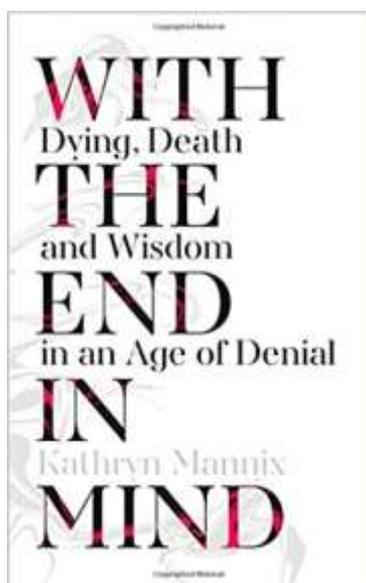


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# BOOK REVIEWS

Read what people affected by cancer think about...



**With the end in mind. Dying, death and wisdom in an age of denial (2017)**

Mannix K.

London: William Collins, 2017.

352pp.

ISBN 9780008210885.

**Average star rating 4.8 (out of 5)**

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This book consists of 30 stories of people entering the last phase of their life. Each story is told in a logical order. At the end of each section, there is a piece where the author discusses what you have just read, asks questions about how you might deal with certain things and prompts you to discuss these things with your own loved ones. It could be extremely helpful for someone with a terminal illness, not just cancer, and their loved ones, to understand the stages of dying and what to expect.

The whole book is very well written. It is very easy to understand, and any medical terms are explained. There is also further detail at the back of the book. The cover is appealing even though it really just features the title. It would certainly have grabbed my attention had I seen it online or in a store purely because of the title. The hardback is quite a 'meaty' book in size, which I really like; because it has about 350 pages, I felt I could really get into it. The author's tone is caring and compassionate whilst being completely honest.

I love everything about this book. Even though it is split into many different stories, the underlying message is that dying doesn't have to be something awful that you should fear; underneath, no matter what the cause of the illness, most people's experiences are pretty much the same. Having been with my mum when she died and having always had unanswered questions, reading this book has put my mind at rest that everything that happened was a normal part of the process of dying. I feel so much better and reassured and I believe others will find this too.

This book isn't just helpful for someone who is nearing the end of their life, but also a very informative and interesting book for anyone who wants to know more about what happens to us as we are dying. My husband is currently reading it because I cannot speak any more highly of it! I recommend it to anyone who wants to know more about the dying process.

**Mum had breast cancer and I am a befriender at cancer support centre (36-45)  
(November 2018)**

Anyone who is close to, or works closely with, someone who is dying and will have to witness their last moments could find this book helpful. It may be a little too sad/scary for patients themselves. It gives readers an insight into the different ways that terminal cancer patients may deal with their last moments and what can happen physically, helping them to prepare for what may happen to their loved one/patient.

It is clear and well thought out, very easy to read. The author is very caring but also very knowledgeable on the subject.

I like the raw, honest reality of what happens when people die, no beating around the bush, just facts, which will help some people prepare mentally for what is to come.

### **Daughter of a brain cancer patient (26-35) (November 2018)**

This is one of those books that could, and indeed does, apply to every single one of us, regardless of whether we experience cancer directly or indirectly. It is a powerful, emotive and impressively informative and educational book exploring that taboo of all taboos: our own mortality and our tendency, at least in the West, to be unwilling to accept that one day we will cease to be. It is one of those books that reaches out to every single being alive – death is the one thing that we all have in common. Mannix, ironically, dares us to embrace our own mortality as a way of encouraging us to make the most of our lives, whilst we can.

There is no chronology to the order of the book. However, stories are arranged in sub-categories, e.g. 'Naming death', 'Transcendence', as appropriate, according to the story's main theme. Despite Mannix's obviously extensive and wide-ranging experience, she manages to avoid too many technical terms, making it an easy read in that respect. There is a brief but comprehensive glossary, tailored more for readers outside the UK. It is a hefty hardback, with the text in a font size that makes this a rather lengthy read. Mannix's skill for giving her writing a very visual edge (one can almost 'see' Ruby's cancer-ridden body emptied of her organs, such is the author's knack for visualisation) means that any photographic material, apart from possibly churning a stomach or two, would be surplus to requirements.

