

## **Lisa, 28, London**

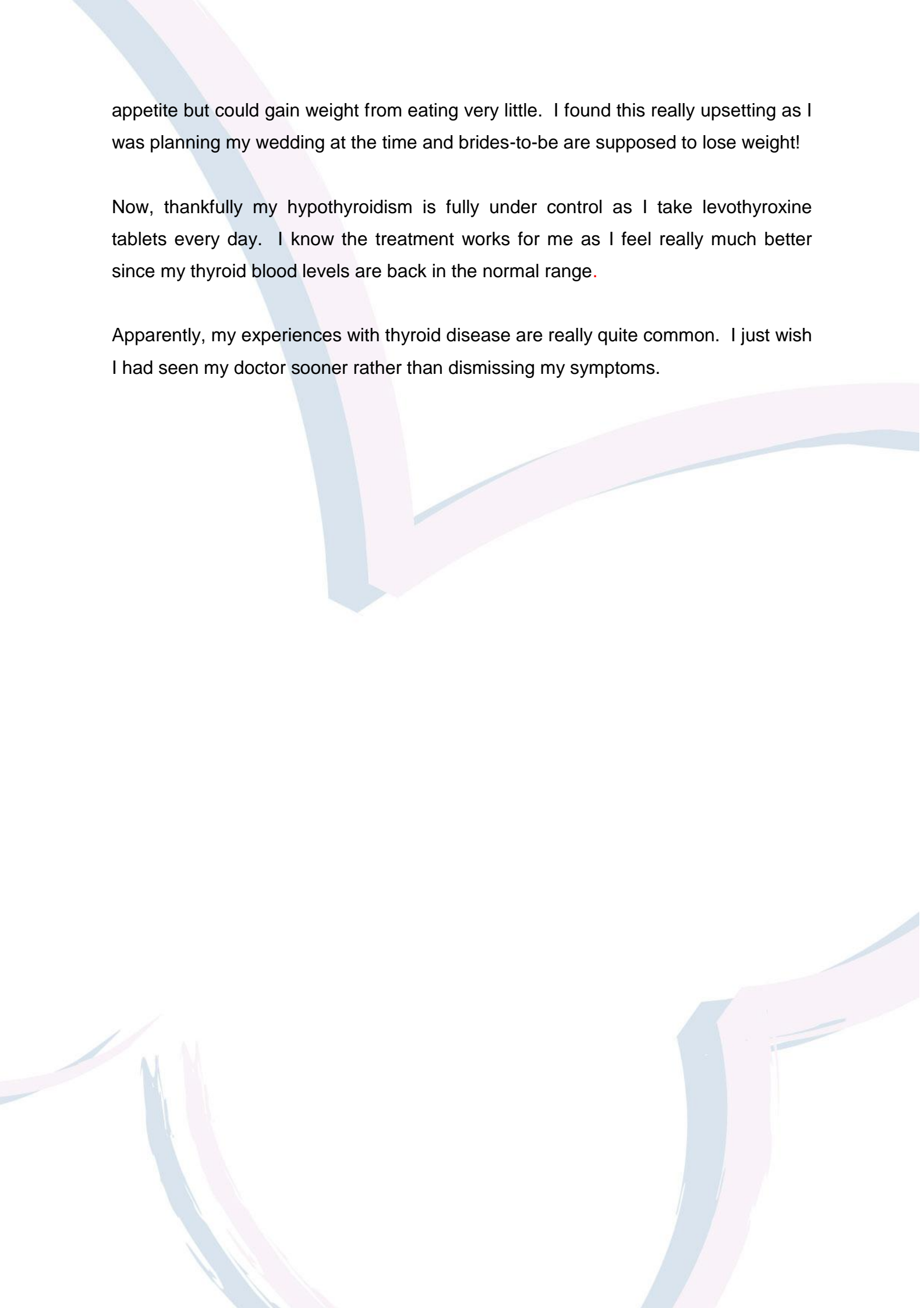
My thyroid problems were diagnosed following a visit to my family doctor five years ago. I only went because friends at work and my family pushed me to go. Looking back on it now, I think it may be easier for someone close to you to recognise the physical and emotional changes caused by thyroid problems than for you to see them in yourself.

I am not really sure what I thought might be wrong and I certainly did not think it was anything significant. Being a young woman, you automatically put things like mood and temperature changes down to being 'that time of the month'.

What I did not know was that I was suffering with hyperthyroidism, which is when your body produces too much thyroid hormone. The best way I can describe it is by comparing it to having a massive shot of caffeine at 5am every day. Everything in my body felt as though it was on 'fast forward', from my appetite, speech and my rapid heart rate. I was definitely not myself; I lost weight but ate much more than normal and I had a worryingly short attention span. My family and work colleagues were really worried about me.

To bring my thyroid hormone levels under control I had radioactive iodine treatment, which was recommended by my family doctor and consultant endocrinologist. I was bit weary of this at first because it causes your thyroid to become under-active (hypothyroidism). However, I was accurately advised that hypothyroidism is much easier to manage.

As expected, after my treatment I developed hypothyroidism which was the complete opposite to hyperthyroidism. I felt like I was continually taking sleeping tablets, I could not wake up or concentrate, I had no energy and instead of feeling like I had drunk too much coffee, I always felt desperate for one. I also found that I had no



appetite but could gain weight from eating very little. I found this really upsetting as I was planning my wedding at the time and brides-to-be are supposed to lose weight!

Now, thankfully my hypothyroidism is fully under control as I take levothyroxine tablets every day. I know the treatment works for me as I feel really much better since my thyroid blood levels are back in the normal range.

Apparently, my experiences with thyroid disease are really quite common. I just wish I had seen my doctor sooner rather than dismissing my symptoms.