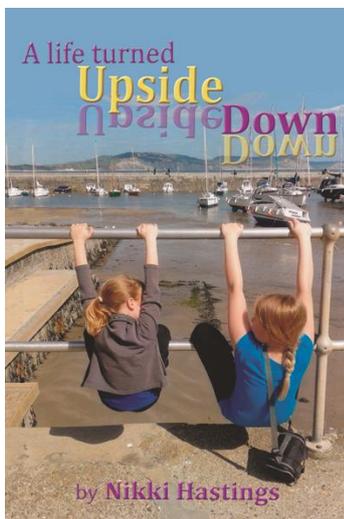


**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**

BOOK REVIEWS

Read what people affected by cancer think about...



A life turned upside down (2015)

Hastings N.

Little Knoll Press, 2015.

154pp. ISBN 9780992722036

Average star rating 4.1 (out of 5)

**Macmillan Cancer Support
89 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7UQ**

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This grass-roots description of dealing with cancer will be extremely helpful for families and carers and will make them feel less isolated. It covers everything on the cancer merry-go-round in real words and with passion.

It is written extremely well from a patient's perspective, covering the whole cancer journey for the patient, family and friends. It is very real, no fancy words or jargon, written by an ordinary normal woman with breast cancer. I love the photos, they put a face to the author, and clearly depict her hairless during chemo; the smiles in the pictures show that we can still have a life and it is not all gloom and sadness. Many patients fear that life has 'ended' when they are diagnosed, but the photos illustrate that life does go on and that there are still things to smile about and times out.

This book gives a first-hand account of what cancer is about; there is empathy for, and a real connection with, the author. I was truly touched and identified with her. I found myself nodding in agreement when she was talking about feelings and the impact on her family and carers and herself. I recommend it and would easily read it again; books like this made me feel I was not alone on my journey.

Living with triple-negative breast cancer, grade 3 stage 2 (46-55) (July 2015)

A life turned upside down could well help someone with a secondary cancer diagnosis (or family member, friend or carer) because it primarily covers aspects of managing life around illness and treatment. It will be most relevant for someone who has been diagnosed with secondary breast cancer or those connected with them. However, I do not think it would be good reading for those in whom primary cancer has recently been detected or even those in recovery from treatments.

It provides an insight into the journey of someone with incurable breast cancer. Nikki explains the emotional upheaval, not just from her perspective as a patient, but also demonstrating her understanding of the feelings and needs of those around her. Naturally, she gives an outline of treatments and the side-effects that add to the enormous disruption many people in this situation face but the accent is on emotional issues that impact the whole family, with the writer facing hurdles and practical difficulties that sometimes seem insurmountable. Some information relating to

treatments and drugs appears to explain how and why things occur but it is a personal account and not intended to be a factual or 'how to' book.

The book has been compiled logically and mostly as events unfolded, with background information to help place matters into context. Nikki eloquently describes her journey, and the terminology is appropriate for the audience, providing a good balance of the issues that she addresses. Where treatments and medications are mentioned, explanations are given as to the reason for them being administered. Throughout the text, a scattering of happy photographs help to break up the serious tone and gravity of the topic, although humorous notes are interspersed.

I found it utterly compelling; it illustrates the far-reaching effects of a terminal cancer diagnosis. I like the fact that Nikki bravely tries to adjust to the lifestyle changes thrust upon her. This could encourage others to try to summon up a positive attitude against all odds, whilst knowing that at other times, to do so is impossible and that converse reactions to the harsh reality of the situation are only to be expected and should not be considered uncharacteristic or abnormal. It is evident that response to treatment and pain is different from person to person and Nikki had an accurate idea of what she would and would not be able to tolerate, which certain medical staff seemed reluctant to acknowledge. Against adversity, Nikki showed determination, sensitivity and strength, and alternately revealed the natural human responses along with the emotional turmoil, whilst also describing some of the physical trauma to which she is subjected, sometimes with amusement. At certain pertinent points, her mother's comments and observations are introduced and, together with tributes at the end, these give another perspective of Nikki and her resourcefulness.

