



## Shrink to Fit

*Dona Sarkar*

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Losing weight is the solution to all basketball-star Leah Mandeville's problems, or so she thinks. Getting superthin will:

- a) help her jump shot
- b) make her look like America's Next Top Model
- c) get the attention of the high school hottie who ignores any girl with a little junk in the trunk

And it's working, isn't it? Her boo is now crushing on her. Everyone says how good she looks. But the problem is that Leah doesn't feel good. And her life is taking a huge turn for the worse, despite her new "perfect body."

## Shrink to Fit Details

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## From Reader Review Shrink to Fit for online ebook

### Denika Ottley says

This Book is really really good. Awesome actually, I cried so hard and I have no idea why. Well honestly I do know why but it was totally irreverent. I can't personally relate to Leah because I love my curves to death and I wouldn't consider pill dieting or dieting to that extreme, but I've known people with that same problem and I've felt for them. When Death and Rejection occurred, I felt horrible for her, just because of all the stress with the coach, photographer, mother that she still had to deal with. All of these Kimani tru books are really good. I'm about to read fast forward, Hope it's just as good.

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### Tiffany Spencer says

#### Shrink To Fit

PLOT: Leah, a young woman with dreams of playing college basketball is a star on the court. Scoring more points a game than any of her other team-mates. But unfortunately when the last basket is scored and the applause cease she has to come home to a "stage mom" who has a whole nother definition of success. The stunning Victoria is a head turner in every sense of the word on the runways and covers of magazines and wants the same thing for her daughter. If only she could just lose a couple of pounds, she'd be so pretty. And what do you know there's a mother/daughter contest coming up for a photo shoot in a popular magazine. Leah frantically tries to lose the weight in time, dropping lower and lower daily and weekly due to illegal diet pills (supplied by her weight-obsessed friend Shazam). Who by the way is already beautiful and popular. And pressured by her longtime crush on neighbor (Jay) whose hard on girls who are about their looks, but is dating a cheerleader himself. Through-out the story we see Leah's decline as she goes from just massive amounts of exercise, to trying her friend's diet pills excessively, to crazy diets she finds on a website, and then eventually the throwing it all up method. Until it lands her in the hospital.

MY THOUGHTS: This book is VERY sad! (LEAH/PLOT) It's sad that this beautiful, confident, talented, young woman was stripped of her self-esteem by a controlling (choleric) mother, an insecure friend, and a hypocritical guy that didn't see what he had in front of him. When I first started reading this book I was groaning. It's annoying to read about females that don't even fall into the "thick" category and are sitting around counting calories and talking about how thick there thighs are. PLEASE! There aren't even pictures of them, but I can just imagine the fattest thing between them is probably that fat-free yogurt they're playing with. When some women in this world really "do" have general weight issues. It's a serious subject matter, but one I can't fully understand because I don't get whose warped eyes they're seeing through when they think of themselves as fat. And it's always the most skinny ones you see in books (and life) that do this. I'm thin and I couldn't fathom starving myself to get in a size 0 for ANYBODY. I guess I like eating too much! And not even that I kind of have to. If you look at the girl on the cover, I don't know if this is supposed to be her before or after. But if it's her before there is "nothing" wrong with her weight. She's pretty. She's tall, she has a baby face, and her hair is gorgeous. Any guy should wanna date her. AND she's into sports and has wit and a mind. I think that she's so assured in the beginning of who she is alone is attractive and would draw anyone to her. And then when you think about today and how it's come full circle men seem to like thicker body proportions on their ladies. Hips, breasts, etc. Which leads me to characters. Let's start with (JAY)'s trifling behind. Three Chapters in and I see he's a hypocrite and not worth Leah's time. He makes fun of the cheerleaders and degrades them with names like ditzes and bimbo's, but then he turns around and dates one.

