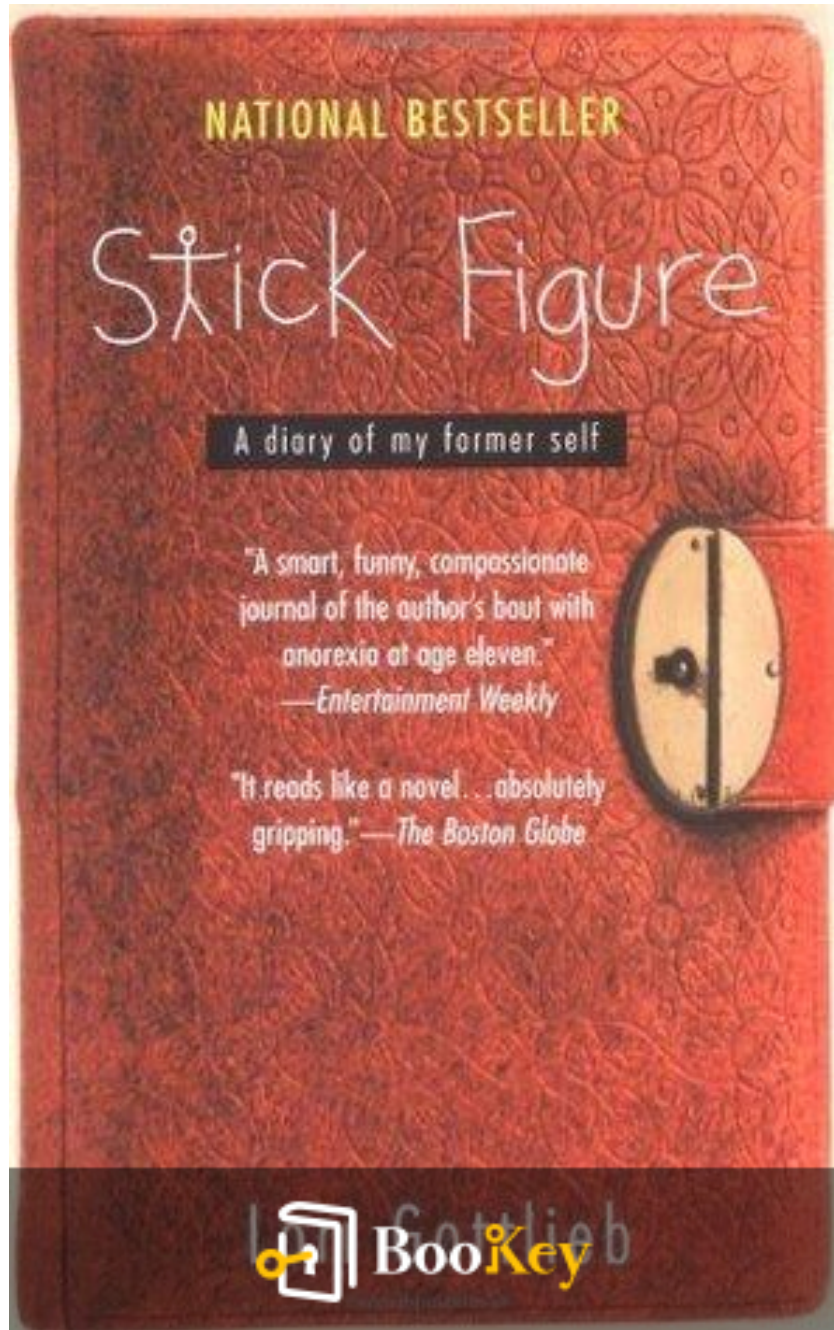


# Stick Figure PDF (Limited Copy)

Lori Gottlieb



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## **Stick Figure Summary**

Uncovering Childhood Truths: A Humorous Journey Through  
Growing Up

Written by New York Central Park Page Turners Books Club

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## About the book

In "Stick Figure," Lori Gottlieb embarks on a journey of self-reflection prompted by the unexpected discovery of her childhood diaries. These artifacts of her youth offer a compelling window into her formative years, revealing the multifaceted challenges of adolescence. As Gottlieb revisits her younger self, she candidly explores the often contradictory nature of growing up, where the pressure to fit in and the relentless pursuit of popularity overshadow authentic experiences.

The memoir humorously addresses critical themes such as societal beauty standards, which dictate how young girls perceive themselves and each other, and the complexities of family dynamics that shape their identities. Gottlieb's sharp wit illuminates the awkwardness inherent in adolescence, capturing the essence of a time marked by both insecurity and longing for acceptance. Through her vivid recollections, she articulates the universal moments of embarrassment and triumph that resonate with anyone navigating the transition from childhood to adulthood.

In this debut memoir, Gottlieb combines poignant, relatable anecdotes with incisive humor, offering readers not just a glimpse into her past but also a broader commentary on the absurdities and struggles that define youth. The result is a narrative that is both laugh-out-loud funny and deeply insightful, inviting readers to reflect on their own journeys of self-discovery while

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navigating the turbulent waters of growing up.

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## About the author

Lori Gottlieb is a renowned psychotherapist and bestselling author, particularly known for her impactful work, "Maybe You Should Talk to Someone." This book, which has resonated with nearly two million readers and is currently being adapted into a television series, delves into the therapeutic process from both the therapist's and the client's perspectives.

In her professional capacity, Gottlieb not only provides therapy but also co-hosts the popular "Dear Therapists" podcast, where she hosts real therapy sessions that exemplify her practical wisdom. Her expertise is frequently shared across major media platforms, such as The Today Show and CNN, showcasing her insights into mental health. Additionally, her TED Talk has gained considerable attention, ranking among the year's top ten viewed speeches, further solidifying her status as a thought leader in the field.