Nikki's writing style flows rather professionally whilst delivering a moving account of a highly challenging period in her life; this results in an informative book that happens to present what I believe to be some potentially useful approaches and ideas. Although it may have been cathartic for Nikki, there is no doubt that, at other times, to pen such a difficult and acutely personal account is an enormously courageous task to undertake and one for which I have great admiration. I recommend it but not for those newly diagnosed with primary cancer, nor in recovery phase.

Breast cancer survivor (56-65) (July 2015)

This is a very real and grounded view of one woman's experiences and thoughts. It is useful for all aspects of cancer, although the inclusion of a paragraph by her husband would give a fuller picture. Nikki explains everything and her style is inclusive, as if she is talking to you. The book has clarity; it is dignified and the content doesn't jump about; it follows the impact of diagnosis, then through their lives, up to her death. The book itself is not fancy and over designed, it's approachable and touching because it is so personal. Nikki's book must have achieved everything she wanted it to and more. It delivers a look into the life of someone who is like your lovely neighbour next door. It is honest, powerful and tragic, but delivered in a 'safe' way; you don't come out the other end in floods of tears, but with a sense of serenity, calm and peace.

Relative of cancer patient (46-55) (June 2015)

Patients, partners and family will benefit from this book; indeed, anyone interested in what can happen after diagnosis will gain valuable knowledge. Nikki describes with great honesty everything that happened to her, which will give family and friends a very good understanding of what can be expected.

It is easy to understand. Nikki explains all the treatments and the instruments used. She dealt with some very difficult decisions and, if it's possible to put something like this in logical order, then it is in order. The cover is lovely and very appropriate. The text is easy on the eye and there is a good range of photos inside.

Nikki is honest and candid about how she dealt with such a difficult time. She didn't give up and pushed herself even when she must have felt like pulling the covers over her head and saying 'I've had enough'. I found it very uplifting because most of the time Nikki was very positive and dealt with each setback very well when others would have fallen apart. She was a very brave lady.

Uterine cancer survivor (56-65) (June 2015)

This is the honest story of Nikki Hasting's journey, her battles with treatment and the side-effects of terminal breast cancer, her relationship with her husband and the story of those family members who supported her during five years of treatment. It is a great insight into her journey and I am amazed at the detail. It will be useful for health professionals on surgical wards who don't understand the whole cancer journey and what some patients go through and doctors who don't listen to patients or take on board their fears and wishes. It will also be useful for partners, family and friends, work colleagues and employers, to help them understand what the patient is going through even though they may appear well. However, not everyone with breast cancer is terminal and may worry that they are unless they have been told by the doctor that they are not. It may also not be suitable for someone going through their cancer journey alone.

It is very easy to read and understand; there aren't many technical words and Nikki explains everything in layman's language. I like the cover, although it does not give an indication of the emotional, honest story within. I like the photos in the book and the size of the book is just right.

This is one of the most honest and emotional stories I have read on this subject. Nikki's courage and the support from her mum and family were amazing. Nikki lived life to the full when she was well enough and has left so many happy memories for her children and family. I might recommend it to others but only if they have not been given a terminal diagnosis. Reading this story made me smile and cry and brought back memories of my own journey with cancer. It stirred up those thoughts again – every ache or pain, is the cancer back? Thankfully, I am doing well.

I had breast cancer in 2011 (56-65) (April 2015)

This book deals with treatment and palliative care for someone with terminal secondary breast cancer. The information will be useful for anyone affected by any cancer, especially those receiving palliative care. It covers many subjects: a difficult diagnosis; frustrating doctor's appointments; talking to friends and family about dying and the future. It will help others to speak about these things and be better prepared.

It is easy to read and understand, and talks about treatment and chemotherapy in layman's terms. It is a small, bright appealing book; the picture of two young girls on the cover lightens its serious nature. I like the author's honesty and the useful information that is not easily found in other books. I will probably recommend it to people with secondary breast cancer and with other cancers.

