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# Death Be Not Proud



## Synopsis

Deeply moving, this true story relates a father's recollection of his son's courageous and spirited battle against the brain tumor that would take his life at the age of seventeen.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

John Gunther was born on August 30, 1901 on the North Side of Chicago. He was one of the best known and most admired journalists of his day, and his series of "Inside" books, starting with *Inside Europe* in 1936, were immensely popular profiles of the major world powers. One critic noted that it was Gunther's special gift to "unite the best qualities of the newspaperman and the historian." It was a gift that readers responded to enthusiastically. The "Inside" books sold 3,500,000 copies over a period of thirty years. While publicly a bon vivant and modest celebrity, Gunther in his private life suffered disappointment and tragedy. He and Frances Fineman, whom he married in 1927, had a daughter who died four months after her birth in 1929. The Gunthers divorced in 1944. In 1947, their beloved son Johnny died after a long, heartbreaking fight with brain cancer. Gunther wrote his classic memoir *Death Be Not Proud*, which was published in 1949, to commemorate the courage and spirit of this extraordinary boy. Gunther remarried in 1948, and he and his second wife, Jane Perry Vandercook, adopted a son. John Gunther died on May 29, 1970.

I first read this book in middle school in English. I was captivated by it then. Pretty soon after, I saw the movie, which was very well done with great portrayals of Mr and Mrs Gunther and Johnny. One

can't help but wonder what contributions John Gunther Jr would have made had he survived. I read this book many times as a teenager and young adult and decided to revisit it. As a mother of 4twentysomethings it was from a different perspective that I read it this time and it gave it even more depth and heartbreaking pathos. I wonder what the medical community would have been able to do for Johnny had he been born a few decades later.

This book was brought to me by my now deceased grandfather more than 30 years ago. He was a fan of John Gunther Sr., and was deeply touched by John Jr.'s indomitable and loving spirit. As a young teen, I too was impressed with John Jr. I recently thought of the book when someone mentioned the actor Robby Benson. As a nurse and more importantly a mother of three, including a boy of Jr.s age, I felt a need to reread this memoir. I was immediately struck by three things: how far medicine has come since the late 1940s, the beautiful writing style of the author, and of course the depth and commitment of both of John Jr.s parents as they came together despite being divorced to love, and help make their son's journey easier. Part of what really touched my heart was the way each parent met John Jr.s needs in such different manners. This book could have turned into a maudlin "why us" story. The fact that it never did is both a testament to the author himself, and the very special young man at the center of the memoir. It is a wonderful read that spans the test of time. Additionally, I would like to add that despite all of medicine's advances, even now in the 21st century, a similar diagnosis is just as serious, as I am reading another touching memoir called "Maryn's Hope-Memoir of a Beautiful Life by her mother Annette Cells.

Bought as a gift for a friend who recently observed a death very similar to young John Gunther's.

I didn't know if I could read this story when I realized what it was about. I had been aware of the title for many years and also knew it was a classic so it was time for me to read it. The emotions grabbed me but I couldn't put it down. I lost my beautiful daughter four years ago to the monster called "glioblastoma". Karen was my second child and was one of my seven children. I felt every pain over again as I shared their story.

A classic book about the impact of cancer on the lives of the patient and his family. Touching story.

I first read this book when I was in grade school, and enjoyed it then. I decided to purchase it and re-read it because my own father died of glioblastoma. Fortunately (or maybe 'un'), my father did not

linger. What has fascinated me, however, is that in the span of 53 years (Johnny Gunther died in 1947, my father in 2003), the prognosis was the same -- death. The cancer is hard to detect, and usually grows substantially before it is caught. By then, it is too late. "Death by not Proud" is the story of a father's journey with his son as time moves them along to the finality of life. It is a real page turner.

This classic memoir by a renowned journalist has stood the test of time. It is one of the best and is still in print after all these years. It tells in detail the events surrounding his son's brain cancer told in a straightforward manner that gives just enough detail without too much. I bought the paperback because I wanted the book on my shelf after reading it on Kindle.

A classic from my teen years. The writing style is now a little dated. Received book quickly and good quality edition.

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