

## Medical misadventures

Battle Scars by Dinaaz Lentin. Published in 2020 by the author, website: <https://dinaaz.com/battle-scars>; email: [dlentin@hotmail.com](mailto:dlentin@hotmail.com). Pp: 243. Price: AUD 35 (Rs 1,820) (includes shipping and handling in Australia).

In her literary debut Sydney's Dinaaz Lentin (pictured) takes readers along on her journey of medical failures and frustrations which ultimately climaxes in success — the moral of her life story being "Say not the struggle naught availeth."



Lentin is truly indefatigable and inspirational. The series of misdiagnoses she suffered started in 1978 when a surgeon operated on her left knee instead of the damaged right one. Did this happen in a backward country with surgeons operating by candlelight? No! Believe it or not, it happened in Sydney.

As a 19-year-old, Lentin discovered the error after she woke up from the anesthesia. To make matters worse, the surgeon refused to acknowledge his error and sent her a bill for the operation. He threatened to sue her to recover the money but relented only when Lentin dragged him to the Supreme Court of New South Wales.

The courtroom drama is described in detail and I felt as if I was present, sharing Lentin's emotions. On the morning of the hearing, the surgeon admitted liability and offered a settlement. The judge decided on Australian \$7,130 (Rs 3,72,680) as compensation.

"A large chunk of that money went back to Legal Aid for supporting my legal expenses over three years. The remainder of the money I received, I gave to charity. The case was not about seeking financial reward but rather based solely on the principle of what was right, getting an apology and, most importantly, changing the hospital system," writes Lentin in Battle Scars,

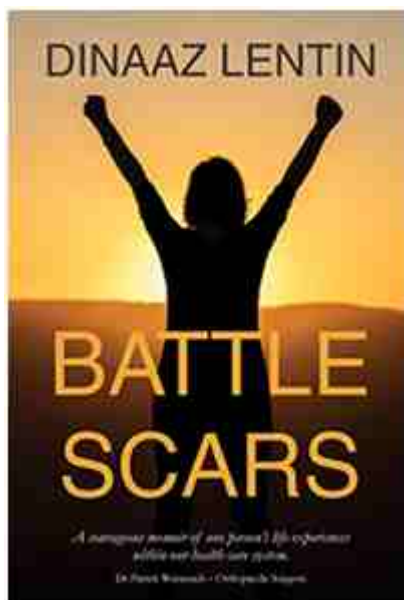
At 22, Lentin experienced both medical and legal tangles. Her life involved more drama, trauma, misdiagnosis and cover-ups by the medical profession.

In 1994 Dr Ian Isaacs had fixed the paralysis of the right arm/hand. It was only because of this success that Lentin chose to seek medical intervention when her left arm below the elbow became paralyzed in 2016 following a complication from kidney surgery. Unfortunately, Isaacs had died in 2009 and she struggled to find an effective surgeon. Her condition was so rare that most doctors advised her to accept her fate and live with the impairment. But she was not one to give up easily. Her memoir Battle Scars narrates her prolonged medical journey to full recovery.

She read research papers online. She has two university degrees — in science and marketing. Her science background helped her do all the medical research to diagnose which led to her eventual recovery from the partial paralysis of her arm. At times she even advised doctors who were not as familiar with the ailment. Her road to recovery took her for consultations from Sydney to Melbourne to Brisbane. Pain and paralysis continued. She eventually found a knowledgeable surgeon, Dr Chandler O'Neill, who diagnosed her problems and was able to cure her. She has dedicated her book to Drs Isaacs and O'Neill and also thanked Dr Patrick Weinrauch from Brisbane for his guidance and encouragement through her medical travails.

Lentin writes in the final chapter, "The total medical costs of my journey were in excess of \$35,000. Was my arm worth it? Without hesitation, an absolute YES."

Each chapter starts with a quote culled from different sources. She also adds her own quotes such as: the facts were as clear as blood on snow; the air was heavy and I felt like a slab of chocolate melting away in a gooey mess; I was on my own, my personal army of one — the general, sergeant and private; the difference between a dream and a goal is that goals have deadlines.



Her daughter Annita first suggested she write a book on her bizarre medical misadventures. Weinrauch encouraged her with, "We can't teach humility and the human side of medicine well at university, but medical students can learn it through the eyes and journey of someone like Dinaaz."

Lentin, who migrated from Bombay over 50 years ago, has held senior marketing management positions in private, government and public companies for over 25 years. For the last 10 years, she has run her own marketing consultancy business which she still does today. What she hopes to now achieve is to be an advocate in Australia and throughout the world for patient safety. In Australia (according to government figures), over 27,000 people died in 2018 from preventable medical errors. In the US, the numbers are in excess of 250,000. The problem exists throughout the world and bringing these numbers down is her goal.

Following the publication of *Battle Scars*, the author has been invited as a motivational speaker. She is currently an ambassador for diabetes in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

This inspirational book contains 13 pages of photos by Daniel Karimi. The names of some of the people portrayed in this book have been altered. Lentin has thanked her parents, husband, daughter, son Kevin and many friends — especially Julie for her prayers for divine intervention.

#### KERSI MEHER-HOMJI

A research virologist, Meher-Homji has written 16 books on cricket including *The Waugh Twins*, *Nervous Nineties*, *Six Appeal*, *Cricket's Great Families* and his latest *From Bradman to Kohli*.