Beyond her clinical practice, she has created resources like the "Maybe You Should Talk to Someone Workbook" and the "Maybe You Should Talk to Someone Journal," aimed at guiding individuals in their personal growth and transformation. Through these endeavors, Gottlieb combines her therapeutic skills with a deep understanding of human emotions and relationships, offering readers and listeners valuable tools for navigating life's complexities.

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In her writing and speaking engagements, she often explores themes of vulnerability, connection, and the challenges people face in their emotional lives, providing a nuanced and compassionate lens on mental health. Her work encourages individuals to reflect on their experiences, embrace their feelings, and seek help when needed, making the journey towards healing more accessible and relatable.

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# Summary Content List

Chapter 1: 1

Chapter 2: 2

Chapter 3: 3

Chapter 4: 4

Chapter 5: 5

Chapter 6: 6

Chapter 7: 7

Chapter 8: 8

Chapter 9: 9

Chapter 10: 10

Chapter 11: 11

Chapter 12: 12

Chapter 13: 13

Chapter 14: 14

Chapter 15: 15

Chapter 16: 16

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## Chapter 17: 17

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# Chapter 1 Summary: 1

## Chapter 1 Summary of "Stick Figure"

### Introduction to the Protagonist

The story begins with the narrator, a young girl who feels profoundly misunderstood, particularly in her interactions with adults. She believes they overlook the depths of her thoughts while celebrating her uniqueness, making her feel like an outsider among her peers.

### Family Dynamics and Personal Struggles

The protagonist's family life is characterized by her mother's obsession with beauty, leading to a constant emphasis on appearances and societal standards. This obsession places pressure on the narrator to conform to these ideals, complicating her journey through adolescence as she navigates shifting friendships and diverging interests.

### School Challenges and Academic Pressure

At school, the narrator faces the dual challenges of academic pressure and social alienation. Labeled as intelligent, she grapples with the expectations

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that accompany this label, feeling separated from her friends who become increasingly interested in trivial matters. Her relationship with her teachers, especially Mrs. Rivers, becomes tense as they critique her unconventional approach to learning.

### **Social Pressures and Identity**

The protagonist reflects on her evolving identity and the impact of social dynamics at school. As her popularity diminishes, she finds herself feeling more isolated, struggling to connect with peers who are increasingly focused on superficial conversations and appearances.

### **Confronting Expectations and Finding Voice**

During a visit from a family friend, the narrator passionately addresses the pressures surrounding her changing appearance, feeling frustrated with societal beauty standards. This confrontation leads to disciplinary actions from her parents, adding complexity to her understanding of communication and self-expression.

### **Sports and Empowerment**

In gym class, the narrator challenges gender stereotypes by excelling in softball, an achievement that instills a newfound confidence in her. This

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success not only elevates her social status among peers but also serves as a moment of empowerment amid the confusion of her adolescent experience.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout the chapter, the narrator navigates her evolving identity, the weight of societal expectations, and the tumultuous journey of growing up. The narrative poignantly captures the struggles of adolescence and the quest for self-acceptance, illustrating the protagonist's determination to find her voice in a world that often feels dismissive.

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## Chapter 2 Summary: 2

### Summary of Chapter 2: "Stick Figure" by Lori Gottlieb

In this chapter, the narrator confronts her complex family dynamics while attempting to complete an essay that requires her to delve into her personal experiences and reflections. This writing assignment serves as a critical lens through which she examines both her own identity and the societal pressures imposed on her.

#### Family Dynamics

The narrator's family members play pivotal roles in shaping her views and experiences. Her **mother** is portrayed as beautiful yet emotionally immature, often being the source of drama and requiring support for even simple tasks. This portrayal evokes a sense of disappointment in the narrator, who feels burdened by her mother's child-like dependency. Conversely, the **father** is depicted as silent and logical; his emotional distance leaves the narrator feeling abandoned and disconnected, as he prioritizes solitude and intellectual engagement over familial warmth. Meanwhile, her **brother**, David, has become withdrawn, furthering the narrator's sense of isolation as their relationship deteriorates.



## **Writing Assignment Experience**

As the narrator begins her essay, she feels an overwhelming pressure to conform to perfection. This pressure distorts her authentic voice, compelling her to overuse transitional phrases in a bid to impress her teacher. Despite these efforts, she ultimately prefers her original, more truthful reflections, revealing her deep desire for genuine self-expression.

## **Self-Perception and Societal Pressures**

Throughout her adolescent journey, the narrator becomes acutely aware of societal expectations around beauty and body image. She observes how her peers grapple with similar issues, especially concerning dieting and self-worth, often influenced by the behavior of their mothers. This experience amplifies the theme of conformity, illustrating the struggle many girls face to measure up to external standards.

## **Personal Struggles with Dieting**

Compounded by familial and societal pressures, the narrator wrestles with her own views on body image. Influenced by her mother and friends, she internalizes the absurd practices surrounding food—where desserts are saved for males at the expense of her own desires. This absurdity underscores the expectations of girlhood she feels obliged to meet, revealing the internal

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conflict between her personal cravings and the external teachings she absorbs.

## **Conclusion**

In navigating her family dynamics and personal reflections, the narrator critically examines the societal pressures that shape her identity. Her internal struggles reflect broader themes of adolescence, perception, and the innate quest for acceptance as she seeks to reconcile her individuality with external expectations. Through this exploration, Gottlieb not only sheds light on the narrator's personal experiences but also critiques the societal norms that dictate the lives of young women.

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## Chapter 3 Summary: 3

### Chapter 3 Summary: Valentine's Day Dilemmas and Personal Growth

In this chapter, the narrator shares her disdain for Valentine's Day, a holiday she views as a social obligation rather than a genuine celebration of affection. She particularly reflects on an incident involving Chris Caplan and his seemingly insincere Valentine card to Evelyn, the classmate known as the "Booger Girl," highlighting the superficial nature of such gestures among peers.

