

Malignant: How Cancer Becomes Us

S. Lochlann Jain



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Nearly half of all Americans will be diagnosed with an invasive cancer—an all-too ordinary aspect of daily life. Through a powerful combination of cultural analysis and memoir, this stunningly original book explores why cancer remains so confounding, despite the billions of dollars spent in the search for a cure. Amidst furious debates over its causes and treatments, scientists generate reams of data—information that ultimately obscures as much as it clarifies. Award-winning anthropologist S. Lochlann Jain deftly unscrambles the high stakes of the resulting confusion. Expertly reading across a range of material that includes history, oncology, law, economics, and literature, Jain explains how a national culture that simultaneously aims to deny, profit from, and cure cancer entraps us in a state of paradox—one that makes the world of cancer virtually impossible to navigate for doctors, patients, caretakers, and policy makers alike. This chronicle, burning with urgency and substance leavened with brio and wit, offers a lucid guide to understanding and navigating the quicksand of uncertainty at the heart of cancer. *Malignant* vitally shifts the terms of an epic battle we have been losing for decades: the war on cancer.

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