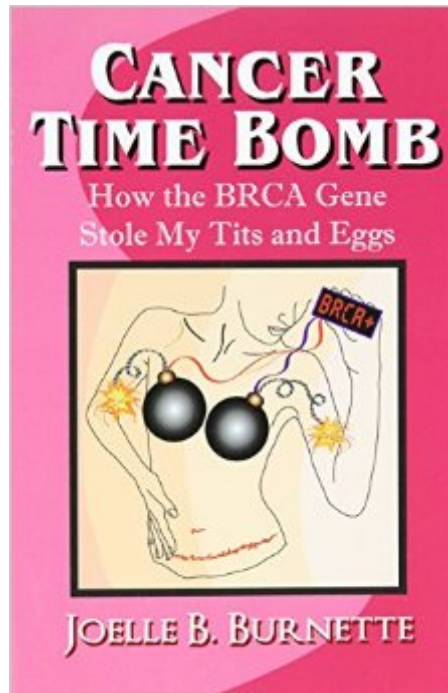


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# Cancer Time Bomb: How The BRCA Gene Stole My Tits And Eggs



## Synopsis

After finding out she tested positive for the BRCA genetic mutation, "Cancer Time Bomb" is Joelle Burnette's non-fiction narrative about her prophylactic journey to becoming a cancer survivor and free from breast and ovarian cancers. Balancing a serious subject with sarcasm and humor, this powerful story chronicles Joelle's 3-year odyssey as she justifies slicing away healthy parts of her body that have high odds of producing cancer. While pressured by surgeons and family to take drastic measures that would remove cancer's potential threat, she offers insight into what it feels like to face these significant decisions while not having cancer, and knowing there's that miniscule chance the disease may never strike. Offering raw honesty, she reveals the darker side of choosing TRAM Flap reconstruction after a prophylactic bilateral mastectomy. She details the challenging, long recovery as she comes to terms with her choices and their impact on her as a woman, daughter, mother and wife. Breast cancer had already impacted or taken the lives of several family members. Moreover, it was supposed to kill Joelle's sister in 1994, according to the doctors' grave predictions. Regardless, 32-year-old Michelle suffered through powerful chemotherapy treatments and a painful bone marrow transplant to beat the odds and become a survivor. Thereafter, doctors had told the family, Michelle likely would die if she ever got cancer again. When she was diagnosed and survived a second breast cancer more than a decade later, Michelle's cancer triggered a series of events leading to Joelle's own battle to remain cancer-free. Michelle fought cancer again while the health of these sisters' father deteriorated after years of diabetes. All the while, caring for everyone was Joelle's mother, Arlene, who played the strongest supportive role. Arlene remained by her daughter's side while Joelle carried out the proactive steps to avoid cancer and stay alive for her two young children. **BOOK BONUS:** The author's tips on how to prepare for a TRAM Flap procedure. Find out what you may need to get set up before your surgery, items to have handy in the hospital, and what to have ready when you return home after your hospital stay. Parental discretion is advised.

## Book Information

Paperback: 290 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (April 24, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1475152213

ISBN-13: 978-1475152210

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (7 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,286,407 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #165 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Diseases & Physical Ailments > Genetic](#) #3203 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Women's Health > General](#)

## Customer Reviews

While there is nothing funny about cancer at times you won't know whether to laugh, cry, or be angry. I could not put this book down. In the midst of the tragedy of having this mutated gene, the author describes in very believable terms, a family suffering its own dynamics, yet coming together for her and each other in a way many, many families would not. Too often vulgar but always honest, this one could be a movie. The author takes us on her journey, struggling with her choice while showing us an emotionally fragile self. The excellent tips at the end are for all people facing a long hospital stay and recovery.

Joelle B. Burnette gets a five-star rating from me for a writing a book that is sometimes coarse, sometimes offensive, but always brutally honest about herself and her decision to surgically remove her healthy breasts and ovaries after confirmation that she carries the BRCA gene mutation, which, in a woman, means almost certain breast or ovarian cancer. She neither sugarcoats the truth about her own fears and resentments nor spares us the foibles and imperfections in her family of origin. Her mother repeatedly annoys her, and her sister, who has twice gone through breast cancer surgeries and treatments, manages to be intrusive and aggravating on most occasions. Yet, there is a very strong thread of love and appreciation for her family and their loving support that lies beneath Brunette's story. Her decision to undergo a very radical mastectomy and reconstructive process was done with the stark realization that she wants to be alive and vitally present to her two children as they grow up; she also tells us she can function as a role model, should, God forbid, either of the children need to make similar hard decisions in the future. This is a brave work by a brave woman.

Kay Mehl Miller, Ph.D., author of *Living with the Stranger In Me: An Exploration of Aging*

While cancer is not my problem, I found the book extremely funny. Many times I had trouble stopping laughing at the behavior of her dysfunctional family. Most families exhibit some of the behaviors. I would have given this book 5 stars but some people may find some of the material about sexual behavior offensive. The book was a gift. I really enjoyed reading it and had a hard time

putting it down and found myself finishing it at 2 am. Burnette's journey changing her chances of getting cancer from 94% to 2% by removing her breasts provides very good information for those contemplating options.

As a BRCA-positive breast cancer survivor, I enjoyed this memoir on many levels. While my story is different from this author, I could completely relate to many of her dilemmas and choices. I appreciated Joelle's honesty and the frank discussion of her family life. Funny, sad, sweet and well written.

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