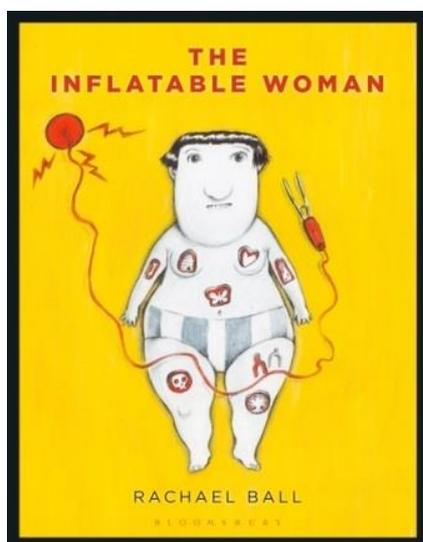


**MACMILLAN  
CANCER SUPPORT**

# BOOK REVIEWS

Read what people affected by cancer think about...



## **The inflatable woman (2015)**

Ball R.

London: Bloomsbury, 2015.

544pp.

ISBN 9781408858073.

£18.99.

**Average star rating 3.3 (out of 5)**

**We would like to thank Bloomsbury for their generous donation of multiple copies of this book for review.**

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This book could help a patient appreciate that it is normal to be emotional and to have dark or confusing thoughts. It may also help carers, family and friends to understand the psychological effects of cancer.

The fact that it is a graphic novel means that it can be understood by anyone and the magical element helps to explain things without too many technical references. It looks daunting to start with, but it is quick to read and flows nicely. I like how stark and simple some pictures are while others are hugely detailed. The simplicity of the pencil drawings helps portray the starkness of the emotions.

I love how it looks and that the drawings help explain varied and confusing emotions. It helped to me appreciate that my emotions when I was diagnosed did not mean I was a weirdo. It was good for me as a younger breast cancer patient, but it did touch sensitive nerves and make me emotional. I recommend it to others affected by breast cancer, but it is best appreciated a couple of years after diagnosis.

**Diagnosed with breast cancer at 31 (36-45) (May 2016)**

Initially I was surprised by the book as I have not read a graphic novel before; however, it soon had me hooked and I 'read' over half in one sitting. I was captivated by the magic realism, raw honest deep-felt imagery and pain evident in many of the pages. Her fantasy life comes to the fore, providing much humour and pathos feeding her need to imagine another more hopeful future than the one reality demands.

I like the book for Rachael's unflinching honesty and her portrayal of the inner battles we all face when presented with an impossible situation. It may be useful for anyone wishing to understand the whole impact of cancer on a woman's life. The only downside is the weight; it is too heavy to handle – I read in bed mostly late at night!

**Friend of someone living with cancer and advocacy professional (56-65) (February 2016)**

This book could help people understand the dark nature of a cancer diagnosis and its effect on a patient's psychological state. I found it useful when caring for those with a recent/long-term diagnosis; it assisted me with my practice and I was able to think about how we as healthcare professionals focus on the physical aspects of an illness and unintentionally forget the individual and their feelings.

It doesn't focus on medical facts, but the descriptions of the medical procedures that Iris would face are accurate and I was able to relate these to some of the things that my patients had experienced. It is more about the feelings around cancer diagnosis and treatment and written to focus on the frightening prospect of cancer. Although the main character has breast cancer, it will be helpful to anyone facing diagnosis; it may help them understand some of the feelings they may have during this difficult time. I would pass it on to friends and family to give them an insight into what it may feel like to be diagnosed with cancer if I was unable to talk to them about my feelings.

It is fast paced but deals with the topic in an insightful manner. From beginning to end you understand how the story will play out; it doesn't jump between topics. The wording is simple and easy to understand, the most technical word is mastectomy and no glossary is needed. It is probably more suited to younger patients but if you want to read something that does not bombard you with medical terminology and assumptions then it will cater for many. The tone is appropriate for this style of book and you find yourself smiling because the author has put lighter tones on some of the darker aspects. She gives you a sense of the fear that Iris faces but also the happier feelings when she is in contact with Sailor Boy; there is hope amongst the sadness.

