

The Butterfly Diaries Sampler
Excerpts from
Welcome to Today

A short story by Henrietta Bollinger
Based on interviews with Alice*
*Name changed for confidentiality

This story; there are parts of it I don't like to remember.

When I remember them my day stumbles, stutters and has to be picked up again. There are parts I can't remember, whole days I only managed to get through by skimming across the top of them, for these I've had to depend on others who have recollected for me.

This is my story. I was chronically suicidal from age eighteen to twenty-two. I had considered suicide on and off during my earlier teens too. But this story doesn't begin with a struggling teen feeling like she's run out of options. It doesn't begin with a young woman who, at twenty- one, thanked her psychologist sincerely but was sorry to say she was done with life, it was just too hard. It begins with a little girl.

Smiles and frowns

There are so many smiles, so many shining smiles... so –

“Alice?”

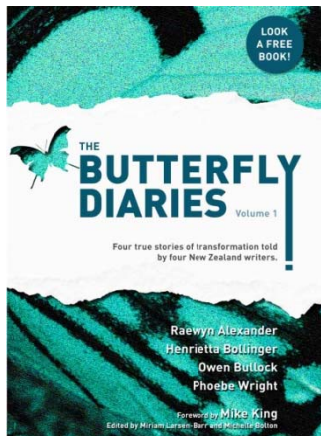
“Yeah Mum?”

Across the table Alice's mum is frowning. She stands out against this background of grins: smiling waiters, serving smiling families, filling their smiling faces. There are so many smiles. Her daughter looks away to study her almost empty plate and scrape at the remnants of dinner distractedly.

Mum is still frowning.

“You okay love?”

Alice is quick to adopt the uniform face: mouth-corners up. She's smart, the youngest in her class, but a quick learner. She knows how to follow the norm, smiles when she should. It keeps the big kids off her back. Sometimes. In front of Mum though, the camouflage slips away quickly.



●●● Find Alice's Full Story in the Book ●●●

The Butterfly Diaries is a free book of real-life stories about overcoming the experience of being suicidal. Check out the story samples online. Order a copy of the book for you or someone else by making a donation to Engage Aotearoa.

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