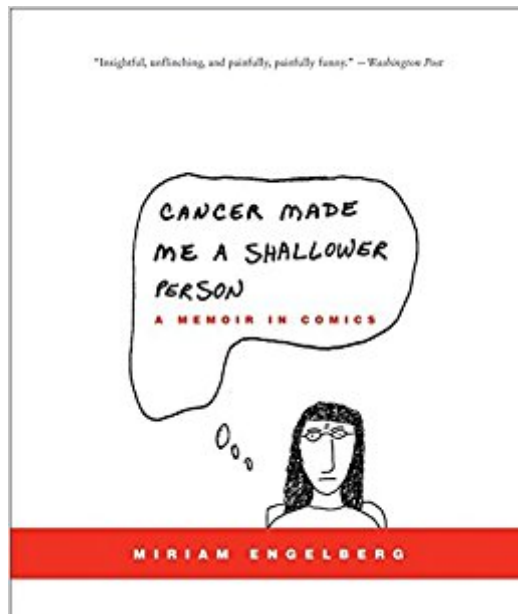


The book was found

Cancer Made Me A Shallower Person: A Memoir In Comics



Synopsis

a cartoonist examines her experience with breast cancer in an irreverent and humorous graphic memoir.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Stricken with breast cancer at a disturbingly young age (43), Engelberg turned to cartooning to cope; the resulting work is both powerful and very funny. She starts at the very beginning, while awaiting her diagnosis. The story follows the cancer trail all the way through surgery, chemo, support groups, wigs, the distraction of cartooning, moving house while completely nauseated and the horror of a second diagnosis. In contrast to the heavy subject matter, Engelberg's artwork is naïve to the extreme, though it has some charm. The true strength of the book is its fusion of the deadly serious with the absurd, in the finest tradition of black humor. Engelberg's narrative is riveting. She traces the trajectory of both her diagnosis and her growing obsession with the crossword puzzle in the newspaper's TV guideâ"must...avoid...inner...thought... processes," she announces. The reader discovers the author's difficulties in appreciating life's special moments, and witnesses the many compliments she receives on her post-chemo wig. We follow the way the medical profession communicates, the things people say when they don't know what to say and the utter incomprehensibility of not knowing if you're documenting your own slow death. It's extremely honest and extraordinarily powerful. (May) Copyright Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Engelberg was 43 and the mother of a 4-year-old when diagnosed with breast cancer. She underwent surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy in quick succession, and the cancer later metastasized to the brain. She lost her hair, experienced the seeming paradox of gaining weight on account of treatment, lost interest in sex, joined support groups in which she made new friends, and obsessed about what she might have done to bring on her illness or avoid it. She decided early on to make comics out of her travails, and if they are pretty rudimentary, they are very focused. Each one- to six-page helping of them centers tightly on a topic, incident, or such bits of fancy as an imaginary "Cancer Channel" and an infomercial for metastasis. Engelberg's daft sense of humor, never mean, gross, or flippant, serves readers, perhaps especially fellow cancer patients, as well as, maybe better than, it does her. Ray OlsonCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

I was diagnosed with breast cancer six months ago, and just finished chemo after a double mastectomy. Being a physician, I had thought I would be at least somewhat prepared for the experience, but that was not the case. Thank God I picked up this book. Miriam's experience was so similar to mine that I felt she had read my mind. What a relief to find my weirdest thoughts (too weird to share with other doctors) framed up with both sarcasm and warmth, which made the whole experience much less scary. As it turns out, I'm not the only one with the experience of Everything is My Enemy, or hearing the bizarre ways in which people try to protect themselves from my diagnosis (cancer can't possibly strike just out of the blue, can it?). I will be buying more copies of the book for my friends, both patients and doctors. I would just repeat the warning that the ending is sad.

For those of us with cancer, this is an engaging book that debunks the notion that the superior way to deal with cancer is to become, say, a tour de France champion or a marathon runner.