The narrator's emotional stakes heighten when she receives an invitation to a "boy-girl" party at Samantha's house. This invitation stirs up anxiety, reminiscent of her previous exclusion from Tracy's party, where she felt marginalized. As she prepares for the event, she grapples with societal pressures around beauty and acceptance, particularly concerning her own insecurities. Despite her mother's encouraging words about her appearance, she obsessively tries on multiple outfits, hoping to look appealing to Chris, whom she considers cute.

At the party, the atmosphere is charged with typical teenage games like spin the bottle, leading to awkward encounters, particularly with Chris. The narrator's hope for a romantic connection becomes clear, yet the reality of



the game proves to be less enchanting than she anticipated. After the event, she shields her true feelings from her parents, fabricating a happier experience to avoid their scrutiny.

The chapter takes a turn when the narrator finds herself navigating sex education in school, triggering a mix of curiosity and embarrassment. She struggles to approach her parents about the topic and is caught off guard by the childbirth film shown in class, which intrigues yet overwhelms her.

Compounding her emotional turmoil is a family trip to Washington, D.C., which threatens to further isolate her from her friends and social aspirations. In a moment of frustration, she confronts her parents, resulting in punishment and escalating tension. This conflict leads her to adopt a more detached approach to her family dynamics, comparing herself to a chameleon that blends into her surroundings to cope with feelings of disappointment and conflict. Thus, the chapter explores not only the superficialities of teen social life but also deeper themes of identity, acceptance, and the challenges of growing up.

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# Chapter 4: 4

## Chapter 4 Summary

### Trapped in Washington

The narrator finds herself in Washington, feeling stifled by the structured itinerary designed by her parents. Their enthusiasm for each tourist destination clashes with her yearning for a leisurely escape; instead, she feels encased in a whirlwind of activities that leave little room for personal reflection or enjoyment.

### Family Dynamics

As they trek through historical sites, the narrator grapples with feelings of neglect. While her family engages with their surroundings, she becomes increasingly aware of her own disconnection, leading her to reflect on her life back home—particularly her struggles with school and friendships that feel increasingly isolated.

### Frustration with Expectations

This trip serves as a catalyst for the narrator's growing frustration with her

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parents' controlling tendencies and societal pressures. She resents their expectations, which seem to dictate her behavior and self-image, particularly concerning traditional gender roles that limit her sense of independence and freedom.

## **Meeting Relatives**

During a family dinner with her father's cousins, the narrator is struck by the shallow interactions she observes. Both adults and her cousin, Kate, exhibit behaviors that emphasize conformity to appearances and strict dieting, heightening her frustration and sense of alienation from family norms.

## **Self-Reflection**

Following her interactions with her cousin, the narrator delves into introspection regarding her body image and weight. This focus on societal beauty standards creates inner turmoil, as she navigates the conflicting messages about identity, acceptance, and the pressure to conform.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, this chapter encapsulates the complexities of adolescence, showcasing the narrator's struggle against familial expectations and societal norms. Her experiences during this family trip serve as a profound



exploration of individuality in the face of external pressures, highlighting the universal challenges faced by young people as they carve out their identities amidst overwhelming expectations.

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# Chapter 5 Summary: 5

## Chapter Summary of "Stick Figure" by Lori Gottlieb

### Climbing the Washington Monument

In this chapter, Lori Gottlieb grapples with her complicated relationship with food as she prepares for a climb of the Washington Monument to impress her friend Kate. Nervous about having stomach cramps during the ascent, she tries to skip breakfast, leading to a familial showdown at a restaurant. Her dad, a strict figure in her life, insists she eat, causing a scene that draws attention from those around them. This conflict illustrates the intense dynamics within Lori's family and sets the stage for her struggles with independence versus parental authority. Despite her protests about fairness, Lori ultimately succumbs to pressure and eats, highlighting the constant tug-of-war between her desires and her parents' concerns for her health.

### Tension Over Eating

As Lori reflects on her eating habits, she becomes entangled in the societal pressures surrounding body image and dieting. Influenced by various diet

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books, she believes that not eating will help her achieve skinnier legs, similar to what she perceives in her friend Kate. This obsession feeds into the emotional conflict with her father, whose strict enforcement of her eating creates a rift between them. The chapter emphasizes Lori's quest for autonomy against a backdrop of familial care and concern, illustrating how her desire for self-control clashes with their protective instincts.

### **Milkshake Incident**

The story continues with Lori attempting to avoid food-related conflicts by feigning illness to skip breakfast the next day. However, while heading to a White House tour, she finds herself consuming a milkshake, which brings about feelings of embarrassment when she unexpectedly encounters a schoolmate, Donna Landers. In a moment of panic, Lori tries to conceal the milkshake from her father, who pressures her to finish it. To avoid being caught, she resorts to dumping the milkshake in a bookcase during the tour, showcasing her ongoing struggle to navigate social pressures and parental expectations while managing her eating habits.

### **Family Meal Dynamics**

Lori's tension with food deepens during family gatherings with her relatives,

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Uncle Morris and Aunt Rose, who are preoccupied with cooking and food. Their constant pressure for her to eat exacerbates Lori's guilt about her eating habits, prompting her to concoct a lie about fasting for religious reasons to escape their demands. This dishonesty only intensifies her feelings of isolation and conflict. The family dynamic, characterized by love but also overwhelming scrutiny, complicates Lori's relationship with food and her self-image.

## **Conflict and Confrontation**

As the chapter progresses, the confrontations around Lori's eating habits swell, leading to heated arguments that fracture emotional boundaries between family members. Lori faces mounting frustration and disappointment from her parents, culminating in their decision to take her to see pediatrician Mayo Katz, aimed at addressing her dietary issues. This chapter serves as a poignant reflection on the broader themes of family, pressure, and the challenges of adolescence, as Lori navigates her self-worth amid social and familial expectations.

