Discussion Guide



Down to the Bone
Catherine Pioli

Graphic Mundi
2022
146 pages
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Leukemia and Lymphoma

Summary

As a professional illustrator, Catherine tells the story of her leukemia diagnosis and treatment in this graphic memoir. Young and previously healthy, she now finds herself catapulted into the world of the seriously ill—constantly testing and waiting for results, undergoing endless medical treatments, learning to accept a changing body, communicating with a medical team, and relying on the support of her partner, family, and friends. We accompany her through the waiting, the doubts, the fears, and the tears—but also the laughter, the love, and the strong will to live.

Questions

1. Why do you think Catherine Pioli wrote *Down to the Bone*?
2. Catherine Pioli brings the reader along on her journey through cancer diagnosis and treatment, sharing her thoughts, feelings, symptoms and the daily events and experiences of treatment for Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia. Which aspect most impacted you as you read the book?
3. Ms. Pioli describes a lot of the science and how Leukemia and her treatment are impacting her body. Why do you think this might have been important for the author?
4. Did you appreciate the visual aspects of this book? How did it help you to understand what Ms. Pioli was trying to communicate?
5. How does Ms. Pioli describe her relationships with her medical team?
6. Ms. Pioli describes leaving the hospital. How did she view the outside world?
7. How does Ms. Pioli provide insight into her emotional states? Can you give an example?
8. What passages/pages that struck you personally? Why?
9. What role does humor play in this book?
10. This book ends rather abruptly, in contrast with other works of graphic medicine and memoir that often end with remission. What is the impact of the “unfinished” work?
11. Would you share *Down to the Bone* with people in your life? Why or why not?

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