It is well thought out; the incredible illustrations add to the mood of each scene. The quality of design from the cover to the contents is inviting and well suited to the story. The cover shows how it will be for Iris; like the game operation, she is losing parts of herself and who she is. The black pages reflect the dark emotions and loneliness that Iris faces as well as the happy moments by lightening the picture. It is a hefty book, but the story runs quite quickly, each illustration appropriately matches the text; it is as if Iris has written it herself and that adds to the design and story.

I was gripped from start to finish and read it in three days. I like everything about it, mainly the storyline and illustrations. The dark paper and the illustrations reflect the dark topic. I love that the zoo animals have their own characters and conversations that somehow add a humorous tone. Iris's true friend is a nice addition and shows that even in the darkest of times there is someone you can depend on when everything else has let you down, i.e. her body and Henry the lighthouse keeper.

While on placement I met a young woman undergoing a second mastectomy – I wish I had known about this book then. She was a strong character but facing some difficult emotions regarding her self-image and this book may have helped her put some of these into perspective. It reminded me of her and I can see how she must have felt even though she had been through it before; the fear must have been worse because she was dealing with this cancer for a second time and she was only 25 (not that age should matter but it was a reminder of how lucky I am to be fit and well).

I will be recommending this book to fellow students as it has been a great help to me during my placements. Books like this can help healthcare professionals to be more

empathetic, to understand how fear can affect a person's character, e.g. manifesting in anger or rudeness. It made me stop and think about how fear can make people behave in ways that are not their norm, and to not take their behaviour personally. It was a reminder of how frightened our patients must be when they are in hospital undergoing tests and receiving a diagnosis such as breast cancer.

**Student nurse regularly caring for patients living with cancer as well as those who are palliative (26-35) (February 2016).**

This is a very original take on what breast cancer means for the patient. It gets to the heart of the impact of cancer in a direct and visceral way. It isn't entirely based on the real world but uses magic realism to put across the message.

It is vastly different from anything I have read on the impact of breast cancer. It tells the story of Iris, a zookeeper, who finds out that she has breast cancer; she takes you on her journey in a very poignant and sensitive way via amazing black-and-white pencil drawings. There is a lot of humour and the author's clever use of magic realism gives full impact to the fright and fear that her diagnosis brings.

Her story begins before diagnosis and we see a normal person living her life, looking for love and dreaming of being a famous ballet dancer. Post diagnosis, her life changes rapidly and despite having friends, including singing penguins, a helpful monkey and a lighthouse keeper she has met on the internet, becomes fraught with coming to terms with the cancer. Her dark times are graphically represented by vivid dreams and nightmares in a way that words can't describe but also interspersed with light-hearted and funny sketches of, for example, the medics who offer treatment; this takes away some of the sting when dealing with medical professionals. The pictures are lovely and clear. It's a big book, over 500 pages, and the hardback is very heavy. However, a kindle version wouldn't be as good; having said that, I'm not sure why!

Iris is a character with whom cancer patients can identify. As she progresses through treatment we see her go through the full range of emotions and emerge at the end a different person. The graphical representation of her emotional and psychological transition is visceral in its stark impact, but we rejoice with her when she moves on to live out her dreams to dance and see it as a positive change in her life.

This book will appeal to the younger reader especially and those who find reading a challenge. It is less concerned with the science behind cancer and more with the emotional and psychological effects of a diagnosis. I found Iris totally believable and this is maybe because she is modelled on the author's experience herself. It must have been very cathartic for the author, but it is also a big help for other patients to realise they are not alone with their fears and doubts.

**Breast cancer patient (56-65) (December 2015)**

This book is about the terror of dealing with a cancer diagnosis, the burden of illness, friendship, family, hope, despair, internet dating, fantasy lives, musical penguins, polite monkeys and implausible romantic suitors. My first impressions were that it was going to be some whack-a-doodle, arty-farty production that would have little resonance for me. How wrong I was...I just loved it and 'read' it in one sitting.

