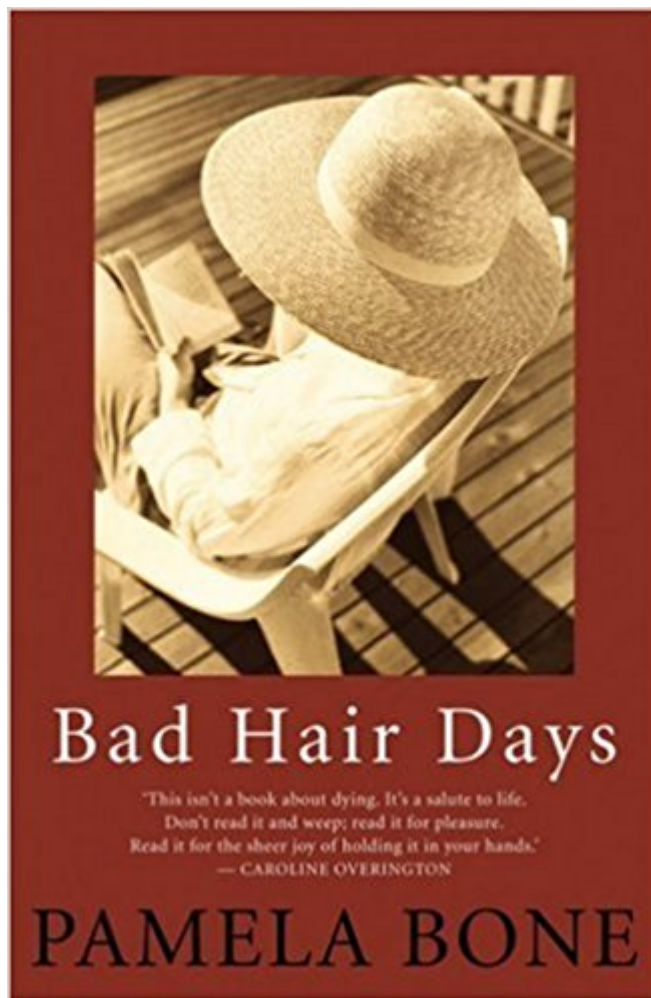




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Synopsis

A revealing story of battling cancer, from the diagnosis in 2004, through chemotherapy and other invasive treatments, to the process of coming to terms with the inevitability of dying, this prize-winning author shares the emotional weight and personal suffering that come with dealing with a terminal illness. A moving look at serious illness and how it affects sufferers and their families.

Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Melbourne University Publishing; First Edition edition (August 1, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0522853692

ISBN-13: 978-0522853698

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.7 x 8.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #10,250,351 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #48 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Diseases & Physical Ailments > Cancer > Bone Cancer #8955 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Journalists #10758 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Medical

Customer Reviews

Pamela Bone is the former associate editor of Age newspaper and the author of *Up We Grew*. She has won the Melbourne Press Club's award and is a recipient of the United Nation's Media Peace Prize. She is now in remission from cancer.

I found this an engaging (& uplifting) read; superficially it is about Pamela Bone's experience with multiple myeloma (a type of bone cancer), but Bone was a journalist for The Age for over 20 years and she often moves into talking about world affairs and humanitarian issues and it is these that were the most fascinating. She writes passionately about issues that should be important to us. She is seemingly reluctant to write about her illness, as she acknowledges there are so many people who become ill, and even though she mentions it, she doesn't really probe it the way she explores issues external to her. She does, however, tackle the issue of her impending death (the illness is treatable but not curable; it isn't a matter of whether it will

come back but when at time of writing; she died in 2008) and what death means in our society and the right to die with dignity. Her writing is intelligent and unsentimental but not without feeling. She had a fatalistic approach to her illness; she saw it as bad luck, just as she saw her comfortable life as the luck of the draw. She says she never had a positive thought about her illness, she didn't believe in the power of positive thinking, or of fighting it, but she was a positive person, who believed that most people have a strong instinct for the common good and she believed in the goodness of people (despite her experiences as a foreign correspondent; she was certainly not naive in the way this statement can make a person seem). She had an interesting take on the cliché a sad loss for the world and she says "the greater sadness surely is not the world's loss, but his loss of the world." I tend to agree. The thought that resonated the most with my world view was how she summed up, with a reworking of the words of John Diamond (a journalist who also died of cancer but is apparently better remembered as the husband of Nigella Lawson), "Don't put it off. Allow yourself to be happy. This, now, is it. This is life. Love it, now."

Although it is the case that Ms. Pamela Bone writes bravely and honestly about the devastating diagnosis, the grueling treatment, and now the welcome remission of her multiple myeloma, in a logical extension of her life's work as a writer of editorials and opinion pieces for a Melbourne, Australia newspaper, she also opines about current events, international travel, world affairs, and this and that. Reading this book is almost like sitting across the kitchen table from Ms. Bone, sipping coffee, munching on fresh pastries, and chatting about whatever comes up. And, by the end of the book, one almost feels as though one has been befriended. As with all friends, the parting is bittersweet. This book is difficult to categorize, for it will be of interest not only to cancer survivors and those who love them, but also to people who are interested in politics, human rights, women's issues, medicine, and end-of-life issues and people who just enjoy reading a good yarn written by someone with a direct, no-nonsense style, a lot of opinions, a keen intellect, and a sharp wit. I highly recommend this book and wish the author continued good health. And I hope she writes more books, for hers is a voice that should not be silenced.

Pamela Bone died on 26th April after losing her long and brave fight. I don't usually read books about cancer but I always admired her newspaper columns (although sometimes not agreeing with

her opinion) and when I saw the book I thought that it would be a 'warts and all' story. This was definitely the case with her political opinions and experiences in many of the world's hotspots interspersed with the journey of her illness. She also quotes poetry, songs and the experiences of others with cancers, she is never self-pitying and does not rely on religious belief for solace. She critically explores every aspect of her treatment and also writes about death which she faces with an unflinching eye. Pamela was a supporter of euthanasia and had the 'knowledge' to end her life if need be, but the newspaper reports of her death say that she did not need to take this step. I found this book truly inspirational and feel a great sadness as I write this even though I never knew her.

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