Overall, these chapters portray Lori's intricate struggles with food, body image, and family expectations, capturing the challenges of a young girl seeking to assert her identity in a world filled with competing pressures.



## Chapter 6 Summary: 6

In Chapter 6 of "Stick Figure" by Lori Gottlieb, the narrator grapples with the mounting pressures of body image and parental expectations. After a trip, her mother's immediate scheduling of appointments for hair, nails, and a doctor's visit reflects her growing concern over the narrator's eating habits. Although the narrator finds it unnecessary to see a doctor for what she considers a normal approach to eating, her mother's anxiety compels her to comply.

While waiting for Dr. Katz, the narrator reflects on the contradictions in dieting literature, noticing how magazines geared toward food don't emphasize calorie counting as her mother's diet manuals do. This tension underlines her struggle to navigate the conflicting messages surrounding food. She reveals her discomfort in hiding her dieting habits from her friend Julie, worried that news of her restrictive eating might reach her mother.

The appointment with Dr. Katz serves as a pivotal moment; he weighs the narrator and notes a concerning six-pound weight loss since her last check-up. Her mother eagerly expresses her frustration over the narrator's eating habits, while Dr. Katz emphasizes the necessity of healthy weight gain, recommending whole milk. This advice brings mixed feelings for the narrator, as her mother's enthusiastic gratitude further complicates her struggle with self-image.



Shopping for groceries, the narrator's attempts to advocate for healthier food choices clash with her mother's dismissive tendencies. The choice to buy whole milk contrasts sharply with the narrator's nutritional knowledge, highlighting a significant disconnect between her own understanding of dietary needs and her mother's practices.

At school, during lunch, the narrator continues to feel pressured to conform to dieting standards, often sacrificing her nutritional intake to gain social approval. She receives compliments about her weight loss, which temporarily boosts her self-esteem, illustrating the precarious balance between her self-worth and adherence to peer expectations.

After a follow-up appointment with Dr. Katz, the narrator admits to faking lactose intolerance to evade drinking whole milk, prompting the doctor to suggest further tests for underlying digestive issues. This revelation feeds into her anxiety, especially in light of her father's insistence that food is medicine, further intensifying her fear over potential health complications.

Ultimately, this chapter thoughtfully portrays the narrator's complex relationship with food, strained family dynamics, and the pervasive societal pressures regarding body image. It underscores the internal conflict she faces as she navigates the challenges of her formative years, heavily influenced by her parents' concerns and societal standards.

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## Chapter 7 Summary: 7

In Chapter 7 of "Stick Figure" by Lori Gottlieb, we delve deeper into Lori's complex relationship with her body image and the mounting pressures surrounding her health. After a doctor's appointment, Lori returns home to find her mother anxious about her noticeable weight loss. This interaction highlights the tension within her family regarding Lori's health and dietary choices. Influenced by pervasive advertisements promoting idealized body standards, Lori decides to switch her breakfast to Special K cereal, believing this decision will align her more closely with societal expectations of beauty.

At school, things take a turn when Lori is called in to meet with Miss Shaw, the guidance counselor. Miss Shaw expresses concern over Lori's behaviors and her rapid weight loss, but instead of confiding her inner turmoil, Lori deflects through sarcasm, making a quip about Miss Shaw's life. This exchange showcases Lori's discomfort and unwillingness to open up about her struggles, illuminating the barriers she faces in seeking help.

To further conceal her eating habits from her parents and teachers, Lori fabricates a tale about being lactose intolerant, claiming she needs medical tests as an excuse to avoid scrutiny. This leads to a hospital visit for a gastrointestinal test, where her anxiety manifests as an unwillingness to eat. In the sterile environment of the hospital, her obsession with weight predominates her thoughts, layered with a deep-seated vulnerability that



surfaces when she interacts with a kindly nurse—a figure of compassion that strikes both a comforting and fearsome chord for Lori.

The chapter culminates in a fraught ride home with her mother, highlighting the strained dynamics of Lori's family life and her mother's persistent worry about Lori's health. The emotional undercurrents of this relationship add to Lori's feelings of inadequacy and the societal pressure to conform to a slender ideal. As the chapter concludes, it foreshadows the ongoing challenges Lori will face related to her diet and body image, setting the stage for her further internal struggles and the significant impact of societal expectations on her self-worth. Throughout this chapter, Gottlieb artfully captures the emotional weight of adolescence, marked by a quest for acceptance amidst the noise of external pressures and personal fears.

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## Chapter 8: 8

### Summary of Chapter 8: Facts and Figures

In this chapter, the protagonist grapples with her anorexia during a pivotal conversation with her father that unfolds the underlying tensions within their family dynamic. Concerned for her health, he shares statistical insights regarding the dietary needs of girls her age, but she dismisses this information, fixating instead on her aspiration to be thin. This exchange starkly illustrates the chasm between the protagonist's distorted self-image and her parents' genuine worry for her well-being.

As she navigates her struggle, the protagonist is preoccupied with an impending medical appointment, even as she achieves notable athletic success at school. However, this success is marred by unkind teasing from her peers, which deepens her feelings of isolation and misunderstanding. Her accolades do little to alleviate the emotional turmoil she faces.

At her appointment with Dr. Katz, her physician, she faces a harsh reality when she is weighed and informed of her significant weight loss. This prompts a referral to a psychiatrist, Dr. Sol Gold, a step she resists, unsure about what it entails. Feeling skeptical about the therapeutic process and the qualifications of the attending assistant—whose appearance gives her



pause—she enters therapy with trepidation.

