



# Passing for Thin: Losing Half My Weight and Finding My Self

*Frances Kuffel*

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## **Passing for Thin: Losing Half My Weight and Finding My Self** Frances Kuffel

An intimate and darkly comic memoir of a woman who does a 180 with her body.

In the opening pages of *Passing for Thin*, Frances Kuffel waits at the airport to be picked up by her brother, Jim. He strides past her without a glimmer of recognition because she barely resembles the woman he is expecting to see. Jim had last seen her when she was 188 pounds heavier.

What follows is one of the most piercing explorations of the limits and promises of a body since Lucy Grealy's *Autobiography of a Face*. With unflinching honesty and a wickedly dark sense of humor, Frances describes her first fumbling introductions to the slender, alien body she is left with after losing half her weight, shining a light on the shared human experience of feeling, at times, uncomfortable in one's own skin. Buoyed by support from a group of fellow compulsive eaters she deems "the Stepfords," Frances adjusts not only to her new waistline, but to a strange new world—the Planet of Thin—where she doesn't speak the language and doesn't know the rules. Her lifetime of obesity had robbed her of the joys of lovers, a husband, children—and even made it impossible to enjoy a movie, when standing in line was too painful, or travel, when airplane seats were too small—and hadn't prepared her for the unexpected attention from strangers, the deep pleasure of trying on a tailored suit, the satisfaction of a good run on a treadmill, or for the saucy fun of flirting and dating. She joyfully moves from observer to player, while struggling to enjoy the freedom her new shape has given her.

As Frances gradually comes to know—and love—the stranger in the mirror, she learns that this body does not define her, but enables her to become the woman she's always wanted to be.

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