Carer (56-65) (April 2015)



This is a moving, straightforward history of Nikki Hasting's life following her diagnosis at the age of 34 and with two young children. It is extremely informative and explains her treatment and how she was affected emotionally and physically. Nikki chose to stop treatment shortly before her death; this is understandable – quality of life becomes important after so much treatment, with such horrific side-effects – but is something that only the patient can decide. I have great admiration for Nikki and am sure that she will never be forgotten. Her book is a valuable insight into the treatment available to secondary breast cancer patients and how the whole family is affected.

It gives a clear picture of how the writer and her family were affected by diagnosis, treatment and coming to terms with a terminal diagnosis at such an early age. It also looks at how relationships can be affected by cancer: husband/wife; mother/child; patient/friends. It explains secondary cancer well – something I was not very aware of before I read this book. It also gives very clear explanations of different chemotherapy regimes, which is informative and interesting.

It is presented in a no-nonsense, this-is-what-happened style. There is not too much emphasis on the trauma of diagnosis, treatment and subsequent death. It is all very matter of fact and makes for fascinating reading. It is very accurate, although practice may vary from hospital to hospital. It is easy to understand if the reader has some knowledge of breast cancer terminology, but many terms are explained well. The photographs give the reader a better insight into the patient and her family.

I was unable to put it down and read it in less than 24 hours! I learnt a great deal and am very glad that I read it. There need to be more such books. Ignorance breeds fear. Any cancer patient will feel stronger and more empowered if they are armed with relevant information throughout treatment and beyond. An excellent read. I may recommend it but will stress that the writer had secondary breast cancer and that the book describes her life from diagnosis, through various treatments, until her death.

Breast cancer patient (56-65) (September 2015)

A life turned upside down is an autobiographical journey from diagnosis through to the final days before the writer's death from HER2-positive secondary breast cancer. It is a fast-paced, no-nonsense, at times searching, at times funny, often moving account that raises awareness of secondary cancer and of the impact of the illness on family and friends. You may be distressed by the story if you are at a vulnerable stage of primary cancer. Someone with secondary cancer or their carers may find reassurance in shared experiences. There are some cautionary tales; for example, the writer comments that she may have done things differently if she had known at diagnosis that her treatments would result in five years of extended life.

The 33 chapters start with "How it happened" and end with "The 40th birthday party we thought she would never see" and a "tribute to Nic" - the last two chapters taken up by family members. Some chapters are factual such as "Bad scan results" while others are more reflective, for instance "What makes me a woman". It could be read in an evening, and I found it difficult to put down. The momentum is maintained by hospital visits and treatment regimes, with family events and blog-style posts interwoven into the story. Some of Nikki's concerns are about censorship and the prison of expression – "so much had to be censored to protect other people". At one point, she recalls a conversation that ended "with him (a friend) telling me how cushy my life is". Explanations of medical terms are given in the text, there is no glossary.

One thing that stands out is the number of photographs of Nikki and her family. This gives it a very personal feel, so that when I had finished reading I didn't feel it was my place to comment. Nikki also manages to look beautiful in all the pictures, which is at odds with the subject matter. I found her experience with the media interesting, at one point saying, "I wanted the money and I wanted the publicity" but then pulling out because of what she felt to be, "sensationalising of the story". There are brief forays into the world of charities and chuggers, of benefits and disability, life insurance and the possible view that "life is better now I have cancer".

Nikki describes her relationships and experiences in a frank and open way that is accessible to anyone, regardless of whether they find themselves in a similar situation. She is an ordinary woman whose life takes an unexpected turn. She is self-aware and recognises her own inner conflicts and limitations. The reader can only share her sense of bewilderment and despair, but also her determination to transcend the, "cancer catchphrases" of communication and to find continuity, that life goes on, even though we die.