Contrarily, Dr. Gold approaches her with an unconventional and engaging style, introducing chess into their sessions while also inquiring about her interests. This relaxed interaction contrasts sharply with her previous

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# Chapter 9 Summary: 9

## Chapter 9 Summary

In Chapter 9 of "Stick Figure," Lori Gottlieb presents a vivid portrayal of a seemingly superficial Parents' Night at school, where teachers lavish exaggerated praise on the students. Amid this facade, Lori struggles with feelings of misunderstanding and isolation, both at home and in her social circles. While her parents take pride in her achievements, Lori grapples with self-image issues, navigating the complicated world of adolescence that is often dominated by body image concerns, especially in her interactions with her peers, like Leslie.

As the festivities carry on, Lori feels increasingly out of place and retreats to the hallway, where she reflects on her loneliness. Her attempts to connect with classmates result in a series of awkward exchanges, culminating in an embarrassing comment from a fellow student that only deepens her sense of alienation. Ultimately, her parents' preoccupation with their own excitement about the night leaves her feeling neglected and unseen.

In the aftermath of Parents' Night, Lori's father opts for a visit to Dr. Gold, a psychologist, hoping to clarify the family's underlying issues. The therapy session is fraught with uncomfortable dialogue, highlighting the disconnect

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between Lori's feelings and her parents' concerns, which primarily focus on her eating habits. As Lori voices her frustrations, it becomes apparent that she feels more like a subject of analysis rather than a valued member of the family.

This chapter underscores the complexity of adolescent life, particularly the challenges surrounding body image and the often misguided attempts of parents to bridge the emotional gaps with their children. It illustrates how communication, though pivotal, can feel disingenuous when not grounded in genuine understanding. Through these experiences, Lori's story captures the essence of teenage struggles for acceptance and the significant role familial relationships play in shaping one's self-perception.

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## Chapter 10 Summary: 10

### ### Summary of Chapter 10 - "Stick Figure"

In Chapter 10, titled "Stick Figure," the protagonist grapples with her feelings of isolation and the intricacies of her mental health, particularly regarding her sleep and body image. The chapter opens with her reflecting on her struggle to remember dreams, which Dr. Gold, her therapist, encourages her to share, believing that exploring these dreams could be more beneficial than her usual chess games. This leads her to recall a vivid dream in which she is driving a motorboat alone on the vast ocean, a powerful symbol of her loneliness and longing for connection, even amidst a crowd.

During her session with Dr. Gold, she opens up about her perception of being misunderstood and unheard, particularly when it comes to her family dynamics, her weight concerns, and the looming fear of potentially needing hospitalization. Despite Dr. Gold's probing, she struggles to vocalize her deeper issues, revealing the disconnection between her internal struggles and her ability to communicate them effectively.

The chapter delves into her family relationships, especially her interactions with her father and brother, who inadvertently exacerbate her anxieties about body image. Her father's comparisons to glamorous TV characters, like the



Angels from "Charlie's Angels," highlight the societal pressures she feels, making their interaction tense. It becomes evident that even a seemingly exciting invitation to meet Jaclyn Smith, a beloved actress, stirs both exhilaration and deep insecurity within her.

When she finally meets Jaclyn Smith, the contrasting dynamics are striking. The actress indulges in a regular hamburger, which starkly contrasts the protagonist's restrictive eating habits fueled by her preoccupation with body image. Their lunch symbolizes conflicting lifestyles and the pressure to conform to societal ideals of beauty and health. This moment serves as a poignant reminder of the protagonist's insecurities surrounding her own self-worth.

The chapter reaches a climax with a heated discussion about her health, leading to a family meeting facilitated by Dr. Gold. While her family's concern is evident, the protagonist feels a sense of betrayal, perceiving the intervention as a manipulation that infringes on her autonomy. This struggle for control over her body and choices amplifies her feeling of being unheard, even by those who profess to care.

In conclusion, "Stick Figure" explores the multifaceted challenges of adolescence, particularly the intersection of psychological health, familial expectations, and societal pressures surrounding body image. Through her dreams and interactions, the protagonist's journey reveals a profound

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struggle for identity and self-acceptance, underscoring the complexities of her emotional landscape.

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## Chapter 11 Summary: 11

Chapter 11 of "Stick Figure" by Lori Gottlieb delves into the narrator's experience upon her arrival at Cedars-Sinai Hospital— a prominent medical facility known for treating various health issues, including mental health disorders. Accompanied by her parents, the narrator begins her journey amidst the chaos of their car ride, where arguments about directions create an uneasy atmosphere, exacerbating her existing headache. The admission process is a source of discomfort as the narrator grapples with the invasive nature of the "strictly confidential" information being recorded.

Upon being assigned to a nurse named Elizabeth, the narrator encounters a flurry of medical students who repetitively probe her about her condition. Frustration mounts as she yearns for simple pain relief, but instead, the focus shifts to her headaches, missed signals that she wishes to clarify her reason for admission—her diet. It's not until her mother reveals that she is struggling with anorexia nervosa that the gravity of her situation surfaces, emphasizing the severity of her condition.

As the narrator settles into hospital life, an overwhelming anxiety regarding the food served amplifies her longing to return home. The confinement of her hospital room, with its unable-to-open windows, heightens her sense of entrapment and stirs memories of her previous experiences with dieting and her tumultuous relationship with food.

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The narrator recounts the stringent rules established by Dr. Katz, her physician, which include daily weigh-ins and controlled meal schedules. These regulations feel stifling to her, prompting skepticism about their ability to facilitate the changes she needs. In a pivotal encounter with Bonnie, the hospital nutritionist, the narrator is introduced to the concept of food and behavior modification diaries. However, she firmly resists this approach, convinced her existing dieting practices should suffice.

During mealtimes, the narrator's disdain for the hospital food is palpable, but she finds solace in playful exchanges with Elizabeth, who attempts to break through her walls. Despite her reluctance, she manages to consume some of her breakfast, showcasing her ongoing internal struggle between compliance and defiance.

