

Discussion Guide



Summary

A week after her forty-first birthday, the acclaimed poet Anne Boyer was diagnosed with highly aggressive triple-negative breast cancer. For a single mother living paycheck to paycheck who had always been the caregiver rather than the one needing care, the catastrophic illness was both a crisis and an initiation into new ideas about mortality and the gendered politics of illness. With unflinching honesty and inventive artistry, Ms. Boyer shares her experience with cancer and the "cancer industry" including the hypocrisy of the "pink ribbon culture" in her book, **"The Undying,"** winner of the 2020 Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction.

Questions

1. What do you think motivated Boyer to share this very personal story? What ideas was the author trying to convey?
2. Were there any quotes (or passages) that stood out to you? Why?
3. What surprised you most about the book? Why?
4. What passage or excerpt was most difficult to read?
5. What were your key take aways from this book?
6. If you could ask the author one question about this book, what would that be?
7. Conveying research in a way that's understandable and enjoyable to read for non-experts can be a challenge. How well do you feel the author did this? What do you think of their writing style?
8. Would you recommend this book to friends and family? Why or why not?
9. How did you experience the book? Were you engaged immediately, or did it take you a while to "get into it"?