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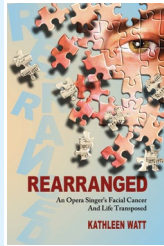
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BOOK REVIEW



REARRANGED: AN OPERA SINGER'S FACIAL CANCER AND LIFE TRANSPOSED

Kathleen Watt;  
 2023; Heliotrope Books;  
 \$22.00 (paperback); pp. 384;  
 ISBN: 978-1-956-47434-3

Head and neck cancer is an area of great interest to the dental team, as we are in the ideal position to screen, identify, give preventive advice, and manage the post-operative care of these patients. Rarely do we get a chance to delve deeply into the inner thoughts of a patient with this disease.

*Rearranged, an opera singer's facial cancer and life transposed* is the personal story of Kathleen Watt's diagnosis, management and ultimate recovery from head and neck cancer and will strike a chord with a variety of readers. She was at the height of her career as a New York opera singer, when she was diagnosed with a maxillary osteogenic sarcoma. She discusses, often with great detail, the wide-ranging effects of this disease, not just on herself, but on her family and loved ones.

Of particular resonance to readers of this publication is the presence of three short chapters involving dentists, outlining the time involved and the frustrations as Ms Watt attended a number of clinicians before arriving at her devastating diagnosis.

She underwent extensive surgeries, chemotherapy and rehabilitation with maxillofacial prosthodontics. She describes her obturator: 'The polished acrylic of the prosthetic plate now filling my mouth, which will fill my mouth forever. Every night. And every day. For the rest of my life.' A realisation that things have changed, forever.

Ms Watt's management did not always go smoothly for her and there were setbacks and periods of long recovery. She faced her adversity with courage, resilience and her readers are given every aspect of her long road to recovery. She is reflective of her journey and gives a stark picture of the effects on her quality of life. It is clear just how many expert, caring professionals are involved after such a diagnosis.

This is a well-written book with an easy style, full of medical details and insights. It contains many darkly witty and sometimes comedic moments. Ultimately, this is a story of hope, the power of the human spirit, the sheer will to live. It was a pleasure to read Kathleen's story and it is one which I will always remember.

This book will appeal to a range of clinical staff who care for patients with head and neck cancer, as well as patients and families of patients. The book informs and educates as well as giving hope and encouragement to patients with this condition.

Simon Killough