how easily he could slip a finger under the strap of her leotard. He'd thought about sex before, plenty of times, but until now he'd never fully understood the concept of making love.</p> |
| 68 | <p>When she smiled like that her teeth were as dazzling as her tiny diamond earrings. She was anorexia nervosa in the purest form. Bones was impressed and inspired-</p> |

| Page | Content |
|------|--|
| | knowing it was possible to go through the program without giving in completely to the radical beliefs of the EDU. |
| 72 | Lard knelt on the bed holding the poster flat against the wall. One hand was on the guy's package. "Is it straight?" Lard asked. "Are you?" Alice deadpanned. "Eat me," he said. |
| 74 | "I lost seven more pounds," she said. "It feels good, you know, not to be puking in a gas station bathroom after binging on hamburgers. Even the sores in my mouth have healed. Sorry, I didn't mean to..." |
| 79 | Alice spread her legs into a perfect V. Her muscles were long and taut. She stretched over one leg and then the other. Bones almost passed out when she stretched forward between those same widely spread legs. He wanted to kiss all over her stretchiness right then and there and everywhere. |
| 83 | "Sexuality Group will be at ten o'clock instead of eleven." He straightened his smiley face tie and left. "No need for Bones to attend the sex meeting," Mary-Jane said. Elsie smirked. "Anyways, there can't be much meat on it." |
| 88 | It was the first time he'd seen her in pink tights. They were as sexy as her ripped pair. ...Being alone with her like this was the closest he'd ever come to sex, even if they were both fully dressed. |
| 90 | Bones was grateful to be behind the camera. He wasn't used to this kind of attention. And it was definitely getting his attention below the waist. ...He wanted to be her sweat. Even through the viewfinder he could see her ribcage pressing against her leotard like a musical instrument. He wanted to play her long into the night. |
| 92 | "Why didn't you tell me I was looking down?" She scolded him in such a way he had to sit on his hands to keep from shoving her backward on the bed and kissing her face. |
| 95 | "Anyways," Elsie said. "I've been on the pill since I was thirteen and my boyfriend uses condoms if that's what this is about." |
| 97 | "Anyways, take my boyfriend-" Elsie wouldn't give up. Lard cut her off. "Sex addicts meet down the hall." |
| 102 | Bones knelt down, pressing his palms into the hollow above her butt. She sighed and bent forward even more. "Yea, that's the spot." He felt dampness through her leotard as she relaxed into the stretch. Alice smelled so good. So fresh, so real, so alive. He didn't know how else to think about her. |
| 103 | Bones lay in bed with his eyes closed, visualizing the sheen of Alice's smooth skin. Her front legs. The nape of her neck. Eyes opened, staring at the ceiling, or eyes closed. It didn't matter. Not even Lard's snoring could hold back the image or feel of her tiny waist in his hands. And there she was, a vision of sexiness floating through his window, asking if she could spend the night with him. He drifted off thinking about all the things she'd do to him under the sheets. Love. Pure love. Bones awoke, wet and sticky. "Are you kidding me?" |

| Page | Content |
|------|--|
| | <p>..."Someone squirted Elmer's glue on my..." he said, joking to keep from being embarrassed.</p> <p>..."You got it wrong, man," Lard chuckled. "Beating off causes blindness."</p> |
| 115 | <p>His mom and dad loved each other as much as they loved him and his sister, even if they could be OCD when it came to work. At least they weren't hooked on prescription meds or irresponsible with credit cards, like some of his friends' parents. No sadistic sexual rituals with dead chickens.</p> |
| 117 | <p>There was enough light from the moon shining on the roof to see Alice, Lard, and Teresa huddled together on chairs under the same blanket. It smelled like a pot-smoker's convention.</p> <p>...Lard and Teresa getting high. Alice smoking like a chimney. He must've said it aloud because Teresa just about snapped his head off.</p> <p>"I don't give a crap about rules anymore," she said and fanned smoke before passing the joint back to Lard.</p> |
| 119 | <p>"Got caught peeing in a bathroom sink," he said staring into nothingness. "But I was drunk."</p> <p>..."Truth, I, uh, think. Uh, yeah, I'm totally good with reality." She sounded as stoned as Lard, until she said, "Unlike every other person in my family."</p> |
| 120 | <p>Lard sat there, stoned and stunned. He joint burned on its own.</p> |
| 121 | <p>"My mom was pissed when she got pregnant and not just because she gained sixty pounds. Stretch mark and sagging boobs were a serious setback in her career," she said.</p> |
| 123 | <p>"And not just because I think skinny is sexy."</p> <p>...They strolled back to the chairs and snuggled under the same blanket and the astonishingly romantic sky- her smoking and him not doing anything but thinking how much he loved her- and on fire because she'd just called him sexy.</p> |
| 132 | <p>"That's a starvation diet, Alice," Lard said, reading from the sheet. "As in suicide."</p> <p>"It's my body," she said.</p> |
| 139 | <p>Lard lit up and stared at the fat doobie between his fingers, as if the rich smoke came from the purest crop. That's when Bones first suspected Lard was growing the stuff up here- maybe in with the tomatoes or hidden in pots behind old equipment. Lard took another hit and gave Bones a look of mock contempt.</p> |
| 144 | <p>Alice smiled again, a nervous little twitch. He'd never hungered for her more.</p> |
| 146 | <p>"Karen was still using laxatives," Nancy went on.</p> |
| 171 | <p>A scarf hung in a way that caressed her beautiful breasts. They were fuller, plumper.</p> |
| 175 | <p>She wore a sheer blouse that slid off one shoulder. His eyes drew a line from the curve of her long neck to her sculpted back. A peasant skirt was hiked up showing off her milky white legs.</p> |
| 177 | <p>Lard decided to go with the plan, because (1) he was depressed about losing his dope, (2) Alice was intent on taking his car, and (3) going on a road trip was the least of the more serious infractions she'd offered up.</p> |
| 178 | <p>She looked so different like this, so intensely sexy and beautiful and wonderful, Bones felt shy all over again. She had on a loose skirt and a low-cut black sweater.</p> <p>...Alic re-crossed her legs working her prowess as a cock-teaser.</p> |