The book would be a good starting point for sharing and discussing the role of the media, possibly disaster tourism, the nature of cancer and how we confront it, the impact on a young family, and the role of carers. It would be a useful resource for a support group to share, including health professionals and policy makers. Essentially, it is a legacy to her daughters and recognises the many people that supported her through her illness, at the same time as facing their own struggles.

Less than a year since treatment for breast cancer 46-55 (September 2015)

This book covers the emotional and factual aspects of dealing with cancer and how you can leave a legacy for children. It is useful for anyone as it presents a no-nonsense, real-life experience about living through and dealing with cancer.

One of its strengths is its straightforward language; I found this refreshing. However, I don't think the presentation does the contents justice. I appreciate that the cover is a personal photo but the packaging and design could be more appealing. It looks like a self-published book but is a valuable insight into Nikki's journey.

I would recommend this book to everyone; it is 'real' and not sugar coated, by which I mean that you get to hear about her husband ignoring her or not dealing with her diagnosis well. You hear about arguments that do happen in real life and how a marriage copes with the pressure of a terminal illness. My husband has struggled with my diagnosis and treatment and like any other family we have had our ups and downs – it reassured me to see that Nikki experienced that too.

Breast cancer patient (36-45) (August 2015)

This is an open and honest insight into the life of a younger woman with secondary breast cancer. It may help relatives, carers and health professionals gain a better understanding of how a patient may feel and struggle with day-to-day living. I also recommend it to patients with secondary breast cancer, but not necessarily to those with primary breast cancer whom it may worry needlessly.

It is well written and very easy to understand. It is a nice, lightweight book, easy to carry around, good if you are on the move. There is good use of photos.

I like its honesty and its length; it tells the whole story without the non-essential information and anecdotes that often accompany autobiographies. The ending is abrupt; this might sound silly as the author dies, but family/friends could have rounded it off. It's certainly insightful and should be recommended for people working in the health service, assisting those living with secondary breast cancer.

Living with secondary breast cancer (26-35) (July 2015)

This is probably best read after treatment has started – the detail may be distressing at diagnosis; it may give too much information about the side-effects, without the support that is there when you are going through it. It explains the reality of living with a terminal diagnosis but many of the emotions relate to other forms of cancer.

The author takes the reader from diagnosis, through treatment, which extends her life far beyond what she could have hoped for, up to her death at an early age. She explains her treatment and how it affects her emotional state. She also considers how her family copes with the practicalities of living with a cancer patient. There are triumphs and joys along the way as well as the realities of living with cancer. The narrative is occasionally taken up by her mother who explains the emotions of caring for her daughter.

It is easy to understand. The author uses everyday language with few technical terms. She writes in simple, speech-like sentences so occasionally it feels lacking in depth. The title and cover could be about almost anything and it was refreshing to be able to read it without worrying about other people asking about the content. However, the title is appropriate – having a cancer diagnosis does turn your life upside down – and the cover represents the author's two young daughters. The photographs inside allow the reader to connect with the author.

This book is very practical about the treatment and the emotions that living with a diagnosis of terminal cancer has on the author. I found I could relate to the author's emotions and it felt comforting to know my emotions were not unusual; even though my diagnosis isn't terminal and has responded to treatment, I could relate to the daily struggles of living with cancer and how it changes your life in a moment. I did feel it lacks the humour that has been evident in other books I have read about cancer, the humour that keeps you going when you need to laugh or else you will cry.

Living with breast cancer (lumpectomy, chemotherapy and radiotherapy completed, now on Tamoxifen) (46-55) (June 2015)

This book helps us to understand the emotions and tensions affecting patients and those around them, the relationship issues, the emotions at play and what sensitivity to show. It is personally engaging, describes situations with a human perspective and expresses the emotions well. It is easy to read and the layout is generally good, although the typeface could be bigger.

It is a good piece of work but misses the opportunity to be inspirational. Reading between the lines, Nikki used a lot of her time in a positive way to live life to the fullest with her children, friends and family. Yet the balance of the book is primarily towards the troubles and sadness. If the two had been better in balance, it would have, on the one hand described the realities of the emotional roller coaster but, on the other, inspired many to take the most positive outlook in the time allowed by the treatment and the opportunities it created.

