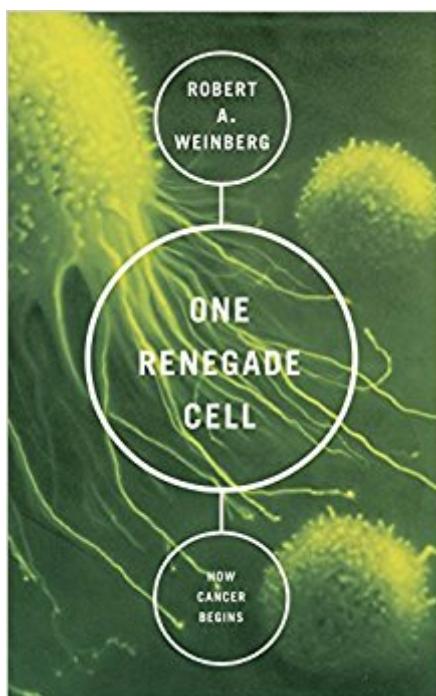


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One Renegade Cell: How Cancer Begins (Science Masters Series)



Synopsis

Cancer research has reached a major turning point, and no one is better qualified to explain the past two decades' dramatic leaps forward in understanding this disease than world-renowned molecular biologist Robert Weinberg, director of the Oncology Research Laboratory at the Whitehead Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In *One Renegade Cell*, Weinberg presents a state-of-the-art account of how cancer begins and how, one day, it will be cured.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Cancer wreaks havoc in almost every part of the human body"--Robert Weinberg's opening remark is a chilling reminder of the pervasiveness of an all-too-familiar disease. Cancer touches most families, and if you have ever wondered why, despite so much time, effort, and money, it has proved such a seemingly intractable problem, then read *One Renegade Cell*, Robert Weinberg's masterful explanation. As director of the Oncology Research Laboratory at the Whitehead Institute and professor of Biology at MIT, Weinberg has been at the forefront of cancer research for well over a decade. Unlike most diseases, cancerous tumors are not foreign invaders but "take on the appearance of alien life forms, invaders that enter the body through stealth and begin their programs of destruction from within." But as Weinberg shows, these are deceptive appearances. And since he is foremost a scientist, he finds the truth "subtle and endlessly interesting" and manages to convey fascination for something that most of us dread--cancer. Much of the present increase in cancer is due to increased longevity because "given enough time, cancer will strike

every human body." By telling the story of the historical discovery of cancer, Weinberg is able to introduce gradually the intricacies and complications of the genes and proteins involved (oncogenes, tumor suppressor genes, etc.) for the general reader. He characterizes cancer cells as renegade because, unlike normal body cells, they "disregard the needs of the community of cells," they are "selfish and unsociable," and are only interested in "their own proliferative advantage." By comparison, normal cells hold down cell numbers by "inducing them to commit suicide" (apoptosis). The understanding of cancer has been developed enormously over the last few decades by Weinberg and the worldwide community of researchers. As Weinberg eloquently shows, cancer research and its related disciplines "have moved from substantial ignorance to deep insight."

--Douglas Palmer, .co.uk --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The last 20 years have brought a revolution in cancer research that will profoundly change diagnosis and treatment of the disease, writes Weinberg in this comprehensive but rigorous introduction to the subject. Weinberg, founder of the Whitehead Institute for Cancer Research and a biology professor at MIT, traces the development of previous theories of cancer, and explains that scientists are now certain that cancer is caused when genes are damaged through a succession of mutations. These can result from damage to a cell's DNA inflicted by mutagens (which can be of foreign origin, such as tobacco smoke, or of internal origin); from normal mistakes made when DNA is copied during cell growth; or from defects in the body's DNA repair machinery. Weinberg discusses the roles of chemical carcinogens, retroviruses and heredity in developing cancer, and explains the body's intricate defenses against tumor growth. Though he argues that cancer will never be fully eradicated because so many mutations occur during long lifetimes ("Given enough time, cancer will strike every human body"), Weinberg is optimistic that increasingly sophisticated understanding of cellular functions will yield more effective treatments for those cancers that cannot be prevented. Though some readers might find the technical sections of the book difficult, it readily conveys the challenge and excitement of scientific discovery. Two illustrations. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I actually first bought and read this book eight years ago and really liked it. I thought it was very technical, but not too technical for a lay audience and did a good job of explaining the "superpowers" a cell must acquire to become cancerous. Then I lent it to one of my high school biology students who developed an interest in cancer research after I presented a unit on cancer. She also enjoyed the book, though admitted it was a hard read for her. However, she went on to

major in molecular biology at UCLA and did undergrad research on cancer and is now pursuing a PhD in immunology at UCSF and I think this book helped motivate all that. I bought a second copy of this book recently for my dad, who was diagnosed with cancer and trying to learn more about it. He said the book was too difficult for him to follow so maybe best for a lay audience with a solid biology foundation as a good primer for understanding cancer. My dad did take biology in college but that was 50 years ago! The field has advanced greatly since then while his memory has not. But for anyone with a good science foundation, this book is manageable and extremely interesting.

