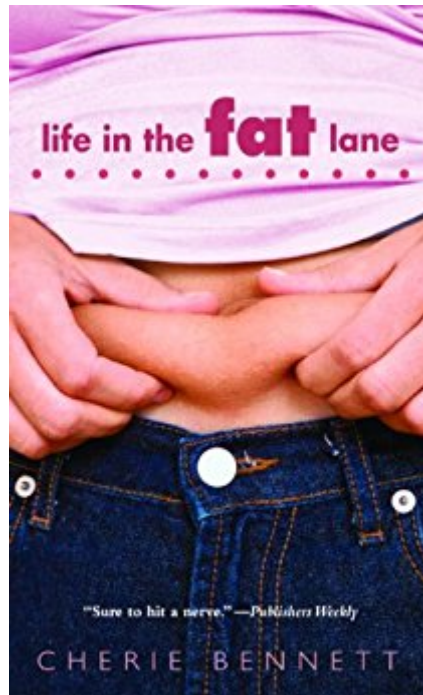


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# Life In The Fat Lane



## Synopsis

THERE'S A PERFECT GIRL at every school, yours included. You know her. Beautiful. Talented. Smart. Great parents. Cool boyfriend. You can't even hate her, because, of course, she's so nice. At Forest Hills High, Lara Ardeche is that girl. But things can change. "Skillfully drawn, resulting in a compelling story. . . . An enjoyable and thought-provoking read." "School Library Journal" "Readers will be totally caught up in Lara's struggle to find her true self under all that weight." "Booklist" An ALA Best Books for Young Adults From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I'm not sure exactly when I came across this book or exactly when I bought a copy for my Kindle but as I was recently scrolling through titles I owned but hadn't yet read, I decided to look into it. I had bought it for a reason, and with the calendar year coming to an end, I wanted a relatively quick read right before the

holidays. First-person narrator Lara Ardreche competes in teen beauty pageants, so her appearance and attitude are especially important to her, and maybe more important to her parents. The book starts near the annual homecoming dance, and though she's only a junior, her friends think she has a good chance of winning homecoming queen. She wins, just like her mother had won years earlier. Lara genuinely seems like a decent person at the start of the story. She has friends in the popular click (which in the world of this book means thin and attractive), an artist boyfriend who eschews these social dynamics, and a wonderful best friend named Molly who isn't part of the popular crowd. Lara acknowledges that her other friends probably wouldn't be friends with Molly because she is heavier, but Lara remains true to her. At one point at the dance, she has a bathroom conversation with a heavier girl in her class. In beauty contestant fashion (Lara's admission), she offers to help the girl find a diet and/or exercise regimen. I don't think Lara was intentionally trying to insult the girl, as I think Lara was raised by her parents to believe that anyone who's not slim needs help. I mention this scene to make a counterpoint later in the review. After the dance, Lara gets a case of hives, and then goes on the drug prednisone. She gains some weight a little at first but continues to gain once she's off the drug. Her mother accuses her of sneaking high calorie snacks, but after a period of time closely observing her, even her mother sees that Lara is gaining the weight without overeating. She is ultimately diagnosed with Axell-Crowne Syndrome, a fictional metabolic disorder where the body receives mixed messages about food and water and puts on the weight. I have no issue with the author creating this disease, especially if the intention had been for Lara to view the body image issue from "the other side," so to speak. But the execution of this plot device sends terribly mixed messages to the reader. Lara's parents are one-dimensional horrible people. Her father stops calling Lara "princess" now that she's larger. Her mother is wrapped up in her own struggles with fading external beauty due to age. The parents are having marital problems including dealing with an affair but they rarely show compassion for their daughter. As a father of daughters, I love my children unconditionally, and I plan to no matter what size they are. But even more distressing is that their daughter has this extremely rare disease, and they can't put aside their own pettiness. It's shameful. Also, the family moves from Nashville to Michigan around two-thirds of the way through the book. It puts Lara in a new school for senior year, where people don't know how thin she used to be. It's a contrived way to have

Lara be perceived by the kids there as overweight, so they can behave in the same hurtful way to her that her original friends behaved toward overweight classmates. Lara finds herself on the receiving end of a similar conversation that she gave herself. I would rather have seen her standing up to the people she knew who started treating her differently. Instead, she lashes back at people, loudly insisting her appearance is due to the syndrome. Meanwhile, she criticizes the eating habits of other overweight people in the book. Shouldn't the point be that there are all sorts of reasons people have the body shape they have—diet, disease, genetics, and so forth—and that they all shouldn't be judged for it? As Lara makes friends with the non-popular (again, not thin) people at her new school, she laments that she's now a "loser" like them. And this is the book's biggest problem. For a book that purports to be about body acceptance, I found far too much body shaming going on—even from the main character who should demonstrate significant personal growth. She shows a little bit, but that's coupled with a suggestion that her disease may be going into remission. *Life in the Fat Lane* isn't poorly written, and it's readable inasmuch as I always wanted to know what happened next. It's not poorly conceived because I believe the intention was right. Unfortunately, it's poorly executed, oftentimes seemingly arguing against its own intended theme, and for that reason, I can only give it TWO AND A HALF STARS.

Years ago, I found this book one day at the public library while waiting for a friend. I randomly picked a book off of the shelf and began reading. Since that day I have read this book 7, going on 8, times. It is a fantastic book and I really enjoyed it because I believe that a lot of teenagers can relate to this book because one of the hardest things you do in life is be a teenager. The main character, Lara, has seen both ends of the high school spectrum by the end of the book. She learned who her real friends were and I think that her tragic case of the nonsense disease really shaped her life. Reading all of Lara's thoughts of self-consciousness, failure, and depression are thoughts that all teenagers have also whether they can admit it or not. I love this book because it tells the struggles of a teenage girl who's life completely changes over her physical appearance. It sends out a good message of how your real friends will always love you for your heart. I would recommend this book to anyone who is looking for a teen fiction book.

It can happen to anyone...yes, it can. This is a great book for teenage books and pre-teens to read.

I'd like to believe there aren't "mean girls" out there, but I know there are and, as their bodies change, there will be comments from others who have already emerged seemingly without scars. But this book shows things change for lots of reasons and a person is more than who she is on the outside. An important message.

I read this book when I was in high school and one afternoon I just wanted to read it again, so I purchased it from the kindle store. My, my, my.... Upon reading it again, I realized that the memory I had of the book was so tame compared to what I read now and although there were some unintentional typos, not many but a few here and there, this story was so powerful. I would recommend this to everyone, young and old.

One of my favorites I like to read this book often. I first read it 10 years ago and my copy was in tatters so I was glad to find this new one. This story is so good.

Sad about the cliff hanger ending but good read couldn't put it down

This book is told in first person which I love. We go through Lara's journey from thin to fat. It's a great story and I would defiantly recommend to anyone

This was an AMAZING book. Definitely 5 stars. I would recommend this to everyone. It is a great way to understand why you shouldn't make fun of somebody.

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