



So Far Away: A Daughter's Memoir of Life, Loss, and Love

Christine W. Hartmann

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Christine Hartmann's mother valued control above all else, yet one event appeared beyond her command: the timing of her own death. Not to be denied there either, two decades in advance Irmgard Hartmann chose the date on which to end her life. And her next step was to tell her daughter all about it. For twenty years, Irmgard maintained an unwavering goal, to commit suicide at age seventy. She managed her chronic hypertension, stayed healthy and active, and lived life to the fullest. Meanwhile, Christine fought desperately against the decision. When Irmgard wouldn't listen, the only way to remain part of her life was for Christine to swallow her mother's plans--hook, line, and sinker.

Christine's father, as it turned out, prepared too slowly for old age. Before he had made any decision, fate disabled him through a series of strokes. Confined to a nursing home, severely impaired by dementia and frustrated by his circumstances, his life epitomized the predicament her mother wanted to avoid.

So Far Away gives us an intimate view of a person interacting with and reacting to her parents at the ends of their lives. In a richly detailed, poignant story of family members' separate yet interwoven journeys, it underscores the complexities and opportunities that life presents each one of us.



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