It could help some people create a more positive mindset in dealing with their own illness and help them calibrate their own situation to strive for the best use of the time available. For those around them, it may help them to be more sensitive to the emotions of the patient.

Cared for friend with lung cancer for one year until his death (56-65) (May 2015)

This is an open, simple and appealing account of a five-year experience of advanced breast cancer diagnosed at age 34. The details of Nikki's diagnosis and treatments are explained in ordinary language and are very interesting. It is probably more suitable for those in remission or settled into treatment of advanced cancer than for those at an early stage, though her account of chemotherapy might help some. You need to be feeling self-confident to read it. There is much about it that is frankly enjoyable, but it is a sad story of a terminal illness.

It is a paperback with several family photos, mostly in colour. The paper is good quality, the binding secure and the typeface pleasant to read. Nikki writes as an ordinary young woman so it is easy to understand and any technical words are explained as they are used. It is a personal account and does not attempt to explain any aspects of cancer that Nikki did not experience. Her tone is conversational and unassuming. Nikki was creative and doing very well as a family support worker with her local adoption team, so not quite ordinary which perhaps explains the appealing nature of her account. She must have had a lovely personality.

Living with breast cancer (Over 75) (May 2015)

This is most useful for patients with young children as Nikki deals with managing her children and her cancer in some detail, particularly decisions about taking part in drug trials, living with children and extended family relations, and dealing with the emotional aspects of long-term treatment. I like Nikki's directness and the chapters told from her mother's point of view.

It is written as the journey unfolds and there are clear references when needed and lots of detail about how she made decisions when she made them. It is very readable and teenagers could also read it as it is clear and precise. Nikki was conscious that other people will now be reading what she has written and so in places the style feels a bit guarded so as not to offend others. She seems to hold back and is not entirely honest about her anger or frustration with those closest to her; we need to know it is OK to feel like this so hearing it from others is very valuable.

The photographs are lovely and the summaries at the start of each chapter help mark out the journey but I was a bit disappointed by the book's appearance; it looks a little like a self-published book, although the photo on the cover does indicate one its main strengths. I would like it to look more professional and thus be taken more seriously – there are some comments inside that the medical profession needs to hear!

Before her diagnosis, Nikki worked in social work and in adoption teams and this helped her to have a useful knowledge of how to prepare children for the death of a parent, and how others in the family might deal with the practical aspects of this. It is also useful in approaching the legalities of making wills and the guardianship of young children – crucial things that we are often reluctant to address. In view of this, I would like to know how her husband and children are doing. Life must go on after a death and it is often the hardest part and the period where there is least support.

I recommend it to families especially, and to health workers for a patient's perspective on the effects of being on a drug trial and being in the medical system for a long time – Nikki lived much longer than predicted and this is one of the main issues highlighted. She talks about how to deal with living with side effects for so long and how the emotional side of support tails off from friends and family as time goes by; the paradox of still being alive and people needing to get on with their own lives! There is some crucial discussion about resistance to her decision to stop treatment; this is the greatest value of the book, to get this out in the open about our choices.

Breast cancer survivor (46-55) (April 2015)

This a candid account of coming to terms with a terminal illness and taking control shows it is possible to live life to the full and prepare those around you for the inevitable. Nikki exceeded medical expectations in terms of the duration she lived with her illness. It is most useful for someone faced with living with cancer (or another critical illness) but also for carers and family to understand the emotional journey of someone with a terminal diagnosis and how they can support them.

Nikki takes the reader from the shock of diagnosis to the last few weeks of her life, at which point family members conclude the memoir. It relays Nikki's personal experience without seeking to give advice or draw upon any particular research or school of thought. It is written in an easy to read style, with adequate explanations of technical terms for those not familiar with cancer treatments. The photos make it an appealing read and add to the 'journal' style of writing. The length feels appropriate and the chapters break it into logical sections.

