



Book Recommendation

The Upside of Down by Susan Biggar

Susan Biggar's memoir invites us into her family comprising her husband Darryl and three children, two of whom are born with Cystic Fibrosis (CF). Their at times chaotic lives would be familiar to readers who are parents of young children, but their challenges are amplified by the episodic bouts of serious illness that the boys experience and the series of international countries they navigate, all with vastly different medical systems and all with their different tolerance of parent contribution.

Such subject matter may sound daunting and even grim but Biggar's humour and her endearing vulnerability make for a delightful read, with much wisdom to be gained.

Her penchant for the metaphor is appealing, freshly arising from everyday events: 'Shoelaces always break at a bad time and without warning, or at least before I notice that the edges of the laces are frayed and about to blow. It's a lot like me. I regularly find myself balanced on the spiky edge between coping and breaking.' Recognisable?

Here at **my manifesto**, we find her relatable and her courage when the odds are stacked against her, is life-affirming. From within the cauldron of her situation, she maintains an admirable perspective, ...'most people have hard things in their life. Looking around at my friends, I see divorce, depression, illness.' She embodies the wisdom that life is about both the blessings and the mess.

The title of her memoir is ultimately where she lands: **the upside of down**. She exemplifies that attitude.