



# Being Ana: A Memoir of Anorexia Nervosa

*Shani Raviv*

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## **Being Ana: A Memoir of Anorexia Nervosa** Shani Raviv

"I passed by the full-length mirror on the wall near the door. I caught a glimpse of a very thin girl with dead, straight, long, dry peroxided hair and a skimpy outfit like a whorish doll. I turned sideways to look at her. I saw a child. I saw a witch. I saw a dumb blonde. It took a few seconds for my mind to register that the girl in the mirror was me. I looked her up and down. I was thin, blonde and tanned and I was still not happy." Being Ana is the story of one young woman's fight to find strength in vulnerability, truth in her identity and meaning in being herself. Shani Raviv is a struggling adolescent living in an eccentric, all-female, diet-free household in South Africa. At age fourteen, belonging to a girl clique, she gets hooked on a system of counting calories that traps her inside a crazed mind. Over the next decade, Shani embarks on an unholy pilgrimage: from aerobics addict to Israeli soldier to rave bunny to wannabe reborn, she tries to find self-worth in sex, everlasting happiness in drugs and alcohol, comfort in cutting, and above all, salvation in starving. A spiritual epiphany one night awakens her to the fearful realization that she has lost her sense of self to Anorexia (Ana). Shani has to decide whether to surrender and risk losing Ana-which was all she knew-to go in search of nourishment and her true self in a sane and sober world.

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