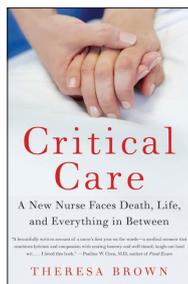


BOOKS

Critical Care: A New Nurse Faces Death, Life, and Everything in Between. Theresa Brown. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2010, hardcover, 208 pages, \$20.



Brown, an English professor, turned to nursing to discover her passion for people, richness in life, and love for a profession. She shares her journey through her first year as a nurse on an inpatient medical oncology unit with honesty, humor, and literary flair. “Getting My Feet Wet” offers insight for new oncology nurses, with thoughtful lessons on helping patients and others to embrace life amid the chaos of the daily grind. The book also gives experienced nurses the opportunity to remember the early challenges of their nursing careers and the powerful positive or negative effect senior nurses can have on novices. *Critical Care* has lessons for any reader who wants a better understanding of health care, the reality of the hospital setting, and the need everyone has for critical care in life-and-death situations.

Brown uses specific chapters to describe common and memorable milestones in the first year of her nursing career, such as the first death of a patient, a condition A (an arrest or code situation), and a typical day on the floor. The chapters are truthful but do not reveal identities. The stories are reality checks told with humor, compassion, love, and exasperation. Brown also shares her personal struggles. In “Benched,” she describes a time when she was injured and off work. “Openings” has a double meaning as the care of a difficult wound or deciding to open up to patients and one’s own family. Finally, “Switch” shows that changing environments is sometimes necessary to better take care of oneself and, ultimately, others.

“Doctors Don’t Do Poop” chronicles the lighter side of critical care. Humor is instilled in some of the trials and tribulations in dealing with bodily excretions, even as readers are reminded of the differences between medical and nursing practice. The time spent with

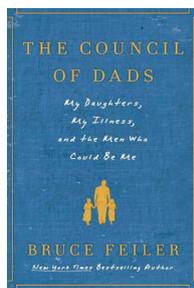
patients, respect for human dignity, and the simple things that are done by nurses emphasize the heart and art of nursing. A nurse making it her mission to find a patient a bible when he needed one is just one example.

The inpatient hospital setting, where necessities include telephones (hand-held and portable), papers (for charting, electronic records, and prescriptions), and alcohol wipes (for everything else—IV, blood products, and other physical “stuff”), is challenging. Nurses may easily become task oriented, doing only the things on a list. Learning how and when to integrate people skills, patient advocacy, and genuineness truly shows the maturity of a nurse. Receiving a smile from a patient or hearing a statement such as, “I needed a dose of you tonight” are the rewards that keep nurses going when they witness what patients go through to live and die.

Final and lasting messages are the need to care for oneself, listen, say “I love you” to family and friends, and “buy the piano”—in other words, surround oneself with things that bring joy, as life can change in an instant. Oncology nursing is hard work, but it can be the most fulfilling experience. Theresa Brown reminds readers of that.

Janelle Tipton, MSN, RN, AOCN®, is an oncology clinical nurse specialist at the University of Toledo Medical Center in Ohio.

The Council of Dads: My Daughters, My Illness, and the Men Who Could Be Me. Bruce Feiler. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2010, softcover, 238 pages, \$22.99.



Oncology nurses and lay readers alike will find wisdom in *The Council of Dads*. While revealing his reasons for choosing a council, Feiler introduces readers to men that shaped the person he has become. This book is Feiler’s memoir and legacy.

Feiler was 44 years old when he was diagnosed with osteogenic sarcoma of his left femur. On routine blood work, he was found to have an elevated alkaline phosphatase that had been normal the previous year. A subsequent bone scan

detected an abnormality that led to his diagnosis and subsequent treatment. At the time of his diagnosis, Feiler was married and had twin three-year-old daughters. Feiler’s goal was to make sure his daughters would know “his voice” should he succumb to his disease.

To reach his goal, Feiler chose six men from different phases of his life to be his “council of dads.” He expected that the men would be a part of his daughters’ lives, ensure they knew the person their father was, and teach them important life lessons as he would if he could. The dad council also would be available for sporting events, dances, or fatherly advice, when needed. Until then, Feiler had to defeat “the monster in the house” for his daughters.

In describing the men that he chose, Feiler reveals details about his life and uncovers some painful memories, such as his grandfather’s suicide. The council members play an important role in helping Feiler learn valuable lessons to discover himself and not be afraid to step into the unknown during his cancer journey.

Feiler, an accomplished author, wrote the book in a readable, nonlinear style. Readers will be intrigued as he blends stories from his personal life, letters of invitation to prospective council members, explanations of why these men were chosen, and family letters of his progress. The chapter “Jeff: Approach the Cow” tells of a cow-tipping experience Feiler had in Holland. His mentor, Jeff, taught him to be a traveler, not a tourist, or to seek out not what is familiar, but what is different.

