



Cancer Is a Bitch: (Or, I'd Rather Be Having a Midlife Crisis)

Gail Konop Baker

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"I want to be brave. I want to be big. I want to be gracious and cool. I want to be the Audrey Hepburn of cancer..."

Gail Konop Baker was a runner, yoga practitioner, and lifelong subscriber to *Prevention* magazine. As her forty-sixth birthday approached, she looked forward to a time when she could at last take a deep breath, with one child heading off to college and the other two busy with their lives. She finally felt as if she was getting *her* life back.

Then, right before Valentine's Day 2006, she heard the words that would forever change her: *Just to be safe, I think we should biopsy.*

It was the beginning of her year-long struggle with breast cancer and its fallout—one that would upstage any midlife crisis she'd fretted was waiting in the wings. "I want to feel bad about my neck. I do," she writes. "But I feel bad I may not ever get to feel bad about my neck." Gail was suddenly faced with the truth that awaits us all—this *was* her life, and she would do anything to hold on to it. As a doctor's wife, she knew more than she should about her diagnosis and treatment. As a mother, she found unbearable the idea of not being there for the next birthday, next graduation, next *anything*. And as a woman who'd put her dreams on hold for years, she was determined to make every minute count.

But *Cancer Is a Bitch* is about much more than the "C" word; it's about the outrageous challenges of marriage, the joys and unpredictability of motherhood, about figuring out what it is you want to do with your life, about wanting to live *now*.

Funny, raw, and moving, this story will resonate with every mother and wife, and with anyone who has been affected by cancer. It is one woman's unforgettable, beautifully told account of juggling midlife and motherhood with a rogue boob—and, ultimately, triumphing.

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