The chapter takes a poignant turn with the visit from Doug, a medical student whose concern for the narrator deepens their connection. Their shared moments of levity, particularly during a chess game, provide a much-needed diversion from the seriousness of her situation. This interaction highlights her yearning for companionship amid feelings of isolation, as the chapter closes on a note of introspection and fleeting distraction, illustrating the duality of her experience in the hospital—one fraught with loneliness, yet momentarily alleviated by human connection.

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## Chapter 12: 12

In Chapter 12 of "Stick Figure" by Lori Gottlieb, Lori's experience in the hospital for her eating disorder unfolds through a series of poignant interactions and reflections. As she interacts with her doctors, particularly Dr. Katz, the gravity of her situation becomes evident. Dr. Katz asserts that this is not a vacation, reminding Lori that her stay is centered on healing. Lori, feeling the constraints imposed by her treatment, perceives the hospital environment as more akin to a hotel, filled with strict routines and a complete lack of autonomy regarding her meals due to her ongoing weight loss.

Amidst the clinical atmosphere, a nurse named Brownie brings a candy-filled bird as a thoughtful gesture from Lori's friend, Erica. However, Lori finds it challenging to embrace this kindness, reflecting her complicated relationship with food. Brownie, attempting to offer support, encourages Lori to connect with another patient, Nora. Yet, Lori remains hesitant, choosing isolation over companionship, even resorting to drastic measures like flushing her food down the toilet—a harrowing indication of her ongoing battle with her eating disorder.

Lori further explores her hospitalization in a school assignment, drawing parallels between her current situation and summer camp. While she identifies similarities, such as a structured schedule and social interactions



among peers, she acknowledges that the stakes are significantly higher in the hospital. Illnesses not only shape personal identities but also influence social dynamics, amplifying feelings of anxiety around friendship and the potential loss of connections.

Throughout the chapter, Lori grapples with profound feelings of loneliness. She reflects on her desire to fit in while simultaneously striving to overcome the deep-rooted challenges of her condition. This internal conflict enriches her narrative, illuminating the emotional complexities of adolescent struggles with identity and health. Thus, this chapter encapsulates the dichotomy of wanting acceptance while battling an eating disorder, highlighting the ongoing tension between her immediate reality and the longing for a healthier future.

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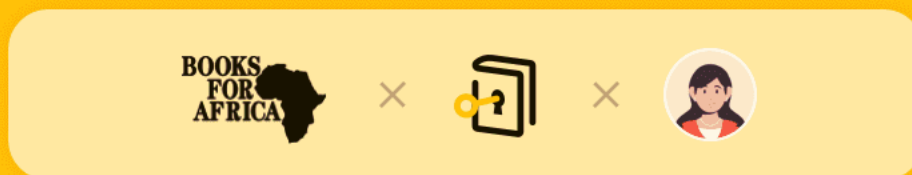




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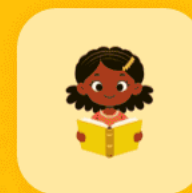
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## Chapter 13 Summary: 13

### Summary of Chapter 13 from "Stick Figure" by Lori Gottlieb

In this pivotal chapter, Nora's health predicament takes center stage as Dr. Katz visits her early, expressing deep concern over her lab test results and her troubling eating habits. He provides a stark warning to the nurses, emphasizing that Nora's self-reports cannot be taken at face value. Upon examination, he uncovers serious health issues such as dehydration and osteoporosis, insisting that Nora adhere strictly to eating protocols, including consuming everything on her tray. This marks a turning point in Nora's treatment, highlighting the gravity of her situation.

As Nora grapples with these restrictions, she feels increasingly isolated. She is further trapped by the nurses' strict policies, particularly under the watch of a staff member named Brownie, who seems to derive satisfaction from her distress. Feeling confined and powerless, Nora contemplates resisting the hospital's rigid food rules, battling her sense of autonomy against the ever-present authority of her caregivers.

Amidst this turmoil, Nora finds solace in an unexpected friendship with another patient, also named Nora. This new Nora, despite her battle with cystic fibrosis, brings a sense of normalcy and joy into Nora's life. They

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connect over their shared experiences and struggles, and the bond deepens when Nora sneaks junk food to her friend, which she is trying to hide from the staff. This connection provides a much-needed ray of hope in Nora's otherwise bleak hospital experience.

However, desperation drives Nora to consider escape from the hospital. Motivated by her desire for freedom, she hatches a plan that involves enlisting the help of her new friend, vowing future treats of Monster Cookies. Yet, her attempt to flee falls short; her escape is thwarted when security apprehends her, and she finds herself back in the confines of the hospital.

Upon her return, Dr. Gold reassures Nora that the vigilance regarding her health stems from genuine care, a notion that Nora struggles to accept. The chapter concludes with the unsettling realization that she will be closely monitored, intensifying her anxiety about the possibility of being fitted with a feeding tube. This situation leads Nora to further reflect on her significant loss of control over her life, underscoring the emotional turmoil she faces as she navigates her health crisis. The chapter encapsulates themes of isolation, the quest for agency, and the importance of human connection in the fight against illness.

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## Chapter 14 Summary: 14

In Chapter 14 of "Stick Figure" by Lori Gottlieb, the protagonist grapples with her eating disorder, intricately entwined with her interactions with hospital staff and her mother. Central to her experience is Bonnie, a staff member who encourages her to fill out meal cards with unhealthy food options. However, the protagonist resists this manipulation as she strives to establish a healthier relationship with food. This struggle is further encapsulated in a tense moment when Dr. Gold suggests filming her to help alter her distorted self-perception, a proposition she reluctantly agrees to.