Not only that but in a dick move when he finds out Leah is into him he makes a public spectacle of kissing Jennifer in front of the whole school in her face. And then later on starts to show interest when she's lost some weight which only leads her on to believe she has a chance so she keeps on losing weight. I can't fault him for being a friend and trying to get her to realize what she's doing, but in the hospital, he has the nerve to try to stick around when the other guy (Cicillian) shows up. BYE! Didn't you say you had somewhere to be? If a man really does care about you it doesn't matter even with all your flaws in his eyes you will be a Goddess. If Jay was about something it wouldn't have had to take her losing weight and his lil snide behind comment of "Well you could stand to lose a few pounds." What even was that? (SHAZAM)'s death was sad. I didn't remember that from the first time I read this, but I guess something that extreme had to happen for Leah to open her eyes to the ugly reality of what she was doing to herself. Same story. A beautiful young lady that's insecure about a guy. I really can't say I relate. Like all females, there are things I want to change about myself, but its things I've wanted because \*IM\* not happy with them. Not for someone else to be attracted to me. Then there's (CICILLAIN?) Why are you even HERE? I guess because I've dealt with one I really don't have the patience for men that come to you with the lame excuse they stayed away from you because they're too much of a coward to grow a set and be like NO! Screw what you're talking about. I WANT HER! And nothing you can say can make me stop trying to get with her. Which is what a REAL man would do. Leah played it cool in the end, but she should told them both to STEP! And speaking of people I didn't feel sorry for there was Victoria who knew all this stuff, had gone down this road herself, seen the signs in other people and then STILL pushed her daughter into that fashion show when she CLEARLY wasn't interested. And then had the NERVE to get upset when her daughter's falling out on the court and is laid up in the hospital with broken ribs (sighing). And then just why and what did she see in that gayish whore of a photographer? All the guys in this book were stupid! In conclusion it had a good message about the dangers of not dieting the right way for its target of teenage girls. If I were a teenage girl and I read this it would scare me silly and senseless. But I can't say that I could really relate to it because while I have myself been insecure in some areas one of them has never been my size.

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RATING: 7

### **Diamond says**

So far this book is about a girl named Leah who start to lose weight to get noticed at school and to make her look like she is a model. Also she is a basketball star at her school. Now that she has lost weight everybody says she look good and she looks good. But inside Leah does not feel about herself. But a good thing is now her boo is crushing on her. Also later in the book a big turn happens to her because of her trying to lose weight to get noticed.

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### **Katrina says**

As a book about anorexia, there are better written ones though not many about non-white girls with anorexia. The multicultural-ness of this book is its only redeeming characteristic. While written in 2008, the book is already dated by references to American Idol and comments like "True that."

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### **Yanni says**

This book was great. It's kinda boring in the middle but towards the ending it got better and better. I like the part when Leah kisses Jay finally and she gets rejected. She was trying to bring him to her room and he said no because he's with Jenn. When she gets too skinny, she'll get into a lot of trouble. I recommend this book for people who like weight drama.

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### **Lanetta says**

A lot of teenage girls in America feel that being anorexic or really skinny (sizes 0-5) is acceptable for boys, the media, and society. In reality, big girls (the thick madames) are considered to have low self-esteem. Sadly, a lot of people do think that, which causes a misbalance. In the book, Leah was pressured to lose excessive weight to please a boy and her mother. A drastic conclusion takes place in the matter.

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### **Carleyk says**

Leah Mandeville is a junior in high school and the star on the basketball team. Leah's mother, Veronica, is a model and she wants Leah to follow in her footsteps. However, Leah is built a little different than her mother. She is tall and muscular and doesn't want to model. Leah feels losing weight will help her with her jump shot, modeling, and getting the attention of, Jay, the high school hottie. Her diet plan was to eat a protein shake for breakfast, salad for lunch, and nothing for dinner. Leah's body then became very weak and she always felt dizzy. During the finals, for basketball, when she went up for the shot her arm was too weak to bring the ball to the hoop. She fell to the floor and later found out she had fractured her ribs. While in the hospital recovering from her fractured ribs, part of Leah's recovery was to admit that she had an eating disorder. After weeks of therapy she does begin to learn how to have a good diet plan instead of starving herself.

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### **Amani Crain says**

This book is amazing!!!!!! It gives you a real look inside the mind of a young girl struggling with a eating disorder. Everything was raw and true and I found myself relating with the character because of the way she thought and felt when dealing with her overbearing mother, her super size 0 friends, her dreams of being a baller, and her crush who apparently only goes for the skinny girls.....

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### **Jamila says**

So far, I hate this book. However, it is a Kimani Tru book, and many of our teen patrons enjoy reading this imprint. So, I'm plugging through on my lunch breaks.

Finished it and I will recommend it to young girls who like drama and who may have body image concerns.

