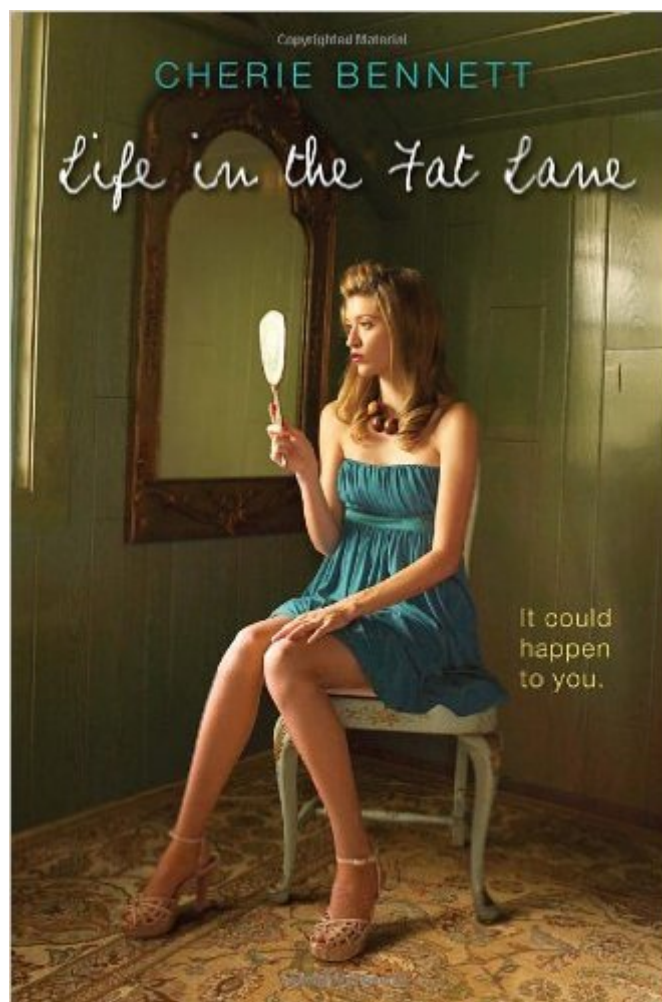


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# Life In The Fat Lane



## Synopsis

Beauty pageant winner, homecoming queen--Lara has the world at her feet. Until she gets fat. Despite a strict diet and workout schedule, Lara is soon a nameless, faceless, 200-pound-plus teenage blimp. She's desperate to get her to-die-for body back--and to find an explanation for her rapid weight gain. When she's diagnosed with a mysterious metabolic disorder that has no known cure, Lara fears she'll spend the rest of her life trapped in a fat suit. Who will stand by her? Her image-conscious family? Her shallow friends? Her handsome boyfriend? Or will she be left alone in the land of the fat girls? From the Paperback edition.

## Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

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Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars See all reviews (183 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

I was looking forward to reading this book because it dealt with a topic that's very personal to me: being thin for most of your life and then suddenly gaining a lot of weight due to having a metabolic disorder. This happened to me a few years ago, and I was recently put on medication for my problem. I've never let my change in appearance get me down, though, and I was anticipating reading a story which featured a plus-sized heroine who isn't defined by her looks. Boy, was I disappointed. Though the book is well-written, I found the narrator, Lara, to be incredibly shallow and conceited. And it pained me that all she did was whine about being "huge" and no longer popular. Yes, it's understandable that she'd be concerned about gaining so much weight in such a

short amount of time - who wouldn't be worried about their body going through a drastic change? - but I wish some of her and her parents' concerns had been about her health (potential heart problems, etc.) I also didn't think the story sent out a positive message to the age group that it's intended for. We only see Lara kinda-sorta come to terms with being plus-sized in the very last chapter. Until then, she's resigned to being an "unattractive" outcast .. and when she "accepts" herself, it's mainly because it's suggested that she's on her way to becoming "normal" again. So, did Lara even really learn anything? It's hard to say. As far as I could tell, she was still judgmental and shallow even at the end of the story. I wish that we'd seen more of an evolution of her going from hating herself to finding ways to love the new her.

Honestly, people who are looking for honest character growth from Lara are missing the point. A novel doesn't have to have its character understand a moral for the reader to understand it. Lara is a beautiful, wealthy, talented, bright, spoiled girl - and she is a nice person, or at least she thinks she is. She doesn't realize her snap judgments about people, her shallowness, or the other flaws in her character, but how many 16-year-old girls honestly can? As with any unreliable-narrator novel, the reader can see the world both through Lara's eyes and through his/her own and perhaps gain some insights into the way that society views weight and body image. I think it's important that Lara's weight gain is out of her control because she - and many people, especially girls with eating disorders - associate a fit, trim figure with self-control and view it as a positive trait. Lara's struggle with her lack of control over her weight was, to me, one of the most valuable parts of the book. If she had gained weight through her own "fault," i.e. inability to maintain a diet and exercise plan, the book would not have been as compelling because it would have reinforced the value of willpower in the mind of the reader. When I first read this book eight years ago, I was a young teenager not far from Lara's starting size, which I maintained through extremely restrictive dieting and almost constant exercise. If Lara had gained weight because of a lack of self-control, the book would have done nothing to change my mindset.

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