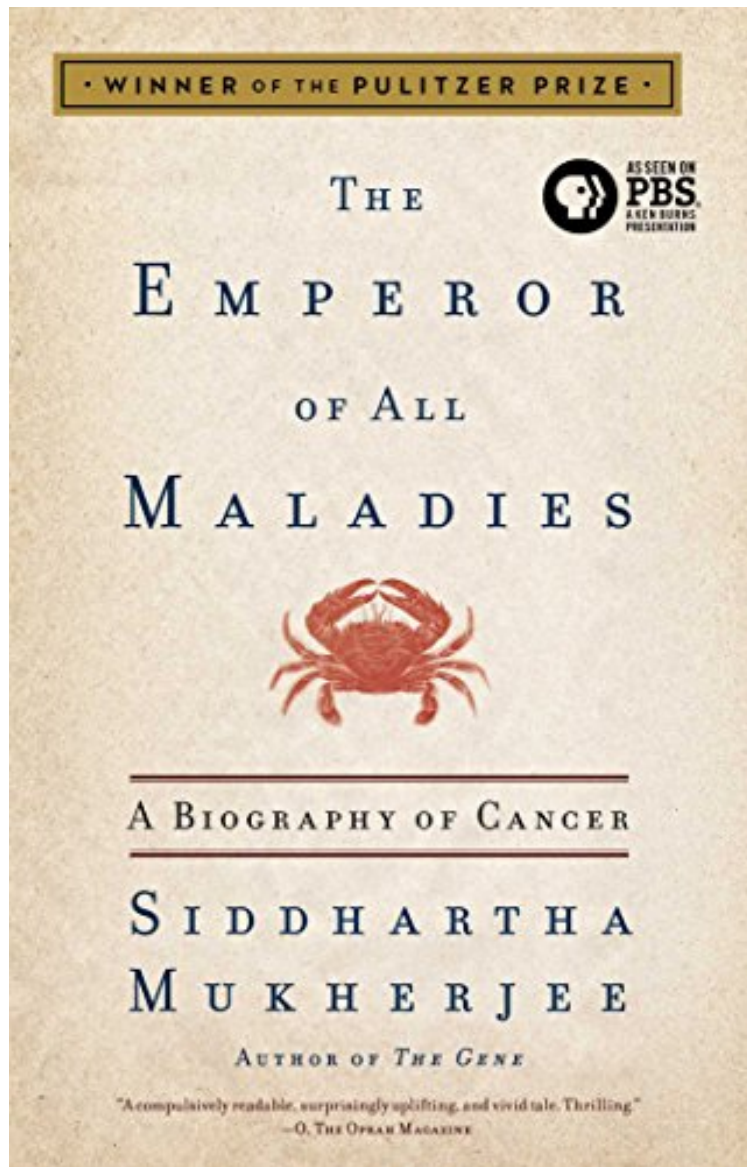



[Ebook pdf] The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer

# The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer

*Siddhartha Mukherjee*

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**Siddhartha Mukherjee : The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer:

93 of 98 people found the following review helpful. read it after your treatmentBy Aaron McLoughlinLast April I was diagnosed with acute leukaemia. After a stem cell transplant I am coming up for a year.When you are told you have cancer you are bewildered. You are also very angry. I asked myself was there something I had done in my past that was going to deprive me seeing my two sons grow up into happy young men and dads. The first two weeks go by in a

weird nightmare. Day 17 your hair falls out. Your peeing orange from the chemo drugs, which have put me off lucozade for life. You double check all your insurances are up to date and update a will to make sure my wife does not have any hassles with the tax authorities. At the age of 44 you are very angry. You realise you are likely going to die. You are angry because you have no idea what is doing it. What you planned for when you were older is all meaningless. But, thanks to certain stubbornness and amazing treatment and care, and a generous gift of life from a German donor of life giving stem cells, I am alive. This book helps explain many of the questions I had. It does it in a way that makes sense if you don't have a degree in science. What was until recently a death sentence is no longer the case. The battle against cancer was waged by intrepid individuals, and this book explains the war so far. It outlines the causes of cancer, whether it is a virus, bacteria, induced by smoking or chemicals, or just our own body playing up and turning on itself. It explains how our own understanding is still basic but advancing year by year, and treatments, if not cures, are being found for many, although not all cancers. I learned that what was once a death sentence is not the case today. I am looking forward to see my sons become men. This book gave me clarity, it gave me hope.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating! By Eduardo Lopez Pineda Fantastic reading... well written, clear, educative and entertaining. Dr. Mukherjee has a gift for making this complex and fascinating world- and quest- easily understandable and highly riveting. Extremely recommendable. The clear history of the disease and the elucidation on the major advances shine a bright light on the courageous men and women who suffer this disease, and the bright minds that have increased our understanding and led to the realization that it may in a sense well be possible that this is just part of our nature.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Incredibly well written. By ArtFan I picked the book up because I have an interest in cancer for several reasons. First, 1/3 of all humans die from cancer. Second, from a scientific perspective it is a fascinating, challenging and complex topic. This is an extremely well written, well planned out and organized book. I'm almost as much in awe of the author's command of the English language as I am of the skill he had in organizing the material. If anyone else were to do a history of cancer, they truly could not match the quality of this book. I say this because the author strikes a perfect balance between focusing on details when needed and focusing on the big picture when needed. And he presents the material in such a way that the key points really stick with you. You walk away with an excellent understanding of the disease - certainly much more than the layman and probably more than some medical professionals - and a comprehensive understanding of how human beings have tried, and continue to try to understand this disease. I think a lot of people should read this book. First of all to expel the myths and misunderstandings that people have about cancer. Second, to have a much better understanding of doctors and medical profession, including their limitations. And third because we all have been, will be, or know someone who is affected.

