



Chocolate Vicodin: My Quest for Relief from the Headache that Wouldn't Go Away

Jennette Fulda

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Jennette Fulda went to bed on February 17, 2008, with a headache, and more than three years later, it still hasn't gone away. Yes, she's tried everything: intravenous drugs, chiropractic adjustments, acupuncture, subliminal messaging, marijuana (for medical purposes only), heavy drinking (which just made it hurt more), and lots and lots of chocolate. A pint of ice cream makes her feel better, but her insurance doesn't cover mint chocolate chip.

In this painfully honest, smart, and funny memoir, the popular PastaQueen.com blogger who chronicled her nearly two hundred pound weight loss in *Half-Assed* shares her incredible journey to find relief from a chronic headache. As she visits countless doctors, indulges all manner of unsolicited advice from the Internet, and investigates every possible cause, from a brain tumor to a dead twin living in her brain, Jennette considers what it means to suffer, how to live with pain, and why the best treatment might be the simplest: laughter.

Chocolate Vicodin: My Quest for Relief from the Headache that Wouldn't Go Away Details

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From Reader Review Chocolate Vicodin: My Quest for Relief from the Headache that Wouldn't Go Away for online ebook

Liseuse says

I wanted to like this book, I really did. And it was OK. I like chocolate a lot, and when I really need it, vicodin does the trick. I have some of my own pain issues.

Jennette Fulda takes us through her journey of a year of hell caused by and awful headache. Boo hoo you think, get over it. Yeah, well her headache was pretty debilitating from her descriptions. I related to a lot of her issues with the medical institution, the reactions of people around her, and just plain feeling miserable a lot. Especially poignant for me was that she also got a lot of people trying to help her with outlandish ideas and diagnosis on her blog, something I also get from others. She also hit upon something that I agree with: no one gets it unless they are also suffering through chronic pain too. It's true, people can have a lot of sympathy, but they won't know what to say or do unless they've been there themselves. Then the still may try to bombard you with the cure that worked for them. One cure does not fit all folks.

Even though I think that if someone read this book they'd understand my situation better, and I could really relate to her, I just felt the book was boring. Probably because it was too similar to my life: going to doctors' offices all the time, lying on the couch, trying new medicines, barely hanging on. Been there, lived that, don't need to read about that. Also, there is an unclear reason why she does get better, which makes even less dramatic of a story line. Plus, I was jealous. I wanna get better.

Does it make me want to write a book about my own chronic pain? Not in a minute. She is supposedly really funny and wrote another great book about losing half of her bodyweight, but I found this book dull. So I wouldn't want to expose people to more of that. Her book wasn't really even designed to help anyone, just merely to groan about it and provide an excuse as to why she was depressed and gained some of her weight back. I feel a book about pain should be a bit more focused and less apathetic. With more chocolate, perhaps a bar inside the flap.

BELIEVESINMIRACLES says

I first heard of this author when I read her weight loss memoir 'Half Assed' which I enjoyed as I have issues with my weight as well and could relate to her struggles.

Later on she wrote this book about a headache that would never go away, and I felt such compassion for her, as I can not begin to imagine how a constant pounding in the head every single day with no let up. She went to so many doctors and alterative healers for so so long, it was crazy.

She is a lot braver than I would have been, I don't think I could endure that level of daily pain with no relief at all.

God bless her - I would have wanted to rip m head off my neck, anything to make it stop.

Samantha Warwick says

This book is amazing. Anyone dealing with a chronic daily headache - or chronic illness in general - will find good company (and excellent writing) in this memoir. I think headache specialists and doctors wishing to better understand the patient perspective would benefit from reading this memoir. The writing is clean, crisp, cleverly suspenseful and despite its somewhat grim topic (of chronic pain) Fulda has a healthy sense of humour - a funny way of describing difficult-to-capture moments. Kudos. Highly recommend.

Karyl says

I love reading memoirs by ordinary people. I know that it can be inspiring to read about an Olympian's journey to his gold medal or about the Prime Minister of another country, but I much prefer ordinary and everyday people. Jennette Fulda could be considered famous in the blogging world, but I feel like she still fits the category of "ordinary people."