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## Gabriella Sanders says

Dona Sarkar's purpose in writing this novel was to bring her audience awareness. Sarkar wanted to display the struggle of having to fight against peer pressure and disorders. This novel is appealing to all teenagers, more-so directed towards females around the age 13 to 18. Shrink to Fit emphasizes what all girls go through and helps them overcome it and to possibly know that they're not alone in their situation. The impact Sarkar's novel will leave a mark on everyone that comes across this book, whether the reader can relate to Leah Mandeville or not. The message that someone would receive from this, is that you should never push yourself too hard to become someone you know you are not.

Shrink to Fit is well written depending on which perspective is being used. If the reader has a negative outlook, then Sarkar's words in the novel would be viewed as very harsh. Someone who has an optimistic outlook on life would see Sarkar's words and words of encouragement. For example "Two hundred pounds. Yeah, that was heavy...It probably wasn't even healthy. From tomorrow on, no more junk food, no more sitting around after school." (Sarkar, p. 33) Depending on who's reading it would see it as motivation, others may see it as taking a shot at them. Yes, the novel is written in a third persons' perspective as a teenage girl with a reoccurring battle with herself but it is all based upon how the reader perceives it. The novel is a very nice book. Shrink to fit highlights other struggles aside from Leah's eating disorder. Leah's best friend Shazan dies from a drug overdose and that sends a message within itself, "Sonoma High School Cheerleader Dies of Drug Overdose...She silently read the rest of the article. *she's really gone*" (Sarkar, 196) Leah knew all about her friends use of drugs but never thought to say anything. This teaches everyone that no matter how little, its good to speak up and possibly save a life. At the end of the novel Leah realizes what she was doing to herself and begins to eat again, no matter what size she was. Leah also realized that 'skinny' Leah wasn't who she wanted to be. "I have my whole life ahead of me. But for right now, could you hand me that Milky way bar? I'm starving!" (Sarkar 205) All in all the novel was very well written, apart from a few grammatical errors here and there.

The first time I read Shrink to Fit, I was very cautious while reading it. I first read it when I was in middle school. The second time around, I began to pick up on what everything meant. Before, I had not the slightest clue what a "eating disorder" was and nor did I really care. Now, I find it to be interesting because I'm aware of what the Author is trying to emphasize. I can relate to Leah with the weight struggle. At one time in everybody's life we want to be the image of "perfection". That's what I wanted to be, but I never took it to extreme measure like Leah and Shazan did. I took the healthy route and went to the gym and things of that nature. The novel provokes a series of emotions. It goes from being too serious to the point were you get kind of bored, then BAM, you will start giggling from something a character said.

The strengths of the book are that the author keeps you in the loop. While reading it, I felt as though I was actually there with them just staring into the little group. Another strength is that, like mentioned prior, it displays the struggle of most teen girls. There weren't many weaknesses except the grammar and the author got a little long-winded at some point and it got kind of confusing.

At this age (16) I wouldn't recommend this novel to anyone in high school. I'd probably recommend it to one of my little cousins or my niece when she becomes of age. I would not recommend it to anyway in high school because this book is honestly not on the level we're on. I'd refer this novel to one of my cousins because, just like me, this is something that would entice a pre-teen.

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## **Quamisha Watkins says**

This book is about a girl name Leah who thinks she has a weight problem, which is not true. She is the school star basketball player, as an boyfriend, but she's not happy with her body. She thinks if she loses weight it'll help her jump-shot, make her Americas Next Top Model, and get her the killer boyfriend that ignores all the girl. Little does she know things change for the worst not better.

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## **Katrina Burchett says**

Leah Mandeville is a junior in high school. She's on the basketball team and wants to go onto college to play for UCLA. Leah's mother, Veronica, is a model and she wants her daughter to follow in her footsteps. Modeling isn't Leah's thing and even if it was, she doesn't have the slim frame necessary to make it in the business. But then there's Jay, Leah's next door neighbor and best friend for three years. Leah has feelings for him, but he likes someone else; one of her skinny friend's. Will Leah get his attention if she loses weight?

I liked Leah, but I did not like the way she spoke to Victoria. Even if she was fed up with Victoria caring so much about appearances, this woman was still her mother. She never went too far with her disrespect, though. She knew when to hold her tongue.

I did feel for Leah, wanting to fit in so badly. When she began to lose the weight I was glad she felt better about herself, but then she went to the extreme, losing way more weight than she should have. As the numbers on the scale went lower and lower, it was like she was living in a dream world. While everyone around her could clearly see what she was doing to herself, she actually thought she was becoming more attractive when what she was doing was risking her life. And when she ignored the signs her body sent to let her know something was wrong, that she was abusing her body, I was so sad for her.