I like Nikki's honest and open style, the positivity that she conveys despite the nature of the illness and the brutality of the treatment. I like how she refers to her children and talks about the steps she took to leave memories of their mother. I'd have been interested in hearing of any steps Nikki took with the aim of prolonging her life, aside from the treatment regime she was undergoing, e.g. dietary modifications.

It is a useful read for a cancer patient to feel reassured about some of the anxieties and feelings that are commonplace with a critical illness. I would also recommend it to people affected by cancers other than breast cancer.

Living with ovarian cancer (36-45) (April 2015)

This is not a fact-filled book, it is a ride through the life of the author who had terminal cancer, the ups and downs, her emotions and feelings about news she is given from time to time by her doctors, her handling of various situations and getting on with life. Different people could take something from it; there is a lot of emotion, mainly from the author, but the book also features people in her life and she does her best to include them in her situation. I could associate with many of her feelings.

It is not a difficult read. I was familiar with most of the medical stuff except the new drugs, but all is explained quite well. The author kept it fairly tight; there is not too much flowery stuff and it is mostly to the point – it doesn't feel that she was trying to pad it out. The cover is nice, with her two girls enjoying themselves but I would put all the photos in the text together.

This is well worth reading for someone who is affected by cancer in some way. Whether it would be an enjoyable read for someone with terminal cancer is down to the individual; it could dishearten some, but may lift others. I am in remission, so although there were a few tears along the way and a good few comments, it was not too emotional for me. The author did show fine examples of what can be done whilst living with cancer and its treatment. She is an inspiration in the work that she did and could well be a role model for younger people.

Throat cancer patient in remission (56-65) (April 2015)

Although this book could be useful for anyone affected by cancer, it may be more suited to someone with a terminal diagnosis. It is an honest account of the emotional journey of terminal cancer and how it affects not just the patient, but the family too. It could help reassure people that it is ok to feel the way you feel!

It is an easy read and will suit someone who knows little about cancer. The cover is perfect for the sentiments in the book. I love Nikki's honesty, warts and all, about the effect of cancer on your body, mind and emotions. I could relate to many aspects. The cancer catchphrase bingo is so true and drove me nuts, but I learnt to handle the well-meaning phrases with a smile and a nod! As well as the fear and tears, humour was a vital part of the mix for me and Nikki brought that into her book. It may seem inappropriate, but what the hell, if it helps to lift you up, who's to challenge it!

I must admit that I was irritated with Nikki for a while. She came across as selfish and preoccupied, without concern for the effect of her diagnosis on her family, especially her husband; however, as the story unfolded I could see that it was just her way of dealing with and coming to terms with the awful news. It made me think about my cancer journey, how I turned in on myself when I was diagnosed and probably did something similar. As the story unfolded, her broken life was patched together and a new life emerged, enabling her and her family to get the best from her last few months on earth. Communication is key, but I know from experience that it's not easy to reveal how you are feeling for fear of upsetting anyone; it was so important for Nikki and her husband to be honest in order for them to support each other.

Breast cancer survivor (56-65) (April 2015)

This account of one woman's experience of a secondary breast cancer diagnosis and living with a terminal prognosis is most useful for those with secondary breast cancer (or carers) or with a terminal prognosis for another cancer, especially immediately after diagnosis. It is clear and easy to follow. I like the simple structure and candid, straightforward tone. The photos bring the account alive and the author becomes more real because of them. It is, however, a slim book with a basic layout and design; it is over too soon, like Nikki's life.

As the title suggests, the book is about what it feels like to be given a terminal diagnosis. Nikki was diagnosed with secondary breast cancer without a diagnosis of primary breast cancer first, and immediately had to deal with the medical, personal, emotional and practical consequences of that diagnosis. The book was put together from diary entries by Nikki and her mum, and from a blog she wrote for her local newspaper and includes photos of Nikki and her family during six years of treatment until her untimely death at 40. It therefore has a simple structure and gives a much-personalised account of one woman's experiences: the pain and unpleasantness of medication as well as the fun and love that she shared with family and friends.