Euthanasia, infant death, post mortems are all covered here and Mannix's in-depth accounts of a patient's last moments make for uncomfortable reading (in the chapter "Every breath you take"). She does warn us about this. Anyone in a vulnerable state (emotional, psychological, even physical), anyone very recently bereaved, and anyone who is particularly squeamish is advised to delay reading this book, avoid it altogether, or at least enter with a certain amount of trepidation. It is NOT in any way light reading, nor does it carry much humour. A touching finishing touch, so to speak, is the inclusion of a strangely reassuring letter template for anyone knowingly coming to the end of their life, who wishes to write one last note to loved ones.

### **Former carer to terminally ill mother with grade IV glioblastoma (36-45) (October 2018)**

A must for anyone affected by terminal illness, but not if they are too affected to cope. It can be read in any order to suit circumstances. I like that it covers all aspects, including different end-of-life pathways. The views of terminally ill patients could assist those in a similar position before they reach that point. I recommend it to patients with a terminal prognosis, and probably to others not yet confirmed. I feel more relaxed about what is inevitable for us all. I have beaten colon cancer and have severe COPD, but the future is not so scary anymore.

### **In the clear from colon cancer (Over 75) (August 2018)**

I approached this book with trepidation – being much nearer to the end of life than the beginning – but it did help to allay some of my fears about death and dying. It will be helpful for anyone supporting the dying – medical and nursing staff, carers, or family – or anyone facing the end of life. I found it sad but inspiring, written in an honest and open manner that may do much to dispel fears about a sobering subject. It de-mystifies the unknown and gives insight into this mystery that awaits us all!

It is visually appealing and simply but beautifully written with compassion, grace and respect. It is written in a clear-sighted but sympathetic fashion and is easy to read for the layperson. The glossary explains technical words and abbreviations.

It was insightful to read about the dying process and the ‘pattern’ that it follows, with progressive stages towards the inevitable outcome. It is a difficult subject, but the case studies help with understanding how people and their nearest and dearest approach the end of life; Dr Mannix appears to be well grounded in her experience of palliative care. I hope that I am fortunate enough to have the end of my life’s journey managed by someone like her, with the expertly managed patient care described. To sum up: I found this a difficult and emotional read but ultimately uplifting. I found it best to read just a couple of chapters at a time due to the inevitable sadness when reading the case studies. Recommended, but with caution; had I been given this book to read when initially diagnosed with cancer I probably would have freaked out!

### **Breast cancer patient (66-75) (July 2018)**

As Mannix says, the death rate remains 100% and thus the book is relevant to us all. However, death is no longer widely discussed so people don’t know what to expect and often think that the end may be traumatic and unpalatable. Mannix’s recounting of many deaths makes it clear that it may not be any of these things. Physically, there may be less to be afraid of at the end of one’s life than feared. Whether the emotional and spiritual struggle is resolved is harder to fathom. Anyone with a life-changing illness may find the book reassuring and thought provoking as it makes a clear case for quality of life, not treatment at all cost. It is a great advocate for palliative care.

Although Mannix does not write about her career chronologically, she has arranged the patient stories in order. The first concern themselves more with physical changes and symptoms, then move on to patterns of behaviour and more abstract concepts like making sense of human impermanence and legacies. Her words flow and draw

one in immediately, there is no jargon and no medicalisation of death and dying. Her tone is that of an equal, and she describes life (and death) with great compassion.

Mannix often uses a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy approach to work with patients and families to look at how we interpret events, how they cause us anger, sadness or anguish, and how we may be able to change these responses by understanding the pattern and thus, consider if they are helpful or accurate. Her aim is to help patients find ways to get off the negative treadmill and move on. By anticipating death, people can be enabled to think about options, whether it is reaching short-term goals, tying up loose ends and/or about comfort and symptom control. Mannix brings the reader close to the bedside and shows us – with feeling but without sentimentality or morbidity – just what ‘accompanying people in their last days’ means.

This is an extraordinary and powerful collection of experiences that tells us how to deal with death and talk to the dying. It reminds me of a book by French psychologist, Marie de Hennezel, *Intimate Death* (1997); it is the first time I have read a book describing death and dying that is equally compelling. There is something simple and reassuring about it. However, Mannix’s patients are already within a palliative care setting and thus have access to a branch of medicine that specialises in supporting us as death draws near. It is thus easier to manage symptoms, involve loved ones, work towards the resolution of worries at the end of life. It does not concern itself with unexpected and traumatic deaths and does not look at people who may have been angry all their lives, who die an angry death, or patients who may die in pain or short of breath due to the unavailability of appropriate and sufficient medication. She does however describe ordinary lives and ordinary deaths of people in a manner that offers hope, avoids despair and finds the strength to confront and accept the end.