| Page | Content |
|------|--|
| | Bones wondered if she wore panties under her skirt. And color they were. Black, he decided, and lacy. Probably a thong. |
| 179 | <p>"You making vodka bach here?"</p> <p>"What happens in the Doodle stays in the Doodle," Lard said and tossed his keys over his should in a low arc. "Stash the spuds in the trunk."</p> |
| 181 | <p>Alice rummaged through the glove compartment, retrieving a package of condoms. "Afternoon Delight? Ribbed?"</p> <p>Lard fought to grab his latex treasure.</p> |
| 183 | Lard swerved into a lot and parked in front a hotel that looked more like the mansions Bones had seen on Playboy TV. He imagined businessmen in their rooms mixing cocktails and doing kinky things while watching Pay-Per-View. |
| 184 | <p>"Haven't you ever crashed a happy hour?"</p> <p>Bones and Lard traded looks. "Uh, no."</p> <p>"Just pretend you're a guest." She wasn't kidding. "Come on."</p> <p>..."Red wine or white?" she asked.</p> <p>Lard didn't hesitate. "Red."</p> <p>Bones tried to shrink into himself, even though he thought he fit in okay. "What if someone wants to see our room key?"</p> <p>"They never have before," she said.</p> <p>"Okay, I'll try white."</p> <p>The reasons Bones didn't drink alcohol were obvious- wasted calories, he wasn't much of a risk-taker, and didn't like losing control.</p> <p>...Bones craned sideways, watching as she reaced for a bottle of red wine. She poured confdently, carrying on a conversation with an older couple in matching terry cloth robes. Neither seemed to question her age or whether or not she was a paid guest.</p> <p>...They clinked, and because Alice and Lard too sips, Bones did too. The wine wasn't as bad as he'd expected, sort of like diluted juice.</p> |
| 186 | <p>But he didn't move- just shivered when she breathed on his neck, dizzy with longing and lust.</p> <p>..."Tell me a secret, Bones," she said, blowing in his ear.</p> <p>...I'm a virgin.</p> <p>...He shrugged, tried to look away.</p> <p>The problem with being a guy is that guys bring all of their insecurities with them wherever they go- especially into a place like this- even while sitting beside an incredibly hot anorexic girl.</p> |
| 187 | <p>Then a guy with a hotel logo on his shirt walked around the side couch. Bones tried not to look guilty hoping he wasn't about to ask for a room number or ID.</p> <p>...It wasn't just the mention of weiners on her tongue, but when Bones got up he had to make a quick adjustent to his pants. Alice smiled, enjoying his anguish, and strangely enough, he felt better knowing she knew.</p> |
| 188 | The sun coming through the windowns and the wine were mellowing them out. Alice and Bones had another glass for the road. It was quite clear that they were getting quite drunk. They quite liked it. |