Engelberg's comic strips flout this notion as she explores her emotions after her diagnosis of breast cancer, especially her piercing wit that a cancer diagnosis divides the world into two types of people: those without cancer and those of us with cancer. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to deal with cancer, only the way that works for you. This is a darkly humorous book of how one woman chose to fit cancer into her life and soul.

LOVE this book. It really spoke to me and the cartoons were crazy relatable. It's on newsprint paper and the cover is soft as well.

One might no longer feel as though on an island of despair after reading this comic-format book. Many of the issues and concerns and the self-blame for why one has gotten cancer - as well as how various people react to cancer within themselves, or among their friends, relatives, co-workers and strangers - are addressed in a thought-provoking manner that at times makes you laugh, but most of all, makes you realize that you are not alone. This is not a book covering all the latest treatment options, how to deal with the therapies and so forth. It is a charming and witty and yet soberingly realistic look at life with cancer. And it also a wonderful comic-relief from some of the (often times quite frightening) issues and concerns of having cancer. It also helps one to realize that many others in the same boat are having the same feelings. I thought that some of the pertinent things covered in the book are:- blaming yourself for having eaten the wrong things or having lived the wrong lifestyle - eating all that cheese, or greasy junk food full of preservatives, or drinking all that diet soda, or talking too much on the cell phone.- how people with different forms of cancer sometimes have trouble relating to each other and how people with the same forms of cancer tend to form cliques for this reason.- the notion of being a cancer survivor: when does it begin (upon diagnosis?) and when does it end (are you still a survivor in your deathbed, drawing your last few gasps of air?) If you have recently been diagnosed with cancer, or are fighting it, or know someone near and dear who is going through it - **READ THIS BOOK**. Add it to the list of how-to's and serious medical books. It will help you understand how the human psyche responds to this form of crisis just a little better.

This book was bittersweet. It was an honest account of one woman's breast cancer experience. Not everyone touched by breast cancer becomes a "pink warrior". This book showed that it's OK to not find the silver lining in the cancer cloud, it's OK to whine and complain and just sit in front of the TV. It was laugh out loud funny, and heartbreakingly sad at the same time. Just as her art made the author get through her experience, it also will be helpful to women who read it for it's honesty and humorous take on everything from diagnosis to post chemo symptoms. This book doesn't have a happy ending, but it's an honest account of a breast cancer journey.

Having been diagnosed with breast cancer in my early 30s a few years ago, I had stayed away from cancer books because I was always worried that they would be too saccharine or too dark until Miriam Engelberg's book. I bought Ms. Engelberg's book after attending a reading by Ms. Engelberg at a local book store. Her writing is deeply honest, self deprecating and darkly funny. Her drawings,

although simple and almost crude, fit perfectly with the style of her prose. I read it cover to cover that night, and found myself laughing out loud at her humorous insights, empathizing with her fears and internally saying "me too" at her reactions to her cancer diagnosis and the responses by those around her. Her book may not be for the sparkly pink ribbon set, but her stories and thoughts will touch a cord with almost anyone - particularly anyone in their 20s, 30s or 40s - who has been diagnosed with breast cancer.

Miriam Engelberg examines her ongoing experience with breast cancer in a memoir in comics - a counterintuitive form with a counterintuitive message. By means of primitive cartoons and unflagging gentle humor, the author leads the reader through an array of experiences with family, friends, and therapists as she is affected by her diagnosis, treatment, relapse, and chemotherapy for breast cancer. She is a master of distillation, compressing life situations, philosophy, and religion into a handful of panels per page. How could any of this be funny? That's Engelberg's genius, her delightfully twisted perspective, honed by intelligence and sensitivity. *Cancer Made me a Shallower Person* is a must read for anyone who cares to understand the feelings of a cancer patient, be they be friend, physician, or family member.

This helped me stay emotionally balanced through breast cancer treatment more than all the other books I read. I loved the being able to laugh about the whole experience. Beware - your friends without a cancer experience may think you have lost your mind. But pay it no mind!

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