### **Nurse (56-65) (June 2018)**

This excellent book is the best I’ve reviewed so far. It’s suitable for anyone; we will all experience death and dying. I recommend it to health and social care professionals, including those in training. It is very helpful for anyone caring for patients who are palliative; it will help them understand that death is nothing to fear and how to speak to patients at the end of life, and to relatives and loved ones.

The author covers the subject well, in a comforting way. It is easy to understand and there is a good glossary. It’s hard to put down, but you can dip in and out of the different stories. The author has a genuine passion to ensure patients have the best treatment and care. She explains dying as a peaceful and painless journey and has opened my mind and heart to the subject of death and dying (not to be afraid).

I love this book. I cried all the way through. The stories are lovely, and the author has a genuine passion to ensure that all patients have the best end-of-life care. Her care and compassion for the loved ones of patients is incredible. I just wish all consultants were like her. It is very useful, a must for every doctor. I have already recommended it and will pass it on for others to read. A friend who has dyslexia has ordered the audio version. She is a chaplain, and this will be a very useful tool for her ministry.

### **Breast cancer 2011 (66-75) (June 2018)**

This book should be recommended for everyone. It explains that dying is a normal part of living and not something to be afraid of, that by talking about death and dying we can prepare for it and begin to dispel the taboo that increasingly surrounds it. It could be frightening for patients to read, but they will benefit enormously if health professionals and carers have read it and have the expertise to help them as the author helped her patients. When people read this book and begin to discuss death openly, cancer patients and the general population will benefit.

The author relates stories from her clinical practice over four decades and does this beautifully. She very eloquently brings the characters to life and draws the reader into their world. The language is exquisite, and I devoured this book but at the same time was reluctant to read it as I didn't want it to end. Her writing is beautiful, very gentle and her words paint every scene so well that one can almost feel a part of it.

The attractive cover has an ethereal appearance, in keeping with the tone. The layout is good, but the paper could be better. It is easy to understand and, because it is related as a series of stories, it sustained my interest. Perhaps having worked in palliative care is an advantage in understanding the text, but there is little medical terminology. The glossary will be useful for readers unfamiliar with this speciality.

I like almost everything about this book. I like that the author is recommending and encouraging us to start to talk about death and dying again and acknowledge it is part of living – a process that we all go through just as we all go through the birth process. I must just note that the people in the stories were very fortunate to have the expertise of the author and specialist palliative care professionals to help them with the final part of their lives. Ideally, everyone should have access to this expertise; I hope that, if this book becomes mandatory for all healthcare staff, things will improve.

### **Macmillan volunteer and retired specialist nurse (66-75) (June 2018)**

I recommend this book to almost anyone. It will be most helpful for anyone who fears that they need to die in pain and who is afraid to talk to their loved ones about their feelings surrounding their death. However, it is suitable for anyone as it helps to take away many of the fears surrounding death.

It is well-laid out in terms of the chapters and sections. I'm not sure there is a logical way to handle the topic, but there is a structure to the way that Mannix writes, grouping the case studies around particular headings. It is easily accessible, and the glossary explains topics such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) clearly. There is also a section on resources and helpful information. The cover clearly states the intention of the book and I like the black and red lettering, with the abstract design. The paper quality inside is a bit of a let-down after the pristine white cover.

I really like how the author uses case studies to illustrate her points. I particularly like the idea that, as we have midwives to help us into life, so we should have deathwives to ease us on our journey out of this world. She really makes the reader aware that death is just a normal part of life, not something to be feared.

Other than the paper, I found nothing to dislike about this book. Everyone should read it, particularly health professionals, and I have already recommended it to my oncologist and the volunteers I work with. The author sets out to help us reclaim the ability to see death as a natural end to life, not something to fear. She uses over thirty case histories from her clinical practice to illustrate her points, relating them in such a way that you feel the warmth of her personality and know that the people she is talking about will have felt cared for and cherished as individuals. At times, it brought me to tears, not of despair, but of empathy for everyone in the situations described. It gave me the confidence to talk to one of our service users about what was frightening her about the prospect of her death. It should be on the reading list of all trainee doctors and student nurses.

**I support service users with a variety of cancers and have had breast and ovarian cancer myself (56-65) (May 2018)**

The subject, or thought, of death can be dreaded, frightening and unwelcome. This book aims to encourage the reader to reassess their opinions, perceptions and thoughts of dying and the dying process through a series of stories, written in candid detail. The reader becomes involved in the distressing subject of pending death and the dying process as seen and shared by Dr Mannix in clinical practice, who says “it’s time to talk about dying”. I like the author’s writing style and found the language uncomplicated, and easy to read and understand. The reader has the benefit of a glossary and a list of helpful resources at the back of the book.