It is a refreshingly original piece of work where the narrative moves easily from harsh reality into surreal dreams and nightmares. The drawings are beautifully executed, some starkly simple and some intricately detailed. It works on so many levels – it amuses, provokes thought, is at times poetic, and reflects modern life.

The size and weight of the book seem rather formidable at first sight. It is a hefty book with many pages but as the pages contain mostly pencil drawings it does not present too much of a challenge. The drawings are charming and touching, funny and poignant. The only think I dislike is the very strong smell; is it the black ink?

As a breast cancer patient, I could so readily identify with the ideas expressed in the drawings and speech bubbles. The sometimes-surreal drawings reflected my own experiences, especially about feelings of loneliness, isolation and devastation. The magical, surreal elements helped me to process the many intangible feelings, bizarre dreams and nightmares that I have experienced since my initial cancer diagnosis. It is a simple story but told in a surreal and magical way that creates a realistic atmosphere that enables a deeper understanding of events and experiences. Highly recommended, but I do not feel it would be appreciated by anyone newly diagnosed.

#### **Breast cancer patient (66-75) (December 2015)**

This is the first graphic novel I have read that deals with cancer. It is handled very well and thoughtfully. The drawings are quirky, but the story is very easy to follow. It will appeal to younger people unlucky enough to have cancer. They will relate to it more as most are already used to graphic novels/comics.

#### **In remission from non-Hodgkin lymphoma (56-65) (November 2015)**



I love this book, but it won't appeal to everyone. It is a very personal view of breast cancer, how she saw life at the time and moving forward. It is daunting initially as it is very thick but there isn't much reading involved. I love the graphics; the artwork is sad, moving and funny. My only criticism is the binding – my copy is falling apart.

#### **Breast cancer patient (46-55) (March 2016)**

This would be most useful for those related to someone with cancer or those trying to understand someone affected by cancer. Small points that may help a patient get through their recovery that only those affected could point out.

The topic is handled in a logical order in that the patient's attention is first on treatment and then on restoring her damaged body. I like the interruptions in the main treatment plot, as if you might use other activities during treatment to distract yourself and escape from your predicament.

I found it incredibly easy to understand and it is something I think most people will understand. The minimalist and plain language is indicative of how irrelevant are the technical terms that patients might be swamped with when diagnosed and treated. The tone of the author seems genuine and has some striking similarities with my relatives who have been diagnosed.

It is certainly very appealing to look at. The quality of the paper and the illustrations made the reading experience very pleasant. I enjoyed the minimalistic style of the drawings; the author put this style to good use when they put across the story. The cartoonish eccentricity is used effectively. I did not have any issues following the layout, as it seems to be fairly straightforward.

The depiction of the patient's reaction to her diagnosis is genuinely something I had not considered. As someone who is studying to be a part of NHS, it was very useful for me to see how much of an impact a healthcare worker can make in the treatment of a patient. There could have been more introspection and exploration of the protagonist's thoughts and feelings.

### **Relative of leukaemia patient (Under 25) (March 2016)**

This book may help a breast cancer patient realise that other people feel, and have felt, like you and that you are not alone in your thoughts and feelings. It may also help family and friends to realise that it does get pretty dark for us at times.

Some parts look a bit confusing, but the more you read the more it makes sense, and to be honest, what makes sense about the whole experience? The layout is easy to follow and flows in the correct order. I could understand the drawings because of my own experience. The drawings are very good, interesting and consuming to look at all the details in them. All things considered, I do like the tone of the author.

I like that someone has expressed their experience of breast cancer in this way rather than through the conventional medium of writing. Some of the drawings are quite dark but, as I said, it is a dark subject.

This could be a really good tool for breast cancer patients and the people around them; it's actually very detailed and well drawn out. I think it would help them realise that the isolation you feel is natural. I have rated it four stars because the content in my experience is spot on. The only niggle I have is the price, it is a bit high!