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, and now a documentary from Ken Burns on PBS, *The Emperor of All Maladies* is a magnificent, profoundly humane biography of cancer from its first documented appearances thousands of years ago through the epic battles in the twentieth century to cure, control, and conquer it to a radical new understanding of its essence. Physician, researcher, and award-winning science writer, Siddhartha Mukherjee examines cancer with a cellular biologist's precision, a historian's perspective, and a biographer's passion. The result is an astonishingly lucid and eloquent chronicle of a disease humans have lived with and perished from for more than five thousand years. The story of cancer is a story 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 eyes of his predecessors and peers, training their wits against an infinitely resourceful adversary that, just three decades ago, was thought to be easily vanquished in an all-out war against cancer. The book reads like a literary thriller with cancer as the protagonist. From the Persian Queen Atossa, whose Greek slave may have cut off her diseased breast, to the nineteenth-century recipients of primitive radiation and chemotherapy to Mukherjee's own leukemia patient, Carla, *The Emperor of All Maladies* is about the people who have soldiered through fiercely demanding regimens in order to survive and to increase our understanding of this iconic disease. Riveting, urgent, and surprising, *The Emperor of All Maladies* provides a fascinating glimpse into the future of cancer treatments. It is an illuminating book that provides hope and clarity to those seeking to demystify cancer.

.com Best Books of the Month, November 2010: "In 2010, about six hundred thousand Americans, and more than 7 million humans around the world, will die of cancer." With this sobering statistic, physician and researcher Siddhartha Mukherjee begins his comprehensive and eloquent "biography" of one of the most virulent diseases of our time. An exhaustive account of cancer's origins, *The Emperor of All Maladies* illustrates how modern treatments--multi-pronged chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery, as well as preventative care--came into existence thanks to a century's worth of research, trials, and small, essential breakthroughs around the globe. While *The Emperor of All Maladies* is rich with the science and history behind the fight against cancer, it is also a meditation on illness, medical ethics, and the complex, intertwining lives of doctors and patients. Mukherjee's profound compassion--for cancer patients, their families, as well as the oncologists who, all too often, can offer little hope--makes this book a very human history of an elusive and complicated disease. --Lynette Mong From Publishers Weekly Starred . Mukherjee's debut book is a

sweeping epic of obsession, brilliant researchers, dramatic new treatments, euphoric success and tragic failure, and the relentless battle by scientists and patients alike against an equally relentless, wily, and elusive enemy. From the first chemotherapy developed from textile dyes to the possibilities emerging from our understanding of cancer cells, Mukherjee shapes a massive amount of history into a coherent story with a roller-coaster trajectory: the discovery of a new treatment--surgery, radiation, chemotherapy--followed by the notion that if a little is good, more must be better, ending in disfiguring radical mastectomy and multidrug chemo so toxic the treatment ended up being almost worse than the disease. The first part of the book is driven by the obsession of Sidney Farber and philanthropist Mary Lasker to find a unitary cure for all cancers. (Farber developed the first successful chemotherapy for childhood leukemia.) The last and most exciting part is driven by the race of brilliant, maverick scientists to understand how cells become cancerous. Each new discovery was small, but as Mukherjee, a Columbia professor of medicine, writes, "Incremental advances can add up to transformative changes." Mukherjee's formidable intelligence and compassion produce a stunning account of the effort to disrobe the "emperor of maladies." (Nov.) (c) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist\*Starred \* Apparently researching, treating, and teaching about cancer isn't enough of a challenge for Columbia University cancer specialist Mukherjee. He was also moved to write a biography of a disease whose name, for millennia, could not be uttered. The eminently readable result is a weighty tale of an enigma that has remained outside the grasp of both the people who endeavored to know it and those who would prefer never to have become acquainted with it. An unauthorized biography told through the voices of people who have lived, toiled, and, yes, died under cancers' inexorable watch. Mukherjee recounts cancer's first known literary reference since its birth, so to speak in the teachings of the Egyptian physician Imhotep in the twenty-fifth century BCE, in which it is clear that Imhotep possessed no tools with which to treat what appears to be breast cancer. His cryptic note under Therapy: There is none. Throughout cancer's subsequent years, many more physicians and scientists with names both familiar and obscure attempted and occasionally succeeded in deciphering or unlocking keys to many of the disease's mysteries. Alas, this is not a posthumous biography, but it is nonetheless a surprisingly accessible and encouraging narrative. --Donna Chavez