This is a sad book, but very thought provoking about death and the dying process. It is a distressing subject but perhaps this sharing might reassure the reader, and give them courage to talk about dying? It is heartfelt, intimate and comforting and ultimately may assist in allaying the fear of dying and the dying process.

**Former full-time carer of parent with breast cancer (now deceased) (56-65) (April 2018)**

Many people don’t like talking to people with cancer about death and dying, because they find it uncomfortable. We are all in such a state of denial about eventually dying that it isn’t often discussed, and people base their expectations on fiction or films, which may or may not be accurate. If you have a cancer diagnosis you need to work through the impact of suddenly being confronted by your mortality and this book is informative and a helpful conversation starter. It will be helpful for people who are dying, their carers, family, or friends, and those worrying about dying. Certainly, anyone with a terminal diagnosis would be reassured greatly by reading this book.

It’s very clear and easy to read. The author weaves the information into stories about individual patients. Unlike many authors, she tells you all the most important and reassuring information straight away; this is quite refreshing and will be useful if you don’t have the energy to read the whole book. The chapters are short and manageable, making it suitable for those with limited energy or concentration. It is written to be relevant for carers as well as patients and their families.

I highly recommend it. It is written from the first-hand experience of a palliative care doctor. They don't always get it right, but what comes across clearly is that they try to consider the needs of each person and their family and do their best to make the experience a good one. They can indicate when death approaches, giving the family time to gather and say what they need to. Having more knowledge makes something less scary and this book provides information that you may not know as a patient, relative, friend or carer. I like that the author describes death in detail, taking time to reassure anyone facing it imminently that it will be a softer, less harsh experience than many expect or worry about. An excellent book. Not everyone wants to think about death, but this book would have a broad appeal amongst those who dare to consider it, or who have a terminal diagnosis.

### **Previous breast cancer experience (46-55) (April 2018)**

This is suitable for anyone with or without a long-term illness. It is not specifically about cancer, although hugely relevant. With a diagnosis of cancer, the first biggest fear is often the idea of dying. This would be the book to choose when trying to understand that process, to demystify what may happen and make it less frightening.

The book has a very specific structure, with explanations as to why the information and stories are presented as they are. Some of the author's experiences have been collated into one complete story, even though they may not have happened in that way. This is intended to help the flow of the narrative, while still maintaining key ideas or interesting anecdotes. This does not interfere with the authenticity of the text and indeed maintains trust about the author's honesty. There is a sense that the author wants the reader to understand the subject. With her empathetic writing and passion for the subject, she reiterates ideas, such as her message of 'do it now' rather than waiting, or the understanding that the process of dying is akin to the process of birth. She highlights key aspects of the theme and specifically attempts to clarify her aims.

The title is euphemistic and initially seems ironic as the author's intention is to talk about death in an open and honest way. However, the subtitle is very clear and succinctly captures the core purpose of the content. The book is about the very natural dying process of most people, no violent murders or gory accidents, which seems at odds with the colour choice for the cover. Black and red is usually representative of dark tales in western cultures and the whimsical marbling effect does not capture the down-to-earth common-sense approach taken by the author.

The book is beautifully written, despite such intense subject matter. The author adeptly describes the details of a scene, the emotional landscape as well as physical. A poignant phrase or well-crafted paragraph will suddenly catch the reader. The diversity of people in the stories is powerful and will undoubtedly find different resonance for different people, depending on their experience. The author includes her own experiences too, taking the reader further into her confidence, with mistakes she has made as well as moments of personal triumph. The reader is reassuringly taken through what dying looks like, but there are no false happy endings and she fills in gaps of information, where the reader may have felt frustrated by not knowing.

The author shines as a caring, compassionate person, but does seem protective of the reader at times. For example, in 'Reading the label' she cautions about the subject matter, suggesting that it may be too difficult at times. It should be assumed that the reader has made an independent decision based on the cover and blurb and can monitor their choice. The subject is wide, and the author skilfully informs the reader about the process of dying, possible choices, the work of hospices, but also introduces huge themes more randomly and without further opportunity to explore, e.g. PTSD and euthanasia. Her long experience in health care suggests she would have interesting ideas to share but are misplaced in the main theme of this book. The resource list seemed skeletal on first reading and the letter template simplistic. However, since completing the book, I have been thinking a lot about the statements in the letter and have been assimilating how I could apply them to my circumstances.