### **Living with breast cancer (46-55) (January 2016)**

This book beautifully captures the emotional side of cancer as well the practical chaos that happens – like keeping up with a massive number of appointments when trying to cope with the changes and live a normal life. It will be useful for coping with the emotional side of cancer and finding a new normal after cancer and for helping people understand how overwhelming the whole cancer experience is.

Being a graphic book, there is not much information about the medical aspects. The mastectomy is beautifully illustrated with images, but I struggled to understand the inflatable implants. I had breast conserving surgery, so I don't understand the reconstruction very well, but it could be just me.

The author illustrates very deep emotions through very simple images, for example pages 228 and 229. I relived my cancer experience through this book and could feel the heavy doors of the operating theatre shut hard (with a bang) as I walked in. I was surprised at how hard I felt the doors shutting. I could relate to how Iris felt: the emotional holocaust after diagnosis; the loneliness; feeling bogged down under the heads-up for mastectomy and then choosing the hard option as the other options were just so awful; how she shut herself off from others (pages 291-293); how the cancer words seem to consume her thoughts and her whole being; the support group experience – how Iris finds support despite not participating in the group; and finally how she finds a new life after cancer and moves on. I could relate to every bit of it.

I don't really dislike anything about the book; it is a beautiful graphic novel. My only complaint is that I wanted to know so much more. Was Iris really a ballerina in her pre-cancer life or was that a fantasy. Was ballet something that she picked up later because it was something she had always wanted to do? I wanted to know if the author looked like Iris. I wanted to know more details about the chemo and the other experiences she went through. I am guessing that Iris didn't lose hair during chemo, but did she have other side effects? Did she need the radiotherapy that was mentioned? What was the outcome from a medical aspect? I would have really, really loved to see a few pages celebrating 'cancer-free', if applicable or I would have liked to stand by Iris in solidarity if the outcome was not all that positive.

I loved the attention to detail, like how the support group was illustrated – the bald heads, the scarves and maybe some wigs (as they looked like perfect hair! A cancer patient knows how the hair loss could happen – not just on the head but on the entire face and body. Polly's image was so real; this is how I saw myself when going through cancer, no hair, no eyebrows and no eyelashes.

I loved many images and I'd particularly like to mention pages 518-520, how Henry's image fades away is sad and yet so invigorating and life-affirming about the choice to move on. If there is an opportunity, I'd like to discuss this work with the author at length so that I get to understand some of the images better. Art can be interpreted differently by different people and it would be wonderful to understand the depth of the author's thoughts.

What a beautiful work! Thank you, Rachael.

**Breast cancer survivor (36-45) (January 2016)**

This is different and extremely thought provoking and would lend itself to carers, relatives and friends as well as the patient. It is very useful for the emotional aspects of a cancer journey and helps the patient realise that what they are going through is similar to what other people are going through without saying it; each reader can adapt their own thoughts through the cartoon illustrations.

The story is divided into chapters and easy to follow. When I first opened it, I was quite surprised by the black pages but once I started to read, I found the format very good and the choice of black pages excellent. The drawings are very good and take the reader right through the cancer journey.

### **Carer (46-55) (January 2016)**

This is an unusual way to tell the story but very effective. I like the underlying humour and would recommend this book.

### **Caring for someone with cancer (66-75) (January 2016)**

I found this book interesting, accurate, honest and sometimes surreal. It describes the cancer journey with no holds barred. In places it is nightmarish, in others funny and down to earth.

It is not always easy to understand. The drawings are wonderful – her use of pencil is excellent – but the layout is sometimes confusing and the dream sequences not always obvious. I like the beautiful artwork and the honesty. I don't like the scary bits – the depiction of FNA is brutal (but then it is). It is also a large and very heavy book; probably difficult for women with recent surgery to hold.

I will probably recommend it but not to a newly diagnosed woman, it is too bleak. It may be useful for carers, relatives, friends and health professionals; I am not sure about patients. It would warn of possible callous treatment by health professionals.

### **Breast cancer, bilateral mastectomy survivor (66-75) (December 2015)**

This approach of sharing a cancer experience through a graphic novel is unusual. It follows the character's process through breast cancer and shows an in-depth perception of how someone feels on being diagnosed.

