



Eating Pomegranates: A Memoir of Mothers, Daughters, and the BRCA Gene

Sarah Gabriel

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An intensely powerful and moving memoir about genetics, mortality, family, femininity, and the author's battle with cancer

After the grief of losing her mother to cancer when Sarah Gabriel was a teenager, she had learned to appreciate "the charms of simple happiness." With a career as a journalist, a home in Oxford, England, a husband, and two young daughters, she was content. But then at age forty-four, she was diagnosed with breast cancer—the result of M18T, an inherited mutation on the *BRCA1* gene that had taken the lives of her mother and countless female ancestors. *Eating Pomegranates* is Gabriel's candid and incredibly intimate story of being forced to acknowledge that while you can try to overcome the loss of a parent, you can never escape your genetic legacy.

Being diagnosed with the same disease that killed her mother compelled Gabriel to write this story. In her struggle for survival, she recounts the rigors of her treatments and considers the impact of a microscopic piece of DNA on generations of her family's dynamics. She also revisits her past in an effort to reclaim her identity and learn more about the mother who disappeared too early from her life. Beautiful and brutal, *Eating Pomegranates*—like the myth of Persephone and Demeter, which inspires the title—is about mothers and motherless daughters. It is about a woman so afraid of abandoning her children that she is hardly able to look at them, and about the history of breast cancer itself, from early radical surgeries to contemporary medicine.

Combining passion, humor, fierce intelligence, and clinical detail, *Eating Pomegranates* is an extraordinary book about an all-too-ordinary disease.



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