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BME 301-Book Review

Amber’s Review of *Bald in the Land of Big Hair*

*Bald in the Land of Big Hair*, a true story, provides a personal account of author Joni Rodgers’s life before her diagnosis of cancer, during her battle with the disease, and her struggles after remission. This story focuses mainly on Joni’s life with her family before, during, and after cancer. Joni sprinkles humor throughout her accounts in order to give her story a little lighter heart. She talks about the problems she encountered in trying to figure out what was actually wrong with her health, how she and her family dealt with her diagnosis, and much more. This topics in this book change often and they do not consistently involve her disease. Joni really gets in-depth personally by talking about her past, her career slumps and aspirations, her intimate relationship with her husband, her female family ancestry, and towards the end she even writes about her journey to becoming a published author. Cancer and its treatment consumed much of her health, and at times dampened her spirit, but she honestly shared her struggle of trying to find joy and peace. My opinion on the book: I enjoyed it. Because I find the issue and existence of cancer to be particularly important to me, I chose to read this book. However, what I found was an intimate author to reader relationship. The author is not your typical academic, which makes the book interesting. She is an ordinary wife/mom who reveals herself beyond her disease and then leaves readers with the task of advocating life and searching for joy.

This story relates to our class because it addresses issues that sometimes arise in healthcare. What I found to be notable was the fact that Joni was diagnosed after her non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma had been growing for some four months and she had been symptomatic for a good portion of this time as well. Each time she visited a physician, they were reluctant to give her further medical testing and this was likely due to the associated insurance costs (her health plan was an HMO). Even after she explained her symptoms to a couple of different physicians, they simply dismissed her claims and wrote her a prescription for some antibiotics, which obviously do not combat cancer. It is really disturbing to hear a personal account that clearly shows someone who actually could have achieved remission much more quickly had she been diagnosed in a timely manner.

*Bald in the Land of Big Hair* is a good read.