



# Losing It

*Sandy McKay*

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**Losing It** Sandy McKay

**NZ Post Children's Book Award-winning young adult novel about a young girl's journey back from anorexia to health and independence**Johanna is in hospital, writing letters to her best friend, Issy: letters because for Johanna, most things that we take for granted have turned into privileges. She can only have visitors, leave her room, or even use the phone, if she starts to eat. Johanna suffers from anorexia, and her condition has reached a point where doctors, nurses, and counsellors have had to find new ways to encourage, bribe, cajole-or, as she thinks, punish her-into returning to a normal weight. As Johanna exchanges letters with Issy, and her own family, the novel is also peppered with extracts from Johanna's diary, quotations from the hospital notice boards, poems, and even bathroom graffiti. Johanna offers us wry, insightful portraits of her fellow patients in the ward. Counterbalancing her experience, Issy offers us a picture of a full family, school and social life, a life that Johanna has left behind . for a while at least. Slowly, we-and Johanna-start to unravel the history that brought her to these desperate circumstances. It's the story of a young girl struggling to understand her mother's actions, and taking on too much responsibility because of an adult's inability to cope; it's also the story of how Johanna, through witnessing the worst possible outcome of anorexia, begins to pull herself back to recovery. Sandy McKay tackles a very sober topic with a lightness of touch that neither undermines the gravity of the subject, nor skirts the most difficult truths about the condition.

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