I liked Jay, who was a true friend to Leah. And Shazan, Leah's friend since the second grade, was a good girl, but, unfortunately, she had her own 'weight issues'. It would have been great if she could have seen her problem as clearly she could see Leah's.

Nibbles of food or days of starvation, strenuous workouts, diet pills, and purging led to excessive weight loss for Leah. She became dangerously thin way too fast and no matter how much friends and family pointed that out, she ignored their concerns. Anorexia and Bulimia are the eating disorders Sarkar addresses in *Shrink to Fit*, and she did a very good job writing this story. The psychological illnesses that can be found in those suffering from eating disorders is so clear, and as for the physical effects, when Leah dropped pounds, I was able to get a visual of the changes in her body and it was not pretty. While the story was entertaining to a certain degree, it is most importantly a cautionary tale. The story warns against the danger of depriving oneself of the proper nourishment necessary to stay healthy... and alive. *Shrink To Fit* is a must read.

Parents: There is profanity, but it's not pervasive. There was one word in particular, though, that I grew very tired of reading.

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### **Shanda says**

This book was very awkward but realizable. It was about a girl who loses about 60 pounds and almost dies. The reason she decided to lose weight was to become beautiful and a model like her mother. She ends up almost dies. She loses her friend the same way. I thought this book was mostly about weight-losing but not to go overboard like Leah was.

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### **Alejandra Armitage says**

Good book, a very fast read, however the ending is a little abrupt and it doesn't accurately portray how hard it is to get over an eating disorder. The best part of this book for me was the aspect of pressure at school and at home to be skinny and the aspect that unhealthy equals "beautiful" in this society. A good read, if not for personal enjoyment but for a new perspective on the world of eating disorders.

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### **Caro says**

This is a powerful story that needs to be read. I found that the plot and the characters really gave the theme of anorexia and eating disorders an interesting dimension without making it look negative or disgusting.

The story is told from the point of view of Leah with a third person narrator. There is enough distance for the reader to feel for Leah and think "But what are you doing to yourself Leah?" at the same time.

I thought the characters were really well developed and all very different one from the other. I really liked the fact that there was so much diversity in the book, it looks much more real than the stories plagued by complete uniformity. It was also interesting to read about the various characters' origins and how they lived with their own traditions in the American society. I really felt it is one of the strongest points of the book in the sense that no matter their origin, the idea of being thin to fit a certain canon of beauty is the same. The book reflected that all the girls, no matter how beautiful they are, want to look like someone else to fit in. Leah's confusion resonates in all the other female characters and it makes the issue of eating disorders universal and not just a question of "being thin". Instead of praising individuality and personality, the beauty advertised in magazines and in the media is specific, hence what I call the clone invasion thanks to plastic surgery. You probably have walked in a street in a big city and feared to have entered another dimension because all the girls look the same.

I found that the process which Leah goes through is a bit quick but believable, in the sense that Leah doesn't aim at being anorexic, she just aims at being thinner and fit in, not do the "extreme stuff anorexics do". The fact that Leah constantly denies being anorexic or even having an eating disorder is interesting. There is one point on which I feel I need to comment though: there is a difference (a bridge, a mountain and three oceans) between being an anorexic and eating junk food. I don't understand why it has to be one or the other. Maybe it's easier for me to say that since I may have a different approach to food and eating (I've noticed the difference when I went to live in the US for a while), but you can eat delicious healthy meals which don't make you fat and where you don't need to starve yourself. I found that the book didn't really talk about that and I found it was a shame, because you can eat, you just need to eat healthy food full of what your body

needs. I'm not entirely sure the book succeeds in not making eating look like a sin or something you should repent.

It was interesting to read that guys don't like skinny girls in the book and that the whole concept of them actually liking girls because they are skinny only exists in girls' imagination. If you read too much books like me you would definitely see a conspiracy by evil forces to encourage girls to care about their weight in order for them not to think about being independent and taking the power (which is rightfully theirs - of course). I liked also the reaction (even if late) to Leah's weight loss by her love interest Jay and her mother.

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I would definitely advise this book to people. The theme of anorexia is treated with a lot of sensibility and the book is very well written and presents a very interesting diversity in terms of culture. But I would advise a healthy food cooking book to read along :).