

**Book Title:** *Skinny Me*

**Genre:** Women's Fiction

**About Skinny Me:**

*Skinny Me* is a fast paced, in depth look at the complicated scenarios and emotional highs and lows we find ourselves in. The protagonist, Jennifer Carpenter, deals with the loss of her mother, the pain of coming from a broken family, and, most pressing, the difficulty of existing in a society that so often judges people by their outward appearance. She has come to judge herself by that same measure. Never have humans lived in a world with more widespread pressure to conform to society's version of the ideal woman or has the female form been under such widespread scrutiny. Women, from young girls to aging grandmothers, consistently have visuals of the ideal woman displayed before them. Movies, magazines, music videos, and ads consistently shower us with images of what we should be, reminding us of what we aren't (or believe we aren't). Those in the media who do not fit that ideal are typically less desirable – the side kick, the best friend, the person behind the scenes.

Obesity is a serious issue, and one that that is important to address for the purposes of general health and well-being, but the idea of being 'skinny' is an entirely different matter. Many women who are nowhere near to being obese and have a perfectly healthy weight still struggle daily with thinking they are fat and thinking that when they lose the weight – be it 5 pounds or 50 – they will be happy.

As Jennifer transforms herself from being a dangerously overweight woman to one who is only pounds away from being that ideal version of herself, she experiences, as so many readers have, the pressure to conform to the societal expectations of what a desirable woman should be. Most women can relate to many of the stages Jennifer goes through – whether they are women who constantly struggle to keep pounds at bay, women who have lived through the ridicule of being 'fat,' or women who are slender, but either see themselves as large or as too skinny to fit the desired mold.

*Skinny Me* is not a thesis. It is a story and is meant to be an engaging and entertaining read. But through Jennifer's journey, it is also a story that will allow the reader to think about her own experience, and the ways in which she too may measure her happiness on the same scale she measures her weight. It is a story that challenges the reader to focus on the aspects of herself that are beautiful and worthy and to question the way she may treat and view other women who either do, or do not, fit the ideal. I think it is a story that should be read – and my dream is to see it in the hands of as many readers as possible, that one by one, when they look in the mirror, they just might see things a little bit differently.

**Synopsis:**

Jennifer Carpenter is unemployed, practically friendless, and dangerously obese. Her mother has just died from a heart attack and Jennifer is afraid a similar fate awaits her. When she bursts out of her fattest pair of fat pants, Jennifer is disgusted. She makes the decision to change her life - lose 100 pounds in one year. She has a vision of the person she's supposed to be- the 'skinny me' trapped inside of her who is not only skinny, but kind and caring too.

To help her lose the weight, Jennifer decides to hire a personal trainer. This trainer ends up being her fitness-crazed cousin Autumn's new boyfriend, Matt. As Matt encourages Jennifer and helps her meet her

goal, she starts to believe his interest in her could be more than just the client-trainer relationship. She finds herself dreaming that they could one day be together.

When Autumn expresses jealousy over Matt and Jennifer's relationship, Jennifer is emboldened by the realization that Autumn thinks of her as competition. She has hope that Matt could actually want her instead of Autumn. She starts to alienate herself from her friends and family and becomes even more focused on losing weight and losing it fast. After suffering years of mockery for her weight, she believes she can't be happy until she reaches her goal. Her brother, who did much of the mocking, is in an accident induced coma but Jennifer, focused and bitter, refuses to visit him.

When Jennifer is only pounds away from her goal, Matt proposes to Autumn, making Jennifer face the fact that he's not interested in her and probably never was. Determined not to care, and to find a man even hotter than Matt, she drunkenly hooks up with a guy at a nightclub. When her best friend tries to prevent this, Jennifer is cruel and insulting.

Though heartbroken about losing her virginity through a sleazy one night stand and for her cruelty to her friend, Jennifer decides she doesn't have time for such unfocused emotions. All she has time for is meeting her goal. As she goes to dangerous measures to lose those final pounds she starts to realize she's also in danger of losing everyone that matters to her. When her brother, rehabilitated from his coma, shows up at her door she expects anger and accusations for how selfish she's been. When he apologizes for the years of mental and emotional abuse, Jennifer isn't sure if she's able to forgive him, or if she wants to, but she knows she doesn't want to be the person she sees herself becoming.

After months of avoiding it, Jennifer finally visits her mother's grave and sees, for the first time, the words on her tombstone: "Blessed is this life. Celebrate being alive." Jennifer remembers all the wonderful things about her mother, things that had nothing to do with weight. Skinny or not, Jennifer realizes she has always had the potential to be the person she really wants to be.

Finally able to see how horrible she's been to the people who love her, Jennifer makes the effort to fix her broken relationships and concentrate on health instead of the image in the mirror. When the 365 days are up she hasn't quite made her goal, but is okay with that. She is who she is and she's happy. It's a happiness that's far more stable than a number on the scale will ever be.

### **Author Bio:**

Charlene Carr has been in love with words for as long as she can remember. A voracious reader, when she needed punishment as a child, her parents took her books away. These punishments were blessings in disguise. They gave her the chance to create her own stories. Pursuing her life-long love of words, Charlene studied literature in University, attaining both a BA and MA in English Literature. She contributed to that learning by also earning a Bachelor of Journalism. She chose a career as a freelance writer, editor, and facilitator, allowing her to continue to develop and grow her writing skill while having the time and flexibility to focus on her own creative work. She has numerous media publications and was a regular performer as a spoken word artist when she lived in Halifax, NS.

Charlene lives in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada and loves exploring the amazing coastline of her harbour town, dancing up a storm, and using her husband as a guinea pig for the healthy, yummy recipes she creates!