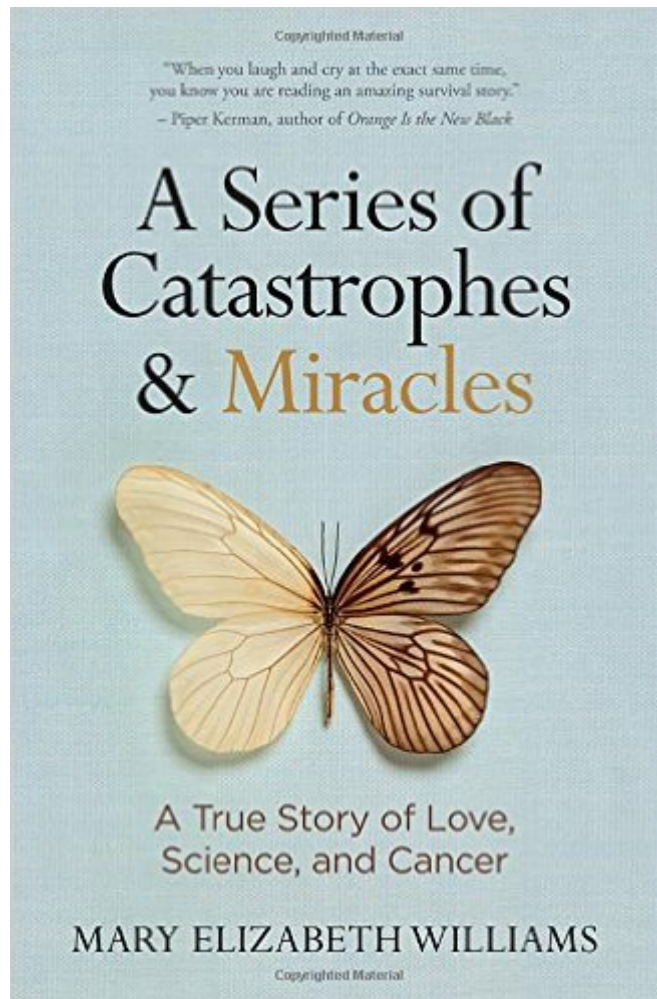


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A Series Of Catastrophes And Miracles: A True Story Of Love, Science, And Cancer



Synopsis

A wry, witty account of what it is like to face death and be restored to life. After being diagnosed in her early 40s with metastatic melanoma—a "rapidly fatal" form of cancer—journalist and mother of two Mary Elizabeth Williams finds herself in a race against the clock. She takes a once-in-a-lifetime chance and joins a clinical trial for immunotherapy, a revolutionary drug regimen that trains the body to vanquish malignant cells. Astonishingly, her cancer disappears entirely in just a few weeks. But at the same time, her best friend embarks on a cancer journey of her own—with very different results. Williams's experiences as a patient and a medical test subject reveal with stark honesty what it takes to weather disease, the extraordinary new developments that are rewriting the rules of science—and the healing power of human connection.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Author and Salon.com senior staff writer Mary Elizabeth Williams has just released a most amazing book. It tells the story of her diagnosis and treatment of stage four malignant melanoma over the course of two years. Cancer memoirs today are unfortunately a dime a dozen, but this book is about as far from the cliche-fought-my-courageous-battle-with-cancer-and-heroically-beat-it formula as you can get. Instead, we readers get a superbly written and very human view of what maintaining a life and a family in the face of probable death looks like. It contains a wealth of medical information around the emerging use of immunotherapy as the first truly new treatment for cancer in a hundred years, presented in easy to understand plain English. Her story takes us through the traumas of surgery, recovery, and recurrence, and relates the loss of friends and the

difficulty of holding a family together, but it is the author's deft and frequent use of humor that got this reader through this troubling tale. Her humor is as natural and insightful as it is pervasive throughout. It should be noted that this book is for everyone, whether or not cancer has touched your life. As a person who has "so far" survived a cancer diagnosis whose preliminary prediction was for a 5% chance of three-year survival, I feel a unique bond as she shares the cringe worthy details of the cancer experience from both a physical as well as emotional point of view. As I read through this book, the word that kept popping up in my head was "honest." • We are presented with a brand of honesty that is so direct, unassuming, and shameless as to be almost painful. Those of you who are already familiar with Ms.

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