



# **The Girl Behind the Door: A Father's Quest to Understand His Daughter's Suicide**

*John Brooks*

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An award-winning, candid, and compelling story of an adoptive father's search for the truth about his teenage daughter's suicide: "Rarely have the subjects of suicide, adoption, adolescence, and parenting been explored so openly and honestly" (John Bateson, Former Executive Director, Contra Costa Crisis Center, and author of *The Final Leap: Suicide on the Golden Gate Bridge*).

Early one Tuesday morning John Brooks went to his teenage daughter's room to make sure she was getting up for school and found her room dark and "neater than usual." Casey was gone but he found a note: *The car is parked at the Golden Gate Bridge. I'm sorry.*

Several hours later a security video was found that showed Casey stepping off the bridge.

Brooks spent months after Casey's suicide trying to understand what led his seventeen-year-old daughter to take her life. He examines Casey's journey from her abandonment at birth in Poland, to the orphanage where she lived for the first fourteen months of her life, to her adoption and life with John and his wife Erika in Northern California. He reads. He talks to Casey's friends, teachers, doctors, therapists, and other parents. He consults adoption experts, researchers, clinicians, attachment therapists, and social workers.

In *The Girl Behind the Door*, Brooks shares what he learned and asks "What did everyone miss? What could have been done differently?" He'd come to realize that Casey might have been helped if someone had recognized that she'd likely suffered an attachment disorder from her infancy—an affliction common among children who've been orphaned, neglected, and abused. This emotional deprivation in early childhood, from the lack of a secure attachment to a primary caregiver, can lead to a wide range of serious behavioral issues later in life.

John's hope is that Casey's story, and what he discovered since her death, will help others. This important book is a wake-up call that parents, mental health professionals, and teens should read.

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