Unfortunately, Fulda has suffered from a debilitating headache for at least 14 months at the end of this book. It just started one day and never let up. By the end of the book, she's found some relief, or perhaps she's managing it better, but it's still present in her head. I cannot even imagine the difficulty of being in so much pain all the time, to have your brain feel like it's too large for your skull every moment of every day. I've had some pretty painful headaches in my life, but fortunately they've been vanquished by Motrin or a good night's sleep. I wouldn't wish Fulda's situation on my worst enemy, and it makes my heart hurt that she has to deal with this.

Not only that, but she has to deal with the asinine suggestions made by complete strangers. It does bother me that we live in a society now where so many people distrust the medical community. Fulda does say that she believes in modern medicine, but many of her readers want to sell her on alternative options that are obvious quackery. I saw nothing wrong with her attempting acupuncture and chiropractic, but a lot of the other suggestions weren't even in the same ballpark as reality. I don't blame her one whit for snapping one day on her blog. I would have as well.

That said, it does make my heart hurt even more when she realizes that others have it worse than she does. I understand why she says it, that it could always be worse, but I feel as though it diminishes her very real struggle. Sure, others may have cancer or something life-threatening, and thank God she does not, but it doesn't mean that she's not allowed to bemoan the very real pain she feels all the time. Any way you slice it, chronic pain or any other illness sucks. Period.

At any rate, this is a pretty quick read, and while I sympathized so much with Fulda, I wasn't terribly fond of her writing style. It just wasn't a good fit for us. I do hope that seven years later after the publication of this book, she's managed to escape the debilitating pain.

Sarah Sammis says

Link+ due 4/3/12

There's only so much one can say about being in constant pain. As this book is primarily a diary with no added contextual information, there's bound to be repetition.

Kimberlie says

3.5 maybe. I can't imagine anyone reading this book unless you also have a headache that wouldn't go away-- maybe if you have a different chronic pain disease? But I liked it. She's funny and smart and it was all just so familiar. Except for the Vicodin part. I draw the line at potentially addictive treatments, though sometime that makes me seriously re-think all decisions in my life. :)

Crys says

I'm a nice person (for the most part). Somehow Jennette Fulda made me loathe a total stranger! That's no easy feat. I found her to be insufferable at times in this book. I teetered from wishing her headache would stay forever to wishing she'd developed some kind of narcotic addiction that would end this drawn out story or at least take it in another direction. Once I started reading this, I remembered why I was irritated by first book, "Half Assed" too. She's just not likable. I'm all for sarcasm and cynicism. Really, I love it more than most but she's crotchety and snarky to the point that you wish bad things on her. Or at least I did.

I feel like everyone either went to school with or works with a Jennette... and no one wants to have lunch with her. She's that person whose cubical you would take the extra scenic route to not have to walk past.

More than anything, the book just didn't have enough substance. 1/3 of the content is excessive words and metaphors; 1/3 is woe is me and the other 1/3 is a temper tantrum. None of which advance the book or endears you to the author. Honestly, I'm shocked this found a publisher. Vapid, awful and waste of time.

Dierdra McGill says

I picked this book up because of the cover and the awesome, awesome title! I really have to stop picking books bases on covers. I doubt I will but I should.

This book is about the authors struggle with a headache that is there 24/7. I do have to admit I did not even know this could happen and I am so sorry for what Jennette is going through. I learned a bit about headaches from this book and do agree there really should be more funding and research for this problem because I am sure most people don't even know this really is such a huge issues.

The overall book for me was just ok tho. It got a bit tedious and irritating in parts. I understand the sympathy thing and I understand why at times Jennette did not want to post on her blog about her headache anymore because no one could truly help but they cared enough to email her which made her mad at them yet she writes a book about it. A lot of things were also repeated over and over in the book which at times made it boring.

The writing style was not bad and if you are interested at all in chronic headaches or are just a memoir fan this isn't a bad read.

Sue Nitz says

I loved this book. This woman is able to express all the things I wish I could say about my own experience

and she does so with humor. I feel I could have wrote this same story if I had the gift of being a creative writer. I'm not sure why it helps to have someone affirm the things you have gone through but it really does. Perhaps this quote from the book is why it helps:

"The only people who seem to understand how to talk with someone with a chronic illness were other people who were sick. I didn't need advice, I didn't need them to say they were sorry. I just needed a hug. Pain was lonely."