Amidst her treatment, the arrival of her mother's gift—a pair of jeans belonging to her ex-friend Shereen—triggers a whirlwind of emotions. The protagonist feels a surge of anxiety and trepidation, certain that the jeans will not fit her. When she tries them on and discovers they fit but appear too loose, her suspicions of a trick deepen, escalating the unhealthy comparisons to Shereen that her mother unwittingly reinforces.

As she reflects on her body image, the protagonist learns her target weight is a shocking 60 pounds, prompting disturbing realizations about her condition and self-worth. This knowledge compounds her feelings of fear and inadequacy, leading her to desperately contemplate self-harm as a means of escape. In a pivotal moment, she attempts to hurt herself but is interrupted by a compassionate nurse named Elizabeth. This intervention becomes a



turning point, leading her to oscillate between numbness and vulnerability, prompting a deeper introspection about her mental state and the overpowering struggle with her eating disorder.

Throughout the chapter, themes of body image, control, vulnerability, and the pursuit of acceptance permeate her journey, highlighting her tumultuous path in confronting her inner demons while longing for understanding and a healthier self-image.

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# Chapter 15 Summary: 15

## Chapter 15 Summary: Secretary School

### Weight and Identity Struggles

The chapter begins with the narrator grappling with significant body image concerns, sparked by Elizabeth's probing question about self-harm. The narrator unveils a deep-seated fear linked to societal beauty norms, expressing a troubling belief that overweight girls are destined for "secretary school," a metaphor for limited life prospects. This exchange underscores the oppressive pressure women face to conform to certain standards of beauty and success.

### Motherhood Perspectives

Contrasting the narrator's bleak outlook on motherhood, Elizabeth, a supportive nurse and mother, shares her joyous views on childbirth. She describes it as a "supernatural" experience, aiming to instill a sense of hope in the narrator regarding her potential as a mother. This dialogue highlights the differences in their experiences and attitudes, suggesting that motherhood can be a source of empowerment rather than resignation.



## **Encouragement and Connection**

Elizabeth offers reassurance, reminding the narrator that her worth extends beyond her weight. Their conversation shifts to lighter topics, where laughter over commercials provides a momentary escape from serious struggles. Elizabeth's faith in the narrator's commitment to avoid self-harm fosters a budding sense of hope, reinforcing their bond and providing comfort amid uncertainty.

## **Eating Challenges and Treatment Frustrations**

When Dr. Katz praises the narrator for her eating progress, she expresses frustration towards Dr. Gold, whose rigid questioning forces her to confront the deeper issues of her eating disorder. This reflects the internal conflict the narrator faces, caught between wanting to please those around her and dealing with her emotional turmoil.

## **Mixed Feedback from Staff**

The narrator's journey is further emphasized through mixed feedback from Nurse Bonnie, who recognizes a small victory in her eating habits, while reminding her that the road ahead is long. Despite this challenge, the narrator embraces newfound privileges linked to her progress and starts imagining a future beyond the limitations of her current life.

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## Exploration of Ambitions

In a pivotal moment of self-discovery, the narrator and Elizabeth engage in a discussion about future ambitions, delving into the narrator's interests in fields like astrophysics and dance. This conversation serves as a crucial turning point, revealing the narrator's desire to break free from societal expectations. Their shared dance beneath the stars symbolizes a moment of connection and hope, as they both embrace the idea that life can offer more than predetermined roles. Overall, this chapter captures the narrator's evolving identity, moving towards a more hopeful and expansive vision of her future.

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# Chapter 16: 16

## ### Summary of Chapter 16: Not Resuscitate

In Chapter 16, the protagonist delves into her conflicted feelings surrounding body image, familial expectations, and the emotional nuances of attending her brother David's graduation. This chapter elegantly weaves together themes of parental pressure, societal standards of beauty, and her internal struggles, particularly in relation to her ongoing battle with anorexia.

### Family Dynamics

The chapter opens with tension between the protagonist and her mother, who holds traditional views on beauty and insists that her daughter wear a layered skirt to the graduation ceremony. The protagonist's disdain for the outfit symbolizes her broader struggle with self-image, believing that no attire can make her feel attractive. This clash escalates into a charged phone call, culminating in the protagonist hanging up on her mother—a pivotal act of defiance that underscores her quest for autonomy and self-identity.

### Hospital Observations

As the protagonist reflects on her life in the hospital, she encounters Rita,

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another mother grappling with the heart-wrenching decision to withdraw life support from her terminally ill infant son, Luther. Rita's situation encapsulates intense maternal love, prioritizing her child's dignity over societal beliefs about life and care. This poignant contrast provides a backdrop against which the protagonist examines her own relationship with her mother, revealing stark differences in expressions of love and sacrifice.

### **Struggles with Self-Image**

The protagonist is continually bombarded by her mother's ideals, which include an emphasis on makeup and fashionable attire. This external pressure feeds into her personal battles with anorexia, as she increasingly distances herself from the notion that beauty must correlate with inner happiness. Her reflections spotlight the disparity between how she views herself and how she feels within, compounding her feelings of inadequacy.

### **Graduation Experience**

Ultimately, succumbing to her mother's wishes, the protagonist attends the graduation in a frilly dress that feels alien to her. During the ceremony, she faces another challenge: eating a well-prepared meal for the first time in a while. The enjoyment of prime rib stirs conflicting emotions of guilt and relief, highlighting her ongoing struggle with food. A pivotal moment occurs when she sees her reflection in the bathroom, prompting a shift in her



aspirations about body image and health, moving away from her unrealistic desire to be merely a "stick figure."

