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# Bald In The Land Of Big Hair : A True Story



## Synopsis

Joni Rodgers lives in Texas, where big hair is a God-given right. It's essential to any waitressing job, prerequisite for a real estate license, as natural as Naugahyde, and as important as Elvis. But at thirty-two, Joni was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and lost her hair to chemotherapy. It's not fun being a bald girl in the Big Hair Capital of America, but Joni managed to hold on to her sanity -- and her sense of humor. With the same amazing ability to laugh at life, and herself, that helped her survive cancer, Joni now recounts her story -- a deeply affecting tale of industrial-strength drugs, healing herbs, love, sex, prayer, kids, career, and the search for a wig that won't make her look like Betty Rubble. *Bald in the Land of Big Hair* is the hilarious -- and often heartbreaking -- tale of Joni's journey through the badlands of cancer. From D-Day ["D" for Diagnosis] ("Biopsy is one of those terms that snags on the back of the mind -- like IRS or subpoena"), through the red tape of treatment ("Apparently it was a Christian Science HMO; any kind of medical treatment was against their religion"), through remission ("Surviving cancer is the same as emerging from any of life's refining fires"), Joni tells her story with humor, occasional anger, and unflinching honesty. Yet this powerful, moving story is much more than one person's memoir. It is the story of all of us; of anyone who has faced what seemed the worst that life has to offer -- and won. "Cancer is not what I am. It's not a gift or a curse. It's not a blessing in disguise (unless that is one dang good disguise!). It's not the scourge of God, not the Red Badge of Courage, nor is it a Purely clinical phenomenon. We are who we are, regardless of a few funky cells. "Thoughtful, inspiring, and gripping, *Bald in the Land of Big Hair* is a tribute to the triumph of the human spirit, the importance of community, and the imperative of living every day with grace and joy. And a few good head scarves.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Review of Bald in the Land of Big Hair (a true story) by Joni Rodgers. HarperCollins, 2001.

Hardback. 253 pages. ISBN: 0-06-019588-6 Rodgers is the author of two novels, Crazy for Trying, and Sugarland, but has made an impression in the non-fiction field by writing her cancer memoir, and being a keynote speaker for a variety of cancer related organizations. The title is a concise preview of what the reader will encounter. Rodgers is diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma at the age of thirty-two, while married and raising two children. "Bald" refers to a side effect of chemotherapy, and "big hair" refers to the styles of the big state of Texas, where over done hair is the norm. Rodgers takes us through the indignities of cancer and the treatments. In doing so, she reaches to the core of her being, without clothing, accessories, and flamboyant hairstyles. Although Rodgers tackles the serious subject of her war against cancer, she does so with humor that will have the reader laughing out loud. Even the chapter titles are funny: "Cleopatra, Queen of Denial" "Hairless in Houston" "Lights, Cancer, Action" Yet the prologue offers great prose: "When tomorrow was still a given and ignorance was still bliss, I was floating along like a paper sailboat on a lazy river, too caught up in my life to know that I was dying. But the day you're diagnosed with cancer, you stop dying and start surviving. You stop living and start staying alive." Anyone who has battled cancer will recognize the truth in this paragraph. Rodgers tells us the truth of her fears, the ugly effects of treatment, and her will to survive. Although cancer is not hilarious, Rodgers makes it sound comical.

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