As I read this book there were so many times I just wanted to yell "YES!" That's it exactly, you get it! I did want to be able to give her a hug.

If you struggle with chronic headache of any sort I think you would connect to her story. There's no advice, no magic cure, just her story and how she is dealing with life. It is comforting to know that what we go through and deal with is common to so many of us.

I sincerely thank her for sharing her story.

Katie says

One of the problems with having a chronic condition is that people always want to offer you advice. They always know just what will help, the one simple thing that will cure you. And of course, they know just what you are doing wrong--how you caused this! And the more obscure your condition, the more advice you'll get.

I picked this book up because (a) it was remaindered and cheap and (b) I work with a lot of people with chronic pain, and like to find more to offer when I can. Insider reports are always good.

Thus, my observation about friendly advice. Fulda had a blog about weight loss (she had lost a couple hundred pounds and written a book about that) and she was posting occasionally about her ongoing headache, and she heads each chapter with an email from a reader with some weirdo advice about her headache. My favorite is the guy who told her she had a saint in her causing her headache. (Why not?)

She spent two years going through all kinds of testing and conventional and non-conventional treatments, including acupuncture, chiropractic, IV medications, counseling, and marijuana, none of which made much difference. She never really got a definitive diagnosis. At the end of that time, along about the time she decided to give up the quest for treatment and live with the pain, quit her boring job and start a web design business at home, the pain began to let up a little. But it never really did go away.

I'm not really sure what the message is for my clients, but one scene stays with me: When she is greeted by the acupuncturist, who asks what she is there for, and she explains she has had a headache for several months. The acupuncturist winces and says honestly, "Oh, so, so sorry." "She had earned her \$70 in just that half second," writes Fulda. "I had a witness to my pain, someone who acknowledged that it was real and that it was a true burden."

Koren says

You probably wouldn't think a whole book could be devoted to just one topic, having a headache. And you probably cant imagine a headache that was constant for over a year. I wanted to like this book more, but I

wanted something more to happen other than going from doctor to doctor in search of a cure. I thought it was interesting that a lot of doctors didnt search for the cause, but instead threw pills and treatments at it. I was kind of frustrated with the ending, but I wont give it away.

Caren Nelson says

This book basically jumped off the shelf when I was looking for Frederick Douglass' biography. First of all, there is a cupcake. And it is covered with pill sprinkles! Then I read the title and saw my life! As a woman with chronic pain I found her story to be familiar in many ways and also completely different in others. Her insights were right on and her perspective was fresh and funny. Sense of humor goes a long way to control the pain in our lives. I don't know how she dealt with this for so long, she is my hero!

Kay says

It's hard to explain how much I love this book. The author explains and describes her headache in a way that's hilarious, but never whiney. I'd love to buy copies of this book by the case so I could give it to a) my circle of friends and family, and b) everyone, however well-intended, who has said to me since 2006, things like, "Maybe you should try Tylenol." This book was therapy!

Courtney Baker says

Well, I didn't love this book, but I also didn't hate it. I think Jennette Fulda keeps her writing interesting with her humorous insight that most people notice in themselves from time to time. She keeps it honest, relatable, and personable. I was as eager and hopeful as she was every time she visited the doctors to find some cure to her headaches.

The only disappointment for me was the ending. I feel as though it came abruptly and thrown together.

Laurie Donovan says

Read when it first came out. I'm a sufferer of daily migraines, status migranosus,etc... and was hoping this book would help deal with living with this. I was not impressed and, frankly, got tired of her complaining and feeling sorry for herself; it was not uplifting at all and was actually depressing. It was frustrating to me that she would rather eat the things that gave her migraines than stay away from those triggers. The only thing I got out of it, which I have found useful is her motto " I have migraines but they don't have me". (Which is why I gave the book two stars instead of one) I am happy for her that she learned to stop feeling sorry for herself and learned to live with the migraines, but on the whole, I don't think it was a book that was helpful for anyone newly diagnosed with the illness or who is suffering with depression along with it. It does not help you "see the light at the end of the tunnel". Getting on the Internet and talking to people going through the same thing as you is much more helpful.
