

Because Cowards Get Cancer Too: A Hypochondriac Confronts His Nemesis

John Diamond

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Because Cowards Get Cancer Too: A Hypochondriac Confronts His Nemesis John Diamond In the face of such overwhelming statistical possibilities, hypochondria has always seemed to me to be the only rational position on life."

So begins this caustically funny and informative account of living with cancer from a self-professed coward who's nevertheless unafraid to take on the myths and taboos of the illness.

First diagnosed with cancer in March 1997, journalist John Diamond determined to chronicle the experience for the millions of people facing the same baffling process of diagnosis and treatment. His is a refreshingly clear-eyed take for those readers who likewise instinctively rebel when told that to "wage war with their cancer" they must chant, channel, laugh, breathe, group-hug, or sport a halo for sainthood or a medal for bravery. Diamond's is a distinctly more curmudgeonly stance.

With humor and intelligence, Diamond ex-

plains how he coped with dilemmas every person recently diagnosed with cancer must confront: the awkwardness of "telling"; the need to shrug off

the unearned mantle of "brave soul"; friends' sudden inability to speak openly; intrusions by well-intentioned purveyors of alternative health solutions; battles with good, bad, and indifferent doctors; dealing with treatment gains and setbacks; tension on the home front; and more. Most important, he describes how he's learned to live with uncertainty, the ultimate hallmark of the human condition.

A number one bestseller in England, Because Cowards Get Cancer Too is destined to become a classic in the literature of full-frontal assault on the body, next to such works as Jean-Dominique Bauby's The Diving Bell and the Butterfly and Robert Lipsyte's In the Country of Illness. Diamond's gorgeous writing, sense of wit, and fierce intelligence make this a reader's book as well as a road map for a journey that touches almost everyone.



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Bobbie Freeman:

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