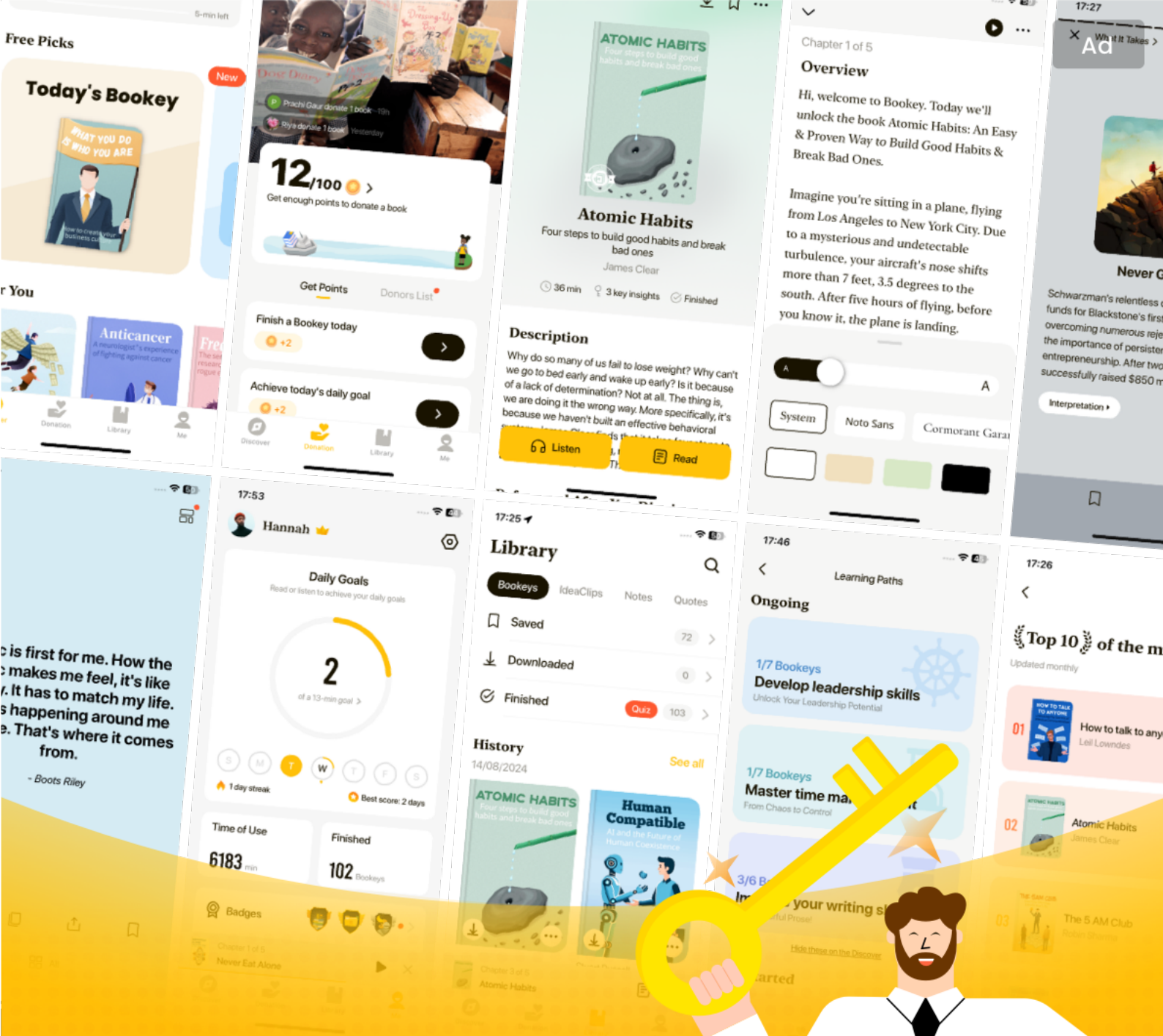
## **Concluding Reflections**

The chapter concludes with the protagonist engaging in a profound introspection about her identity, the weight of societal expectations, and the varied experiences of motherhood she observes around her. Her complex relationship with her own mother and the influence of peers contribute to her ongoing internal battle during adolescence, setting the stage for her growth as she navigates life amidst the shadow of her eating disorder.

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## Chapter 17 Summary: 17

### Summary of Chapter 17 from "Stick Figure" by Lori Gottlieb

### Eggshells

In this chapter, Dr. Gold, the narrator's psychiatrist, proposes a family dinner at the hospital to ease her transition back home after a four-week stay for treatment. The narrator opts for chicken tacos from El Coyote, her favorite restaurant, as a comforting choice. However, the dinner reveals the fraught dynamics within her family. Tension pervades the atmosphere, particularly palpable from her anxious mother, as everyone struggles to project a sense of normalcy. Conversations quickly pivot to superficial topics, masking the underlying apprehension surrounding the narrator's return and the family's emotions.

### Nora's Condition

As the dinner unfolds, the narrator becomes acutely aware of the hospital's atmosphere beyond her immediate surroundings, learning that her friend Nora has been readmitted in critical condition following a severe health decline. The family is asked to leave the area to provide space for Nora's family, which deepens the narrator's concern. Tragically, shortly after, Nora

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passes away, thrusting the narrator into a tumult of grief. This loss starkly contrasts her own survival journey, leading to a profound introspection on the fragility of life and her own struggles.

### **You Can Never Be Too Rich or Too Thin**

As the narrator prepares for her discharge, Dr. Gold reassures her about the continuing support she will receive through therapy, highlighting her need for ongoing care. Reflecting on her time in the hospital, the narrator recognizes the significant shifts within herself, in contrast to the unchanged behavior of her family. This realization becomes even clearer when she discovers her mother attempting to conceal bar napkins that read, “You can never be too rich or too thin.” This phrase disturbs her, prompting critical thoughts about societal pressures related to dieting and body image. This moment marks a pivotal change in the narrator’s mindset, indicating her journey towards self-acceptance and individuality—a significant milestone in her character development.

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