This book is best read by those who remember some of their basic biology but this is not strictly required to benefit from the book. The author uses engaging prose to keep the subject interesting and is able to provide simplified, yet compelling, explanations of a complex topic. Highly recommended for anyone who wants some insight into cancer and cell biology,

I am very interested in the subject matter (for personal reasons) and have no scientific background other than basic biology in high school and college. I selected this book because of the subject matter and because other reviewers said that it did NOT require a strong medical/scientific background. The book does not deal so much with cancer in terms of how it affects the body, but rather, the life cycle of cancer at the cellular level. In particular, how "one renegade cell" becomes cancerous and grows into a tumor. The examples and explanations run the gamut of many different kinds of cancer (lung, breast, ovarian, retinal, lymphomas, and others). It's heavily focused on DNA and cell replication. I found the book very well written. The technical details did overwhelm me at times, but I kept working through it because of my interest in the subject matter. I think that I probably grasped only 30-40% of the real detail here, and I admit that in some sections I'd read the first half of a chapter and kind of skim the rest of it because it was just over my head. However, I still got a LOT out of the book and read it through to the end. I feel like I was able to get the gist of everything, but didn't necessarily have a full understanding of everything the author presented. I do, however, think that this book has given me enough of an understanding of cancer so that I can now understand the oncologist better and also have an increased level of understanding when reading about cancer and cancer drugs as it affects myself and people close to me. Let me explain my 3 ranking. I'm simply not technical enough to be able to speak to the technical accuracy and timeliness of the content of this book; so I couldn't give it a 5. I did find it fairly readable, and I like how the author sometimes used real life examples to explain concepts (like reference to a car with its accelerator stuck ON or the brakes failing), so it certainly deserves something higher than 1. So,

I split the difference and gave it a 3. It would be helpful for reviewers to identify the degree of technical knowledge that they have in these review. I would really be interested to hear what a practicing oncologist, an family doctor, and/or a grad student in molecular biology has to say about the book; just to give it some perspective. I also think it would be great if the author could partner with someone to take the same content, and simply take it down another notch (less scientific/more targeted to the layman). I'm sure there would be a market for this, as there are so many people impacted by cancer, and we all want to understand it better.

By professor Robert A. Weinberg, known for his discoveries of the first human oncogene Ras and the first tumor suppressor gene Rb. His book is a hugely interesting intro into the mechanisms that turn your very own, obedient and useful cells into renegades wreaking havoc. As a layman, you will be amazed anew at the complexity of our bodies' workings and thrilled by the search for the origins of Cancer, that reads like a thriller in this book. I came away less frightened of the disease because of professor Weinberg's wonderful gift of translating the highly technical into a still complicated page turner but in comprehensible language that made my thoughts about Cancer more rational. Highly recommended.

I just have finished the book which I bought 3 years ago but then did not read it as the book is hard for me to handle with only a left hand. But after my wife 4 weeks ago were stated having cancer I read it in the past week. Among other reasons I also bought the book because I in many privies read books had seen references to Robert A. Weinberg. The book is good in telling the history concerning solving most of the problems about how the cells groves and increases, and especially why cancer don't stop living, having no finishing age. It's a clear and detailed writing, even though it was a little bit heavy for me as many years have passed since I was in school concerning biology. And I can see that much new knowing has come since then back in the 1960es. But as we in the book go through what's going on in the cells I must say that it's much like thinking concerning programming software for the Pc. And on side 115 is mentioned an interested discovery in 1972 by Jams Watson, who I only remember for the discovery of DNA in 1953. Weinberg finish the book by writing that in the future the successors will look back on these discoveries in the last quarter of the twentieth century as a historical curiosity, but that's only the same which again and again has happened concerning other researches in science. That's nearly always first going to one side and then to the other, and disbelieving what researchers discover to early the others to believe.

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