Cancer was a very different experience for Feiler, and one he had not chosen. His support system of family and friends, although key to his endurance, was not alone in keeping him optimistic. He describes his surgeon as a monument of hope. His mantra during their first consultation was, “This is a war and I intend to win it.” The war theme continues throughout the chemotherapy and surgery as each phase is likened to a battle—Feiler’s own war on cancer.

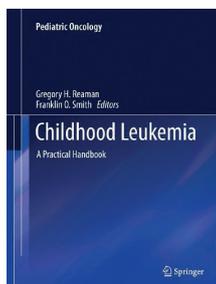
Feiler completed his treatment plan of neoadjuvant chemotherapy, surgery, and adjuvant chemotherapy, and he is in complete remission to date. As a long-time walker and author of *Walking the Bible*, Feiler likely has returned to his stride. His book paints a picture of a man

who lives the values of friendship and family. His words, “cancer is a passport to intimacy,” should remind nurses that patients bring their own histories that shaped who they are, and nurses can learn from all of them.

Deb Ross, BSN, RN, OCN®, is the education coordinator for the Mercy Cancer Centers in Toledo, OH.

NEW RELEASES

Childhood Leukemia: A Practical Handbook. Gregory H. Reaman and Franklin O. Smith (Eds.). New York, NY: Springer, November 2010, hardcover, 308 pages, \$189.



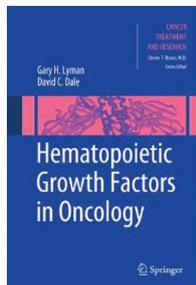
Childhood Leukemia is a comprehensive and up-to-date compendium on all aspects of childhood acute lymphoblastic and acute myeloid leukemia, which are the most frequent

occurring cancers in the pediatric age group. After introductory chapters on the epidemiology and biology of pediatric leukemia, treatment considerations are reviewed extensively, with emphasis on the use of risk-adjusted treatment approaches. The book also discusses promising targeted agents and appraises strategies for the development of new agents. The late effects of leukemia and its therapy are considered in depth, with attention to management of the psychosocial impact of the disease. Finally, global strategies to improve leukemia care and outcomes are reviewed and future directions are discussed.

Reaman and Smith are internationally recognized experts and offer a largely evidence-based consensus on etiology, biology, and treatment. This handbook has far-reaching applicability to the clinical diagnosis and management of pediatric leukemia and will prove

useful for specialists, generalists, and trainees alike.

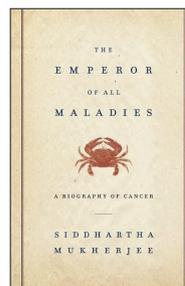
Hematopoietic Growth Factors in Oncology: Cancer Treatment and Research. Gary H. Lyman and David C. Dale (Eds.). New York, NY: Springer, November 2010, hardcover, 330 pages, \$219.



Despite the increasing complexity of modern cancer treatment, oncologists as well as the entire cancer care team should ensure that patients with cancer receive the optimal supportive care available for their disease and its treatment. No area of cancer supportive care better illustrates the progress that has resulted from advances in the understanding of cellular and molecular biology, genetic engineering, and the development of more effective (yet often more toxic) cancer treatments than hematopoietic growth factors. This volume reviews and integrates major advances in the understanding of the underlying molecular biology and pharmacology of these agents, along with the results of well-designed and executed randomized, controlled trials of erythroid-stimulating agents, myeloid growth factors, and new thrombopoietic agents, each addressing a major threat associated with bone-marrow suppression accompanying cancer treatment. The clinical usage of the agents is based on numerous randomized, controlled trials and meta-analyses, along with evidence-based clinical practice guidelines developed by professional societies to direct their appropriate and cost-effective use in clinical care.

The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer. Siddhartha Mukherjee. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, November 2010, hardcover, 592 pages, \$30.

The Emperor of All Maladies is a profoundly human biography of cancer—



from its first documented appearances thousands of years ago to a radical new understanding of the disease today. Physician, researcher, and award-winning science writer Siddhartha Mukherjee

examines cancer with a cellular biologist's precision and a historian's perspective. The result is a lucid and eloquent chronicle of a disease that humans have lived with—and died from—for more than 5,000 years. The history of cancer is a tale of human ingenuity, resilience, and perseverance, but also of hubris, paternalism, and misperception. Mukherjee recounts centuries of discoveries, setbacks, victories, and deaths, told through the voice of his predecessors and peers as they confronted an infinitely resourceful adversary that was believed to be easily vanquished in the “war against cancer” in the 1980s.

From the Persian Queen Atossa, whose Greek slave cut off her malignant breast, to the 19th century recipients of primitive radiation and chemotherapy, to Mukherjee's own patient with leukemia, *The Emperor of All Maladies* chronicles the people who have soldiered through fiercely demanding regimens to survive and increase mankind's understanding of this iconic disease. *The Emperor of All Maladies* offers a fascinating glimpse into the future of cancer treatments and also provides hope and clarity for those seeking to demystify cancer.

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