I have already talked about this book to many people, those in cancer support groups and the elderly who have talked about their last years. Some have resisted, but I urge them to dip into the stories; it's not necessary to read it from cover to cover. I found such reassurance in the stories, and the book continues to prompt questions around how I can prepare my family about death. How do we start conversations with young adults about dying when it is not part of living, as it used to be?

### **Living with untreatable colon cancer (56-65) (March 2018)**

This book is most useful for family and friends of patients with an incurable illness. It is very helpful for medical and nursing students and junior palliative care workers. It is beautifully and compassionately written, with minimal jargon. There is a short glossary together with some resources and helpful information.

Dr Mannix states that palliative care is not solely concerned with dying or with cancer, but with excellent symptom management to people of all diagnoses at any stage of their illness when they require it. So, the book can be used at any stage in the care of the patient. Indeed, the purpose of the book is to enable people to become familiar with the process of dying and this is done by a series of stories at all points of the care plan, from initial diagnosis to end-of-life decisions. Summaries at intervals ask readers what they think about what they have just read; how does it help or inform? Some answers are suggested from experience and research.

This is a very good book that will help discussion about dying. As the author says, she is on a mission to reclaim public understanding of dying. I hope it will be widely read as well as used for reference.

### **Retired GP (66-75) (March 2018)**

This excellent book just read itself to me. It is a beautifully presented, simple text, very powerful. It is spot on. It is useful for the different aspects, positive thinking, and different attitudes presented, all very enlightening. I adore the humour, anecdotes and the life stories; you can see that it has been a labour of love. I feel that anyone can benefit from this if they wish to understand the different people playing a role, whether professionally or personally.

It is incredibly moving and educational in a way that you can learn for the better, not in a classroom scenario, but in real-life situations. I can relate to many of these stories in my own way and I think this is probably the best book I have read in a very long time (and I am an avid reader) ... wonderful.

**Family members living with myeloma, liver and lung cancer and volunteer for Look Good Feel Better, a charity that helps women and teens cope with the visible and sometimes psychological effects of cancer (46-55) (February 2018)**

I love this book. Most people will benefit greatly from reading it to be more comfortable about death – however and whenever it comes – although it may be too soon if very recently bereaved. It is presented as a series of stories, backed up by a long career and much experience of palliative care. It is interesting and enjoyable to read, despite what could be a difficult subject; it made it seem much less taboo.

It is well explained, with a glossary. The cover is nicely designed. The font is a little small for me, but I just had to make sure I was reading in a good light.

I found this book very reassuring. I think I am lucky in that when my own mother died the process was beautiful and moving. Sad, yes, but it felt a natural part of her life.

**Past cervical cancer patient (56-65) (February 2018)**

If there is one book that people should be made to read, this is it. Many people are scared to talk about death and dying, be it themselves or a loved one. But here it is explained and discussed with ease and the naturalness that death is. Through each short account of patients who are dying is woven hope and comfort for all involved in the end-of-life process. Oh, and such wisdom. The chapters are interspersed with pauses for thought and explanations of different stages that families and individuals go through. I didn't read all these as I wanted to read the next story.

I like the ease, knowledge and tone in which it is written. It is superbly easy to understand. At the end is a glossary, resources and helpful information and a poignant framework for a letter to loved ones.

I did not find any of the stories morbid, rather, fascinating. I learnt so much and have great admiration for the work of palliative care doctors and nurses. I hope that I have a doctor as skilled and patient as Kathryn Mannix when I am dying. Please read, find comfort, reassurance, and peace – I know I did.

**Living with cancer (myelodysplastic syndrome) (46-55) (January 2018)**



This book aims to demystify and dispel fears about death and dying. The author shares stories to illustrate what happens when people are dying. These stories are organised thematically and there is a "Pause for thought" section, with questions designed to promote conversations about death and dying, at the end of each theme. It is most useful for those anticipating their own death or the death of a loved one. Healthcare professionals may also wish to read it to gain a greater insight into the dying process and the role of hospices and palliative care teams.

The book is a quality hardback with a reasonable typeface and size. The cover is appealing and appropriate for the subject. The tone is frank and compassionate. The author has a wealth of palliative care expertise, but writes in an accessible and clear manner, appropriate for a wide audience. There is a glossary and resource list.