| Page | Content |
|------|---|
| 190 | <p>Alice rolled up her window and cranked the heater. The she opened a carton of chocolate Ex-Lax and set the foil-wrapped squares on top of the vent to melt. "I got a little something for myself too," she said.</p> <p>"What the hell is that?" Lard asked, eyes alert for a parking spot.</p> <p>"I'm not going to use it, I swear. It's just...insurance."</p> <p>...Alice used the brush to paint pages of the magazine with the melted Ex-Lax to sneak the laxatives into the hospital.</p> |
| 194 | <p>"Give me your hand," she said, barely a whisper.</p> <p>Bones held out his hand tentatively. She took it and placed it on her hear over her left breast. So small. So delicate. She didn't move. He didn't move.</p> <p>..."Kiss me," she said.</p> <p>Bones let his hand linger, and then slowly slip away, not wanting her to think he was greedy. He touched her cheek, careful not to poke her in the eye. He wasn't sure what to do with his other hand, so he put it in his pocket. Classic move.</p> <p>He felt stupid for worrying about his breath, knowing it was gross from the wine- and he worried Alice was about to find out how little he know about kissing- and he wondered if she had condoms in the bag- and imagined himself unrolling one, all suave-like- and realized he was wasting the most amazing moment in his life- and wished his brain would just shut the fuck up.</p> <p>Alice leaned forward. "Now."</p> <p>Bones shuddered. "Okay."</p> <p>He made small movements, taking her face in his hands like he'd seen in movies. He kissed the tip of her nose. He brushed his lips agains hers, soft little butterfly kisses. Her lips were smooth and succulent. He closed his eyes, drinking in her essence. Cigarette smoke and wine and promise.</p> <p>She touched his tongue with hers, and they were kissing, really kissing. Then somehow her tongue was probing his ear and his fingers moved to the slender curve of her waist.</p> <p>"Kiss my neck. No, here. Harder. Yes." Alice purred. "It's okay to use your teeth."</p> <p>Bones nibbled.</p> <p>Alice purred louder. "Ummm."</p> <p>Niether of them wanted to pull away.</p> <p>His hand drifted slowly to her breast. This time she pressed into it. His fingers roamed to her other breast, while she traced the side of his neck with her tongue. He'd never felt anything like this. No words could describe it.</p> <p>Her hand roamed down, down, down.</p> <p>His heart beat fast, fast, fat.</p> <p>And so loud he thought his ears would explode.</p> <p>Then she touched him there.</p> <p>God.</p> <p>She began rubbing circles through his sweat pants and boxers. Softly. More circles. Then squeezing him. Gently, then firmly. Her hand wrapped around him. Steady tugs. Bones wouldn't las another second like this. He hummed inside, little explosions of ecstasy, while he lost his innocence in a six-by-eight-foot compartment that wasn't going up or down.</p> |

| Page | Content |
|------|---|
| 196 | Alice wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him full on the mouth- all tongue and wet warmth. ...All he could do was nod in utter bliss and stickiness. |
| 197 | There was something about the rush of feelings when he'd kissed Alice and she'd kissed him back and her touching him in a way no one ever had. |
| 201 | He lay there in his boxers feeling like he knew where he was in relationship to Alice even when they weren't together. He felt warm in all the places she'd touched him. And even though they didn't to all the way, what they did together, what she did to him, had all the elements to it. Excitement and a secret connections with Alice. |
| 202 | Suddenly Bones was back in the elevator with Alice. This time they were both naked. She was licking her lips hungrily while he fed her peanut M&M's from the bag. He let her feed him one- remembering how good they tasted, realizing he must be some kind of freak, because he was getting hard all over again. |
| 203 | This couldn't be happening, wasn't supposed to happen. Just last night they were in the elevator. Alone. They'd kissed, really kissed- tongues and hot breath. They'd touched. She'd touched him there. |
| 205 | Her wastebasket, filled with crumpled paper. Bones dropped the sheets onto the bed. He emptied the basket, picked up one piece of paper, smoothed it out, and then another. Damn. Pages from the magazine she'd painted. Alice had licked off every bit of Ex-Lax. |
| 208 | The rush of escaping the hospital twice in two days and the anticipation of seeing Alice began to give way to fears that this was all some cruel dream brought on by drugs slipped into his orange juice. |
| 218 | Bones knew he had to tell them about the magazine pages. "I found them in her wastebasket." He hoped the information would encourage them to amp up the search. "She licked off the Ex-Lax." "Why would she do something like that?" Manor asked. "It's an old trick," Bones said quietly. |
| 227 | Late one night Alice wept over something she couldn't explain. Bones thought her tears were opalescent from the absorption of his fluids. It must have nutrients, he thought, because her breasts were overflowing with the same milky substance. |
| 229 | Lard set Rachael Ray aside. "Not too bad, more like you've got an ass. Girls like an ass, man. It gives them something to hang onto." "Yeah?" "Trust me." "Never." Later in the dayroom, Elsie said, "Hey there. You look good with a little meat on your bone." Bones couldn't believe she was checking out his package. |
| 255 | "Eating an apple fills me up," he told his sister one afternoon. "And being full makes me feel fat." "Do you want to throw up?" she asked. "No." |

| Page | Content |
|------|--------------------------------------|
| | "Power down laxatives?" "Nuh-uh." |

| Profanity | Count |
|-----------|-------|
| Ass | 8 |
| Bitch | 3 |
| Cock | 1 |
| Dick | 1 |
| Fuck | 18 |
| Goddamn | 3 |
| Piss | 6 |
| Prick | 2 |
| Shit | 25 |