



# Almost Lost: The True Story of an Anonymous Teenager's Life on the Streets

By Beatrice Sparks

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**Almost Lost: The True Story of an Anonymous Teenager's Life on the Streets** By Beatrice Sparks

Who in his right mind wants to talk to a shrink? I don't want to talk about anything. I don't want to feel anything, taste anything ... or anything. The lyrics "just dying to die" run around in my brain day and night...

Fifteen-year-old Sam is in pain. He comes to the therapist's office unwillingly, angry, depressed, and filled with guilt over his own self-destructive behavior. He is being drawn deeper and deeper into a black hole of despair from which he sees no way out.

## The Road Back

This is the Real-life story of Sam's Recovery, told from tapes of his therapy sessions. It tells what drove him to leave home, how he survived on the street, and why he was desperate to escape from the brutality of the gang that had become his "family" and from the torment of his own self-loathing. For every teen who has experienced the pain and loneliness of a no-way-out darkness, and for all those who love them, here is the light that can lead the way back.

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### Editorial Review

#### From Publishers Weekly

Presented as edited transcripts of taped counseling sessions Sparks (It Happened to Nancy) conducted with a 15-year-old patient, Sammy, this book pieces together a sobering story of a boy "almost lost" to depression. At his mother's insistence, the suicidal teenager begins talking to the perspicacious therapist, acknowledging that his inner pain is so deep that "sometimes even my hair hurts." Sammy can be almost astonishingly articulate as he gradually reveals the traumatic incidents from his past that have stripped away his self-esteem and self-respect. The caring therapist provides him with a variety of exercises, charts and "mind games" to help him get rid of the "fetid garbage" he is carrying around: his decision to join a gang in hopes of gaining a "family," experimentation with drugs and alcohol, experience as a victim of a drive-by shooting and his debilitating, unresolved bitterness toward his abusive estranged father. Though the transcripts shape a clearly defined portrait of an intelligent, determined teen, some of the patient-therapist conversations recorded here may seem lengthy and repetitious to the general YA reader. Yet for those coping with depression, Sparks's account provides inspiration, some rudimentary practical tools and a resounding endorsement of the potential benefits of therapy. Ages 12-up.

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#### From School Library Journal

Grade 9 Up?Sammy, 15, ran away from home in depression and despair, and this is the story of his return to his family and his road to recovery. The book was written from tapes of his therapy sessions. In eight months, he transformed from being a gang member surviving in the streets to the glue that brought his parents together again. He graphically describes his reasons for joining the gang, his initiation, and its activities. The text is mainly a dialogue between Sammy and his counselor and occasionally one of his family members. The therapist uses various psychological techniques such as positive light therapy, optical illusions, positive thinking, etc. It is hard to imagine that the troubled teenager described in the beginning could change so dramatically so quickly and cure his father's cocaine habit, recover from depression, and restore his parents' marriage. Although this book attempts to give troubled students hope and a role model to follow, the scenario described is hardly the norm, and the young man comes across as wise beyond his years in the counseling sessions.?Sandra L. Doggett, Urbana High School, Walkersville, MD

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#### About the Author

Beatrice Sparks is a family and adolescent therapist who edited the diary that formed the basis for *Go Ask Alice*, and has since edited many diaries on topics such as gangs, AIDS, and teen pregnancy in the 1988 *Annie's Baby*. She lives in Provo, UT.

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Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important behave, like looking for your favorite publication and reading a guide. Beside you can solve your short lived problem; you can add your knowledge by the guide entitled Almost Lost: The True Story of an Anonymous

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