



Life on the Refrigerator Door

By Alice Kuipers
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Introduction

An outgoing yet sensitive fifteen year-old, Claire has come to resent the cooking, cleaning, and household responsibilities thrust upon her by her increasingly absent single-mom. Claire and her mother never seem to be in the same room at the same time. Both preoccupied with busy lives, the daily notes, shopping lists, and reminders they leave on the refrigerator door have become the pair's only means of communication. Wrapped up in the typical dramatics of being a teenager, Claire sees her mother's casual note about an upcoming doctor's appointment, but at the time it just doesn't seem to be that important. As this simple doctor's appointment turns into a very serious diagnosis, Claire and her mother face breast cancer together, coping through an increasingly rich dialogue on the refrigerator door.

A story told exclusively through these intimate yet everyday messages, *Life on the Refrigerator Door* reveals a mother and daughter's struggle to connect and survive the most difficult year of their lives.

Questions for Discussion

1. How does the 'post-it note' format affect the read of the book? Did you find it effective? Why or why not?
2. Do you fault Claire or her mother for their limited communication style? Both of them? Neither of them?
3. Is Claire a good daughter? Is her mother a good mother? Why or why not?
4. Does this inspire you to change the way you communicate with your parents/children/loved ones? If so, how?
5. How do we see Claire and her mother's relationship change after the breast cancer diagnosis?

About the Author

Alice Kuipers was born in England and now lives in Saskatoon, Canada, where she works as a Pilates teacher. She has had her short stories published in small literary magazines, and some have been produced by CBC radio. She is a graduate of Manchester Metropolitan University, and this is her first book.