This informative and well-written book clears up many misconceptions about dying and provides an insight into the work of palliative care professionals. I enjoyed the variety of stories (although I feel that the author uses one to make a case against assisted dying and her comments are biased and unnecessary), and the vignettes from her family life. The stories are not limited to cancer patients; there are stories about patients with other illnesses, such as cystic fibrosis and motor neurone disease. The author uses these stories to demystify dying and describe how patients, families and healthcare professionals cope with end-of-life situations. She informs us that open and honest communication about death and dying often results in a more comfortable and peaceful death and encourages us to think ahead and discuss our preferences while we have the chance. Any book that encourages people to talk about and accept death without fear is to be commended.

### **Relative of someone with breast and lung cancer (26-35) (March 2018)**

The author is a palliative medicine pioneer with over thirty years' experience. Her book comprises some thirty vignettes about a person dying – his or her last days and moments, and the experiences of those around them. Each story is unique in the challenges faced by the dying person and their loved ones. The author makes clear her thoughts that dying and death are taboo subjects, and that if we were all to face our deaths with pragmatism, open-mindedness and clear plans, we could be spared much suffering and gain peace of mind. She even includes a template letter that she suggests we fill in and give to our loved ones, showing those we love how we have appreciated them, and what we hope they will remember about us when we die.

It is a good quality hardback with a tasteful cover and an easy to read font. The author has a warm, friendly and authoritative style that makes this book a very easy read. I like her ability to speak to readers in a warm and engaging way. Her kindness and compassion – as well as her skills – show through her words. There is nothing that I dislike, although from her accounts, she does seem always to be the person who brings wisdom and comfort to everyone. This could appear self-congratulatory.

The stories are wide-ranging and memorable. The light that shines through the experiences of those facing death and their loved ones is the great effect of the author, who, in her professional role, says and does things that are helpful and wise at these challenging times. Despite not being immune to her own feelings of sadness, she succeeds in bringing a sense of calm and acceptance in the people she works with. The reader cannot help but like her. This is a book that will remain in readers' minds for a long time. Perhaps we need to face these issues, and when we are not dying! A close relative is terminally ill, and I would not suggest that he and his wife read this book. It would be too much at a time when they are both so vulnerable.

**Friend. Carer. Former health professional (56-65) (February 2018)**



This book is about death and dying in general, and it includes reference to many other terminal illnesses beside terminal cancer. Its aim is to encourage readers to become more familiar with thinking about death and dying in general and about how we approach these questions (and would want to approach these); and as such – and insofar as death remains a big social taboo – it would be most useful for a wide and general audience. It may be useful for those dealing with questions and feelings about palliative care routes, particularly, perhaps, for relatives of individuals who are either approaching or are already in palliative care. However, by that stage it is also likely that questions about death and dying will be at the forefront of their minds and that they will not wish to spend precious time reading a book about it. The author seems to have more in mind a reader who is at a slight distance from the topic.

The book is organised around the stories of individuals and it flows logically and well, guiding the reader through different questions about death and dying. It is easy to understand. There is a helpful glossary, but it is not strictly necessary; the author avoids technical words as much as possible. It is appealing in physical form (paper quality, typeface and so on) and in terms of tone. Despite the heaviness of the topic, the author writes in a warm and friendly way, which eases the reader into the subject. Moreover, because of the way in which the book is structured around stories, which are almost like case histories but in a more narrative form, it is easy to leave the book for a while to reflect on what you've read and then to come back to it.

There are two things that I particularly like about this book. Firstly, each section is followed by a 'pause for thought' where the author reflects on – and encourages her reader to reflect on – the topic that she has just treated. These pauses for thought are about, for example: questions of legacies that we have inherited and generated; the coping styles that we (and those close to us) adopt; and the way in which we talk about death. Secondly, the author centres each story upon one person but sensitively conveys the perspectives of several people (for example, family members and healthcare professionals). This enables us to think about and to imagine the perspectives of several different people in relation to each case.

This book is very useful in the way in which it tries to guide the general reader towards seeing the importance of thinking – and talking about – death and dying. It is

also very useful in broadening the perspective of the reader to consider the stances of, for example, medical professionals involved in palliative care. It would be ideally read by anyone as a book that helps us to think about death and dying in general. People affected by cancer might already have questions about death and dying on their minds (if they have been diagnosed with terminal cancer, for example) and this book would not be the most sensitive recommendation. I also cannot imagine recommending it to the bereaved; for them it would come too late. So, the primary audience I would recommend it to is a general audience.

**Bereaved relative (26-35) (June 2018)**

# 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.

**We're here to help everyone with cancer live life as fully as they can, providing physical, financial and emotional support. So whatever cancer throws your way, we're right there with you.**

**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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