The comic style has a fictitious undercurrent, emphasising the personal account. The author uses drawings in varied tones to represent the mood, the layout is clear, and the story is in chapters. The tone is humorous with thought-provoking sentiments.

Although those with different cancers and those around them could relate to the story with its in-depth emotional insight, the weight and cost may hinder its purchase.

### **Living with cervical cancer (26-35) (November 2015)**



At first, I struggled to identify with Iris's experience but once I had read this book several times, I began to appreciate it more. It may be useful for identifying with the shock of diagnosis, the emotional storm, immense vulnerability, anxiety, and fear of dying, the profound wish for this not to be happening to me, and the denial that can follow. But it also demonstrates hope, through latching quickly on to reconstruction of the breast following mastectomy, seeking out a boyfriend, and finally realising her incipient desire to be a ballerina (albeit in a less limited way in reality).

I struggled at first to work out what is real and what is imagined, but maybe this is designed to give the reader a sense of blurred boundaries following the trauma of shock, between wish and reality. It is a graphic book and poetic, so there are no explanations as such for terms given. Radiotherapy is mentioned as a course of treatment but never happens. Also, who is the person in bed with her on page 19? They don't appear again, to my knowledge. I did not find it very appealing to look at. I didn't like the greys and charcoal-style drawings, but as a creative technique to invoke intended mood and emotional discomfort it is effective.

I like the honesty of one woman's journey through cancer. It made me sad that her experience of the medical profession was so unsupportive and negative, especially as she is portrayed as having few significant family or friends. Although I love the poetry and was taken on a journey looking up Walt Whitman, some of the book is superficial. Her experience at the therapy centre took up a lot of space, but I did not find it as credible and authentic as other parts of the book. I had trouble identifying with the loneliness and relative lack of support of her experience, though I had a taste of something she depicts re medical staff. My care was generally supportive and involved Macmillan nurses and complementary therapy, all free, but I had a very cold and an unpleasant encounter with NHS doctors at diagnosis. My husband and I were kept waiting for nearly two hours until the end of an outpatient clinic for the results of my repeat mammogram and biopsy following routine screening. The room was full of medical students staring at us in silence with poker faces. When we came out, my husband said, 'Thank God you don't have cancer!' The doctor had used the word carcinoma, not cancer. I knew the meaning due to medical training. I subsequently went private as I had BUPA through my husband's work. I then found out the cancer was far more widespread in the breast and needed a mastectomy not just a lumpectomy, so even the diagnosis had been inaccurate.

I admire this book as a work of art and the metaphors are good, e.g. the train of life. But I had to re-read it a lot to find value in the book. During treatment and for at least two years afterwards, my attention span was very limited (I share this with many women I have spoken to) and I would not have bothered to read this book again, I would simply have leafed through it and put it to the side. Now, two years on from my second primary cancer (GIST), I may not have given it a second read had I not been committed to reviewing it.

**Living with breast cancer and GIST (56-65) (February 2016)**

This isn't a book to read for information. It's a graphic novel in which cartoons and lines from famous poems are used to tell Iris's story and it focuses on her inner narrative and emotional reactions. The author is a cartoonist who has had treatment for breast cancer. Through black-and-white drawings, she portrays the emotional reactions of Iris, a fictional zoo-keeper and prima ballerina, as she finds a breast lump and goes through surgery and chemotherapy. It is described as combining "magical realism with the grit of everyday life" and conveys a range of unadulterated emotions – fear, fantasies, comic moments, unrequited love – alongside day-to-day life with cancer.

The style is often fantastical; we meet singing penguins who sometimes dress up as nuns, and an escaped bird flying around the hospital waiting area that leads into a recital of the poem Cock Robin by the theatre team during surgery. We meet newly hatched birds looking for their mother, echoing Iris's needs when she was first diagnosed. Whilst I could relate to some of this because of my own experience, other elements are just strange and a bit macabre.

