

One-Line

The story of an unexpected friendship between two women - one obese, the other anorexic.

Brief Synopsis

(200 words)

Lydia is a fat, graceful woman struggling to maintain her identity in fashionable Venice Beach, CA. Though she is a member of a Fat Acceptance Group (a movement dedicated to fighting prejudice against fat people), she still struggles with complex feelings about her body and its place in the world.

Darcy, a recovering-anorexic Venice real estate agent, is struggling with the same issues from a very different perspective. Her attempt to join the Fat Acceptance Group (since she sees herself as fat) is quickly rejected - but it introduces her to Lydia.

Though they seem at first to be each other's worst nightmare, Lydia and Darcy begin to confide in each other. Meeting warily in the social minefields of hunger and satisfaction, anger and femininity, sexuality and fashion, trust and fear...they become friends.

But then Lydia, stirred by a growing romance with a sweet overweight guy named Bob, asks Darcy for an unusual favor: she wants anorexia lessons.

When Darcy lets Lydia inside her secret inner world, it forces both women to confront deeply-buried feelings about their bodies - and nothing will ever be the same again, for either one.

Detailed Synopsis

(1,200 words)

We meet Lydia in a militant Fat Acceptance group: not a self-help session, but part of a movement dedicated to fighting prejudice against fat people.

But she is struggling with complex feelings about her body and its place in the world, and her attempt to start a fat-acceptance group to walk for exercise on the beach stirs conflict in the meeting.

Enter Darcy: a recovering-anorexic real estate agent who wants to join the Group, since she sees herself as fat. Though Lydia objects to the reverse-discrimination, Darcy is rejected.

Watching Lydia and Darcy at work and at home in fashionable Venice, California, we realize they share at least one experience: loneliness.

But when Darcy offers to help publicize Lydia's beach-walking group, Lydia can't see past their differences and turns her down. Darcy takes advantage of the arrival of Bob, a friendly overweight guy, to press Lydia to accept her help.

Lydia and Bob start the "two-person group", walking together despite ridicule from Hilliard, a homeless guy begging for change on the Ocean Front Walk.

Afterwards, sitting by the Graffiti Walls, they engage in some careful first attempts at flirting.

A few days later at a local café, Darcy shows Lydia the poster designs she had made for walking group. Lydia confronts Darcy about her need to "hang out with the fat girls" - only to be startled by Darcy's honesty: she wants a friend. They end the scene with an uncomfortable truce.

Meanwhile, Bob - trying to avoid humiliation while finding comfort - discovers from a Hooker that even paying for it doesn't guarantee sexual acceptance.

At the next Group meeting Lydia argues with Carol, the Leader, about whether a desire to change one's body is at odds with Fat Acceptance.

That ends with a standoff - but then Lydia is unexpectedly touched to discover that Darcy has gone ahead and distributed postcards to drum up “an actual group” for her Walking Group at the beach.

After the walk, Bob and Lydia talk again. They are getting comfortable, and Bob confesses his desire for a “friend with benefits” (or f--k-buddy) who can accept his weight.

That evening, when Lydia calls Darcy to thank her for the postcards, they end up talking about Bob - and sex. Lydia discovers that, despite their appearances, she is far more comfortable and confident sexually than Darcy is.

In the next after-walk-talk, Lydia and Bob make formal plans for a sexual rendezvous.

The same night that they're going to “do it”, Darcy attends her father's birthday party. She quickly becomes entangled in her family's patterns of conflict and avoidance.

Meanwhile, Lydia and Bob make love, which we see intercut with a discussion of sexuality by the Group.

The sex is a sweet experience for Lydia and Bob, but the afterglow is tarnished by an argument provoked when Lydia discovers Bob is planning to have weight-loss surgery. Though they patch it up, the fight makes them aware that despite their hunger for intimacy, they don't really know each other very well.

Lydia and Darcy, however, are growing closer with each phone call. Sharing the news about her evening with Bob leads Lydia to an even more personal revelation: she is also tempted to try drastic weight-loss measures like surgery. Darcy “talks her down”, but Lydia is still struggling.

Which leads her to visit Darcy's condo soon after - to ask, in person, for an unusual favor: she wants “anorexia lessons.”

Darcy is troubled, intrigued, confused. When she tries to explain what it means to venture into this territory, both women find themselves talking more

honestly with each other than they ever have with anyone. By the end of the conversation they agree to try the lessons.

The lessons are equal parts troubling and fun. Darcy throws out all of Lydia's food and lectures her on controlling what one eats - and thus one's feelings and relationships.

At the beach, Darcy teaches Lydia to critique every passing woman - which provokes Lydia to ask what Darcy thinks of her body. The question is a turning point: they realize that being intimate and honest isn't always pretty.

Lydia works on following Darcy's lessons - walking more vigorously (and attracting more ridicule from Hilliard) and restricting what she eats (and attracting ridicule from a guy at the market.)

It's not long before she's calling Darcy for support. They meet after work to watch sunset at the beach and compare notes about their strangely-similar-antithetical experiences. They have become real friends.

But things are falling apart with Bob. He doesn't show up at the next Walking Group, and when Lydia calls him - he lies. The next day, Lydia goes to confront Bob at work. She needs honesty, even if it hurts. Which it does. But Bob points out he has always been honest with her; if she expected more, that was her problem. Lydia walks away from the failed romance - angry, but not entirely sure at whom.

She calls Darcy for help, but then doesn't want to explain why, so she tries to face her craving for comfort food alone. She struggles through "withdrawal" all evening - and then finally breaks and binges.

Later, Lydia lies to Darcy on the phone. Darcy knows something is wrong, and the next morning, goes to confront Lydia.

Lydia tries to give up on their anorexia project, but Darcy won't let her quit so easily. She suggests staying with Lydia for a few nights, so Lydia won't be able to eat in secret. Forced to face her life-long methods of coping with stress and pain, and also recognizing this may be more about their loneliness than their weight, Lydia agrees to the plan.

Late that night, Lydia wakes to the sound of thumping feet in the next room: Darcy is exercising. Trying to get past the awkward moment, they venture into new territory, sharing more about their eating disorders.

They talk intimately for hours, until Lydia suggests sharing a food binge - and they both realize that, no matter how much they have in common, the lessons only go one way.

The next morning, Darcy is distant. Lydia, ashamed, lets her go.

But when Hilliard mocks her yet again on the beach, Lydia finds herself screaming insults back at him. Unfortunately, it only reveals how comfortable just about everyone is showing contempt for the overweight.

Meanwhile, Darcy makes a call to her former therapist...but hangs up without leaving a message.

When Darcy gets home that evening, she discovers Lydia on her doorstep. Darcy rejects Lydia's attempt to repair the relationship - which provokes Lydia to angrily make a case for her damaged self-esteem...attacking Darcy in the process, naming Darcys' greatest fear: that she is unloved.

Lydia and Darcy, each alone, return to their old methods of comforting themselves. But they have both been shaken by the events of the past few days. So Lydia tries again.

Darcy wants to shut her out, but Lydia won't let it go. They each need to get where they've been going...even if it isn't always pretty.