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# Why I Wore Lipstick: To My Mastectomy



## Synopsis

THE BASIS FOR THE LIFETIME ORIGINAL MOVIE! Having recently graduated from Columbia Journalism School and landed her dream job at 20/20, the last thing 27-year-old Geralyn expects to hear is a breast cancer diagnosis. And there is one part of the diagnosis that no one will discuss with her: what it means to be a young girl with cancer in a beauty-obsessed culture. Trying to find herself, while losing her vibrancy and her looks, Geralyn embarks on a road to self-acceptance that will inspire all women. Although her book is explicitly about a period of time where she was driven by fear and uncertainty about the future, Geralyn managed a transformation that will encourage all women under siege to discover their own courage and beauty. The important and outrageous lessons of *Why I Wore Lipstick* come fast and furious with the same gusto that Geralyn has learned to bring to every moment of her life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I picked up my wife's book, not knowing what it was about. With the title and photo I assumed it to be about dating. As I began reading it became clear to me that this lady was in big trouble. My mother was in her late forties when she discovered a lump in her left breast. A general practitioner told her she had cancer and must immediately have the breast removed. This was in the sixties. He hacked off her breast and sewed it up in a most crude manner, leaving a hideous scar. I knew what she went through was no picnic, but until reading "Why I wore Lipstick," I had no idea the depths of her despair and suffering. In the eighties my sister was found to have cancer, and both breasts were

removed and then reconstructed. Again, no idea of what she was going through. Last year my mother again developed cancer, this time in her right breast. She was 85 years old and suffering from dementia. With the help of my loving wife and hospice we nursed her in my home until her death. Geralyn's story took me into the physical and psychological depths of her experience. She shared her feelings in a way that I never could have imagined. Her story also gave me insight into the media world. I always assume that those who make it to the top tend to lack compassion and kindness. I am grateful for her helping me to become more sensitive to the afflicted, and for helping dispel my prejudice toward those in high places. Humility, humor, openness. What an experience!

Ms. Lucas manages to convey the roller coaster ride which is diagnosing, treating, and surviving breast cancer with unique wit, intelligence, honesty and humor. She has bared her soul as well as her breast, and imparts important information along the way. This is a must read for anyone who has breast cancer, who had breast cancer, who had a relative or friend with breast cancer, or who fears getting breast cancer which is to say, ALL OF US. It is also a primer for doctors as to how to approach patients. Just being smart isn't enough, as Ms. Lucas makes crystal clear. Although the main focus of the book is breast cancer, I think it has useful information for all current or former cancer patients, their families and friends, and their caregivers. Don't miss this one! Jane A.

Geralyn Lucas writes a thought provoking and candid account of her Cancer experience. She addresses topics that are not addressed in most other accounts - beauty, sexuality, familial tensions. I found the book to be fresh and exciting. Good for her, she wrote what a lot of young cancer patients need to hear.

Every young woman's experience with cancer is different so this account is useful from that perspective. But as a young survivor I found it very ego-centric and not at all relateable. Is it tragic that she got breast cancer - yes. Is it more tragic that she got breast cancer AND she's "pretty" and married to a doctor and knows people whose names we recognize - no. While I acknowledge that body image and issues of sexuality and attractiveness seem to be more acute the younger a woman is - this book never develops beyond the surface. Being someone that is not interested in "It" girls (or guys) to begin with - her "it" experience with breast cancer is also lack-luster for me.

If you only read one book about breast cancer in your life, it should be this one. The gutsy author was diagnosed at the age of 27, and this is her raw tell-it-like-it-was story, with all of the ups,

downs, ins, and outs of gut-wrenching fears and self-doubt, and the ordeals of surgery, chemotherapy, and reconstruction. It's a story of the courage and determination of a brutally honest woman, who learned the hard way who she is, and what really matters. And it's a story of grace, good humor, and hope. Hats off to Ms. Lucas for writing such an honest account that is bound to be helpful to many other women facing the same horrible challenge.

I first saw the movie - while I was going through breast cancer myself at 32. Months later - I bought the book. I loved it! I was able to understand what other people went through. It was easy to read with lots of charm. I feel like I really know her and want to read more about how her life is today. I have shared this book with others so they can also understand what it is like to have breast cancer. It should be read by anyone with a loved one - breast cancer can happen to anyone.

Although I enjoyed the book and read it in one sitting, I feel that since it is nearly a decade removed from the disease that its recollections are way too gauzy. Granted it is well written and humorous: But beware - the author engenders more compliments than a Hollywood startlet. Practically everyone she comes in contact with tells her she is beautiful, foxy, stunning, etc. It is filled with grown men reduced to tears - her surgeon, her high school friend she hasn't seen in years, groups at birthday parties, as if all men that know her can't help but mourn for her marred beauty. Her sex life resumes without missing a beat. She gets a promotion during her chemo. Barbara Walters showers her with flowers. She comes in contact with New York City cabbies who are sympathetic to her disease, as only an "It" girl could. It fails to capture the searing loneliness and alienation that most patients with this disease experience. For a more honest account of what cancer is like for a young survivor read Katherine Rich's "Red Devil".

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