Many of the drawings really capture some of the emotions associated with breast cancer: the stress of waiting for test results; the intensity and shock of hearing bad news; the distorted power dynamics between patients and healthcare professionals. It illustrates some of the irrational and subconscious thinking that people may feel when faced with a cancer diagnosis and the prospect of treatment. It's an original way of portraying emotional reactions and offers a different way of expression.

I wasn't keen on the magical realism aspects, although others might like this. The hardback version is heavy to hold and over 500 pages long. The pencilled drawings are, for the most part, black and white with a black surround, which give the book a sombre air; this may be deliberate, but it gives an overwhelmingly morbid feel and reminded me of Victorian mourning cards.

This is an autobiographical account of one woman's experience of breast cancer and its treatment, but can also be enjoyed as a work of art. As with other works of art I think some people will love this and will relate to the medium of graphic cartoons. Some may find it helpful that the author has shared her emotional experience of breast cancer in a quirky and original way that they may be able to relate to. Other readers may find it weird and too whimsical. Some elements may be disturbing so whilst this is an honest account, it's not always a comfortable read.

As someone going through treatment, I found some parts of this book depressing and dark. Some readers may find it helpful, as it's honest and unflinching in describing scary emotions. It may be a helpful book for healthcare professionals providing psychological support.

**Living with breast cancer (46-55) (January 2016)**



This may be useful for understanding what's going through someone's mind. The cover, style of drawings and layout are quite good, but I found the first part quite confusing. It may confuse someone with cancer and upset them. I can relate to some aspects, like the emotions, but we must consider the fragile state of someone who has been told they have cancer and the emotions that they must deal with.

### **Living with breast cancer (46-55) (April 2016)**

This may be useful for learning that someone else is having similar feelings. The pictures clearly demonstrate the mood of the book, which is sombre; the book is all black, grey and white. The language is relatively simple. The illustrations are clear, and the characters are clearly defined by subtle characteristics that illustrate how the author feels about them. It is quite matter of fact, a daily/weekly/monthly account of how the author felt when going through different scenarios.

I am a firm believer in "whatever gets you through the day" and having read several other books about cancer and wellbeing I recognise that to record one's feelings is therapeutic. I would guess that the author found some comfort in recording her journey in a way with which she is comfortable. It may inspire others to choose this method of working through their journey. Some people tweet, others blog, some use journals and this is an illustrated record. Each to their own.

I wouldn't say I dislike it. I prefer text but appreciate that different people are able to portray their feelings in different ways. I would not wish to be disrespectful about the book; it just isn't to my taste. I will share it because I recognise that it may be more appealing to someone else.

### **Family member of someone who died as a result of brain tumour (46-55) (January 2016)**

I am unsure who this book will appeal to. It will not be to everyone's taste but it may be useful for showing how cancer affects a person mentally and emotionally.

It is a big, clumsy book, not for carrying around. The drawings are in a cartoon style, which is ok. I didn't really like much about it. It bored me and I found it hard to stay focussed. Reading is a pleasure to me, and I found this tedious.

I wouldn't recommend it; there are too many pictures for adult reading. I understand it is the author's emotions, her state of mental health, where make-believe is better than reality, but it goes over the top. A shorter version would be better. I certainly wouldn't want to pay £19.00. It's also a heavy book and uncomfortable to hold. I wasn't impressed by the cover. I gave it just two stars because of the drawings.

### **Laryngeal cancer survivor (66-75) (December 2015)**



I didn't find this book at all helpful. I like the layout, design and idea – it looks good and the graphics are brilliant – but I didn't find it easy to follow or understand.

#### **Breast cancer patient (36-45) (March 2016)**

This is a different type of cancer book. It is not a book for information or explanations. Parts really did not make sense and the reconstruction details give the wrong idea. It is obviously good quality, but the design is definitely for a certain taste. The drawings are mainly black and white, which doesn't help. I really had to make myself read it and give it a chance, but felt it was all doom and gloom. Yes, we want a realistic view of living with cancer, but this really got me down and I didn't feel it was helpful. There are sections that I really don't understand and find quite strange.

