



Caregiving: Lives Derailed

Eli Cannon

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An intimate and personal story, *Caregiving: Lives Derailed*, recounts the experience of an American couple on the verge of retirement who choose to open their lives as host-parents to a Third World student. When the student is diagnosed with cancer, they bring her into their home for extended caregiving. While the story reaches a happy conclusion, the normal and understandable emotions expressed and the confident and supportive words exchanged, unexpectedly and repeatedly threaten to destroy their well-intentioned caregiving enterprise. Wide ranging and beautifully written, this thoughtful book raises fundamental questions about intercultural communications, the dynamics of international exchange student programs, and the nature of the caregiving experience. “A heartfelt story, rich in complex relationships, told with care and courage. This book should be read especially by those who find themselves on an unexpected care-giving journey.” —Martin Kohn, Ph.D., co-founder, Center for Literature, Medicine, and Biomedical Humanities, Hiram College and founding co-editor, Literature and Medicine series, Kent State University Press “There are more than 65 million unpaid caregivers in the U.S. They are the backbone of our health care system, providing care and support to the millions of people with illness and disability, often at great cost to themselves and great benefit to patients and society... Many personal accounts of caregiving have been written in the last decade, but few are as wise and compassionate as this one. It is blending of science, wit, and the seasoned insights of keen observer of human relationships.” —Richard Schulz, Ph.D., Professor of Psychiatry, Director of the University Center for Social and Urban Research, Director of Gerontology, and Associate Director of the Institute on Aging at the University of Pittsburgh “I could not put this book down. An engrossing, honest and multi-dimensional look into an enormously interesting caregiving relationship from which all caregivers can learn. Dr. Cannon has done a tremendous job of bringing the book’s lessons to life and allowing the reader to identify with the participants.” —Gary Edward Barg, founder and editor-in-chief of Today’s Caregiver magazine and caregiver.com “This book is an honest exploration of interpersonal dynamics, especially those that become inflamed and illuminated by illness. By transcending the idealistic and often burdensome expectations imposed on the ill and those who care for them, the book allows for a raw examination of the delicate line between help and harm—a line often blurred when we most desperately desire health. As a gifted story teller with an intellectual eye for detail, Dr. Cannon provides an unsettling, but insightful narrative that not only allows us to feel less alone in our humanity, but also encourages healing through the establishment of a new equilibrium, somewhere between comfort and catastrophe.” —Jennifer Aadaeze Anyaegbunam, MS, medical journalist, MD candidate at the University of Virginia School of Medicine, and founding editor of *The Intima*, A Journal of Narrative Medicine “To read this book you must open your heart to a story which could easily break it. Caregiving can produce hurt as well as healing, harm as well as an opportunity for redemption. Reading a good narrative such as this imposes an obligation. In this case, one is obliged to reflect upon one’s own caregiving past, present and future.” —Michael A. Dover, MSSW, Ph.D., editor of the journal *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping*

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