



RANDOM HOUSE

Praise for Suleika Jaouad's BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS

“A phenomenal big-hearted debut Every chapter ends with a cliffhanger, adding a surprising level of suspense to a work where the broader outcome isn't in question.

This is a stunning memoir, well-crafted and hard to put down.”

—**Publishers Weekly, Starred Review**

“Searing Boldly candid and truly memorable.” —**Booklist, STARRED review**

"I want to describe Suleika Jaouad with words like 'courageous,' 'resilient,' 'vulnerable,' and 'inspiring' — but I understand that these words, for cancer survivors, can feel like empty clichés. The problem is, these words are *true*. Suleika Jaouad *is* courageous, resilient, vulnerable, and inspiring. And her memoir about her cancer journey is *a work of breathtaking creativity and heart-stopping humanity*. Jaouad's story goes where you never expect it to go—not only into the depths of her own pain and lost years, but into the spirits of countless strangers (sick and well) whom she meets along the highway of own her life and illuminates with rare generosity and grace. *This is a deeply moving and passionate work of art, quite unlike anything I've ever read. I will remember these stories for years to come, because Suleika Jaouad has imprinted them upon my heart.*”

—**Elizabeth Gilbert**, author of *Eat Pray Love*

“A beautiful, elegant, and heart-breaking book that provides a glimpse into the kingdom of illness. Jaouad avoids sentimentality but manages to convey the depth of the emotional turmoil that illness can bring into our lives.” —**Siddhartha Mukherjee**, author of *The Emperor of All Maladies*

“When the life we had is snatched away, how do we find the conviction to live another? BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS will resonate with anyone who is living a different life than they planned to live. This is a propulsive, soulful story of mourning and gratitude – and an intimate portrait of one woman's sojourn in the wilderness between life and death.”

—**Tara Westover**, author of *Educated*

“In a book bubbling with ambition and impeccable skill, it is what Suleika Jaouad does with courage and secondary characters that is simply *once in a generation*. BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS mended parts I thought were forever disintegrated.” —**Kiese Laymon**, author of *Heavy*

“A masterpiece that upends the expected structure of memoirs about illness to show us what happens after the body recovers, the courage and creativity necessary to forge a transformed selfhood. Suleika Jaouad's sentences are as urgent and beautiful as the story they comprise. BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS is a stunning debut by a powerful new voice and required reading for every kind of survivor.”

— **Melissa Febos**, author of *Whip Smart*

Dear Reader,

I'm so thrilled to be sending you an early copy of **BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS: A Memoir of a Life Interrupted** (Random House hardcover; Feb. 9, 2021) by Suleika Jaouad, a landmark new talent.



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If you're familiar with Suleika's work—her “Life, Interrupted” column for the *New York Times* that became an Emmy-award winning video series, her TED talk on what almost dying taught her about living that's been viewed three million times, or her hugely popular “Isolation Journals” project that's cultivated a creative community of thousands—then it won't surprise you that she's written a deeply insightful and affecting chronicle of survivorship.

And if you haven't encountered Suleika's work before, then you're in for a transformative experience—*BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS* is not only an profound and moving story about healing and self-discovery after illness, but, in the vein of *Educated* or *H is for Hawk*, it's also an exquisitely rendered text that announces the arrival of a resonant new literary voice.

In 2010, the summer after graduating from college, Suleika Jaouad was preparing to enter “the real world.” She had fallen in love and moved to Paris to pursue her dream of becoming a war correspondent. But the real world she found took her into a very different kind of conflict zone.

It started with an itch—first on her feet, then up her legs, like a thousand invisible mosquito bites. Next came the exhaustion, and the six-hour naps that only deepened her fatigue. Then a trip to the doctor and, a few weeks shy of her 23rd birthday, a diagnosis: leukemia, with a 35 percent chance of survival. Just like that, the life she had imagined for herself had gone up in flames. By the time Jaouad flew home to New York, she had lost her job, her apartment, and her independence. She would spend much of the next four years in a hospital bed, fighting for her life and chronicling the saga in a column for *The New York Times*.

When Jaouad finally walked out of the cancer ward—after three and a half years of chemo, a clinical trial, and a bone marrow transplant—she was, according to the doctors, cured. But as she would soon learn, a cure is not where the work of healing ends; it's where it begins. She had spent the past 1,500 days in desperate pursuit of one goal—to survive. And now that she'd done so, she realized that she had no idea how to live.

How would she reenter the world and live again? How could she reclaim what had been lost? Jaouad embarked—with her new best friend, Oscar, a scruffy terrier mutt—on a 100-day, 15,000-mile road trip across the country. She set out to meet some of the strangers who had written to her during her years in the hospital: a teenage girl in Florida also recovering from cancer; a teacher in California grieving the death of her son; a death-row inmate in Texas who'd spent his own years confined to a room. What she learned on this trip is that the divide between sick and well is porous, that the vast majority of us will travel back and forth between these realms throughout our lives.

I hope you will give this extraordinary memoir a close look for coverage in 2021. I'll be in touch soon to follow up.

Best,

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Suleika Jaouad is an Emmy Award–winning writer, speaker, cancer survivor, and activist. She served on Barack Obama’s President’s Cancer Panel, and her advocacy work, reporting, and speaking has been featured at the United Nations, on Capitol Hill, and on the TED Talk main stage. When she’s not on the road with her 1972 Volkswagen camper van and her rescue dog Oscar, she lives in Brooklyn.