I don't like to be negative, but I must be honest. I could not find anything I like about it. It's too dark and left me feeling quite depressed.

#### **Living with breast cancer (36-45) (January 2016)**

I cannot see this being useful at all and I would not give it to anyone at the beginning of their journey; it would terrify them. The depiction of the medical team is dreadful and if this was the experience of Rachael Ball I feel heartsick for her.

The graphics are good, the paper quality excellent, and the cover is eye catching. The size is daunting, but it is very easy to read. The character is appealing and quite lovable and the cartoon quality is excellent, but I don't like anything else. I did not always understand where the author was coming from; for example is the section on the bird in the waiting room about the loss and mourning of the breast. If so, it is not too clear and if not, what on earth is it about? I particularly dislike the reconstruction pictures (pp. 172-173) and the punctured arm re chemotherapy (p. 327).

It makes a terrible experience even more horrific. I would never give it to someone starting this already frightening journey; it's destined for recycling. There is nothing here to uplift the spirit or give hope. A thoroughly depressing read.

#### **Breast cancer patient (56-65) (January 2016)**

I welcomed the opportunity to review a book in a medium other than the written word but there are too many pages with no information at all. The cover is good, but the cartoons are not easy to understand; quite honestly, I found the drawings weird. I know it is concerned with the psyche of someone diagnosed with breast cancer, but it is too far off the wall for me and I think it would be for others too. I can't recommend it and am not sure who it would be suitable for. Others may have different opinions.

#### **Womb cancer survivor (66-75) (November 2015)**

I did not understand this book and I am unsure of the target audience. It is very unusual and did not resonate with me. I found it very confusing and do not think it would help people; it is an abstract view of a cancer experience.

It is a good quality book and the drawings are very personal. However, because it is so personal I did not understand the full story and found some of the drawings quite dark in nature. It shows health professionals in a bad light. It did not suit me and it is not something I would recommend to someone facing breast cancer.

**Breast cancer patient (36-45) (November 2015)**

## Further information

### Why does Macmillan Cancer Support review books?

We use reviews to help us compile a list of suggested cancer books, the [Macmillan Core Book List](#). Cancer information centres and public libraries can use this list to select appropriate and relevant books for people affected by cancer.

We add reviews to the [Directory of information materials for people affected by cancer](#) so that people affected by cancer can see what others in a similar situation think about a book. You can also see details of all the books reviewed in the [Book reviews listing](#), which also has links to all the reviews.

We recruit most of our reviewers through the [Volunteering Village](#) and the [Cancer Voices Network](#), people affected by cancer who have signed up to help Macmillan Cancer Support in a number of ways. Volunteers are a vital part of our book review process; since 2007, over 1,500 Macmillan volunteers have written more than 6,000 reviews of over 500 different books.

If you are a health professional who would like to review books for us, please [email Sue Hawkins](#), Information Materials Researcher, Macmillan Cancer Support.

### Information and support for people affected by cancer

If you are looking for support to help you live life with cancer, you may wish to contact one of [Macmillan's cancer information and support services](#). Or you can call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00** (Mon-Fri 9am–8pm). We have an interpreting service in over 200 languages. Just state, in English, the language you wish to use. If you are deaf or hard of hearing you can use textphone no 0808 808 0121 or Text Relay.

You can also email us using the [website enquiry form](#). Alternatively, [visit our website](#).

### Feedback

If you have any comments, please [email Sue Hawkins](#), Information Materials Researcher, Macmillan Cancer Support.

**Being told ‘you have cancer’ can affect so much more than your health – it can also affect your family, your job, even your ability to pay the bills. But you’re still you. We get that. And, after over 100 years of helping people through cancer, we get what’s most important: that you’re treated as a person, not just a patient.**

**It’s why we’ll take the time to understand you and all that matters to you, so we can help you get the support you need to take care of your health, protect your personal relationships and deal with money and work worries.**

**We’re here to help you find your best way through from the moment of diagnosis, so you’re able to live life as fully as you can. For information, support or just someone to talk to, call 0808 808 00 00 or visit [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)**

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