Nikki came alive for me when I read this book, which is why I am using her first name in this review; I felt that I knew her and I recognised many of her struggles and reactions to secondary breast cancer, although mine have sometimes been different, especially in (luckily) having less painful and prolonged reactions to chemotherapy. It was helpful for me, facing the same final stages as Nikki, to read about how she

coped with the disease and managed still to enjoy her life as much as possible, on her own terms. Although inevitably sad at the end, as well as toe curlingly candid about the way that cancer and its various treatments can bring patients down to rock-bottom, the book is also often positive and even entertaining, despite its subject matter. I read it through in one go and immediately recommended it to my husband!

Living with secondary breast cancer (46-55) (April 2015)

The fact that I read it in one sitting is a testament to the un-put-downable nature of this book. It is an open and real account of facing a terminal diagnosis. Treatments and their side-effects are described in a no-holds-barred way. I found it very moving as well as informative. It is beautifully written with many very personal family photos and the author's style makes it very easy to read.

Though, by its nature it is sad and heart breaking, it is also strangely uplifting. Nikki's determination and bravery in trying new treatments is impressive, as are her efforts to create a wealth of memories for her young children. It is heartening to read about the good times between treatments when she could live life to the full. It is also brutally honest about the stress and turmoil experienced by the whole family; Nikki does not shy away from detailing such instances, which must have been painful for her to write and for family and friends to read. A useful book for anyone looking to support someone going through a similar experience.

Breast cancer patient (66-75) (March 2015)



This book is ultimately about how to find a path of acceptance without acquiescence. I am not sure if it will be useful for those with breast cancer or caring for someone with breast cancer because it is one person's experience – everyone in the midst of their own experience needs to find their own way and will often not have enough energy to take on someone else's story. However, health professionals and folks a little removed from the immediacy of it all could learn much from this book.

It is an easy read. The language is personal so there is little that is complicated. The size, layout, pictures, and typeface are all attractive and easy to manage. The tone seems very personal, almost cathartic; it sometimes feels you are being allowed into or intruding into things. It sometimes felt, I am trying to find the words without criticising, a bit like "an uncaring outpouring".

I probably won't recommend it. As an autobiography, it is fine; it is raw, exposing, real, highly personal and unique, which is just what it should be. If it has any aim to make points, to teach, encourage, or exhort others then I am not sure it hits the mark – the level of personal exposure clouds the message, adding an emotional weight to points that are valid but that would benefit from clear scrutiny.

Living with breast cancer (46-55) (May 2015)

This is most useful for people with secondary or terminal cancer. It is very easy to understand. It's not an eye-catching book but I like the inclusion of personal photos.

Breast cancer patient in remission (36-45) (May 2015)



I'm not sure this book offers any comfort or particularly useful information to people with breast cancer themselves or to those caring for someone with cancer. I found its tone painfully harsh, which made it uncomfortable reading. In fact, it might be too harrowing, particularly for someone newly diagnosed – it details the side-effects of treatments, which would certainly cause concern, possibly unnecessarily. Each case of metastatic breast cancer is unique and treatment can be very different.

It is very easy to understand, particularly if you have prior knowledge of metastatic breast cancer. The cover is particularly lovely, with the two young girls (not sure if they are the author's daughters, but they could be) and an easily identified location (coastal town). The quality and general layout are very good. However, it is very stark; it is very much "no-holds barred", which makes it quite bleak!

There is some useful information about the resources Nikki found helpful in dealing with aspects of a terminal diagnosis but I don't really understand the reason for writing this book, apart from the fact that the author wanted to tell her story. Whilst that might be reason enough, I was expecting a significant or uplifting insight into how she dealt with her diagnosis. Obviously, the subject matter is very harrowing, but the way the story is written means that it is a very bleak read.

Living with metastatic breast cancer (36-45) (August 2015)

Further information

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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.

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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

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