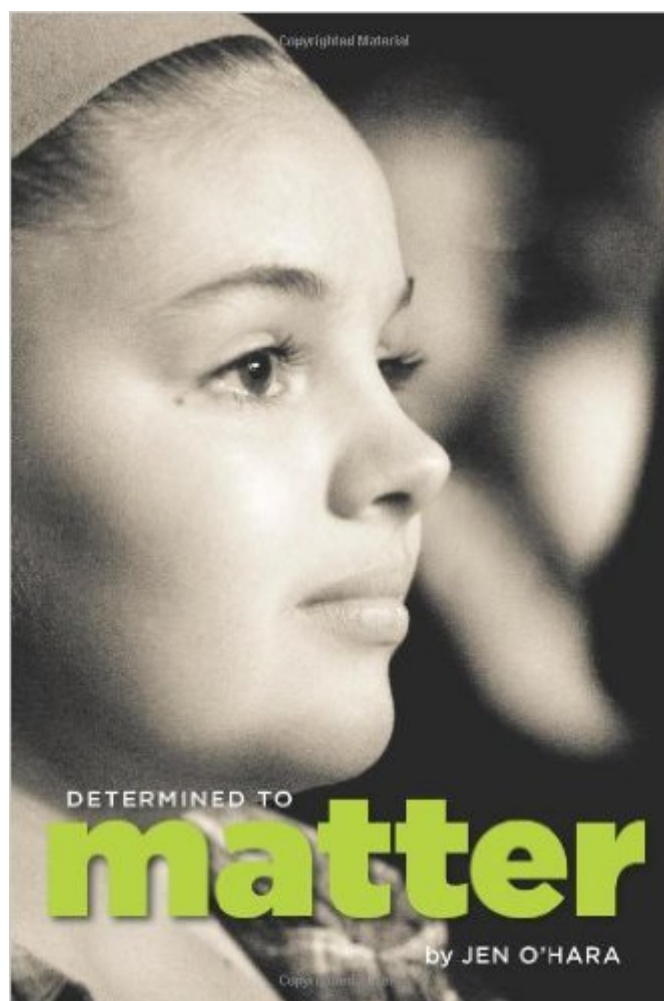


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# Determined To Matter: A Family Facing Inoperable Brain Cancer



## Synopsis

Shannon O'Hara, skating down the ice chasing after the puck, comes face to face with a larger-than-life opposing team player. Never one to back down from anything, barely five feet tall, Shannon tangles with the player and ends up with a penalty. As she sits in the penalty box—only thinking about getting out in two minutes—no one would ever imagine that this beautiful, vibrant, and competitive young spirit will be gone in 54 days. The devastating news that 12-year-old Shannon is diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor is unfathomable, surreal, and unimaginable. This is the raw and emotional story of the O'Hara's as they prepare for the fight of their lives, and their ultimate loss. Written and inspired by a blog that Dan and Jen O'Hara wrote to keep in touch with their family, friends, and supporters near and far, the story follows the yearlong battle from diagnosis to death and exemplifies how to live the "new normal" every day, no matter what it entails. Shannon's struggle reveals why family, faith, and hope are so important in our daily lives and how the support of a community plays such a vital role through the good times and especially the bad.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars— See all reviews— (48 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Nobody who hasn't lost child can ever know what's inside of that hell. And yet this profoundly moving story of a family preparing for their dear child's death and then surviving it is the deepest plumbing of immeasurable sadness that you'll likely ever read. Full disclosure here: I know and love all of these folks as my family, including Shannon, who was my buddy from the first time I met her. I'm also that rare person who lives a life looking out from inside of the rabbit hole: I lost my own son

last April. Most writers do best when they write what they know. Which is probably why Jennifer O'Hara has such powerful and deliberate authority over this story. None could have been closer to home, because this is the story of her 12 year old's reverse gestation, from an April eye problem to a January funeral. 9 months of holding on tightly to every second were also 9 months of thinking about what it meant to be letting go of a child's life. What's so remarkable here is the candid opening into her family's heart and soul that Jenn allows her readers to access. She and her husband Dan did much of this book first in the blog they wrote in realtime, as they brought a community of thousands with them through the months that Shannon was living and dying. But what's been edited and expanded here is something more. An ode to a child nobody who knew will ever forget. A plea for understanding and help to a wide community of supporters who followed every day of this story as though checking over and over again for a new blog post might somehow mean that the news that day would be good. And finally a story not just about this one family and the terribly unfair death their girl was dealt at thirteen but a story, really, about resiliency. Slow, halting, full of slides backward and sideways.

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