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Posted on 19 September 2019 By Rebecca Skloot

#FREE ? The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks ó eBook or E-pub free

When I was a graduate student in the field of Ethics, one of my favorite pedagogical strategies, as both a teacher and a student, was the case study A good case study can

make an abstract ethical issue concrete. A really good case study can turn a deeply contentious issue into an opportunity for thoughtfulness and compassion, right and wrong to the extent that those concepts even belong in the study of ethics are nuanced by descriptions of circumstances or values or human need that can make it easier to see and hear and believe the ones on the other side of an issue. Often the case studies are hypothetical, or descriptions of actual cases pared to just the facts, ma'am, without all the possible extenuating circumstances that can shape difficult decisions. For some students, this causes great angst. How could they be asked to make a judgment, especially one that might involve life or death, without knowing all the details? And of course, at the end of the lesson, everyone wants to know what really happened, how things turned out in real life. On those rare occasions when we actually do know something of the outcome, it is clear that knowing what really happened almost never makes the decision easier, clearer, or less agonizing. And that is what makes *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* so deeply compelling and challenging. It is the rare story of the outcome of a seemingly inconsequential decision by a doctor and a researcher in 1951, one that few at that time would have ever seen as an ethical decision, let alone an unethical one. A researcher studying cell cultures needs samples; a doctor treating a woman with aggressive cervical cancer scrapes a few extra cells of that cancer into a Petri dish for the researcher. The missing cells had no bearing whatsoever on the outcome of the woman's disease, so no harm done. A few weeks later the woman is dead, but her cancer cells are living in the lab. The bare bones ethical issue at stake: whether it is ethically warranted to take a patient's tissues without consent and subsequently use them for scientific and medical research is even now not a particularly contentious one yet. Legally, the case law is settled: tissue removed in the course of medical treatment or testing no longer belongs to the patient. It is, in essence, refuse, and one woman's trash is another man's treasure. Ethically, almost all the professional guidelines encourage researchers to obtain consent, but they have no teeth and most were non-existent in 1951 anyway. In reality, the vast majority of the tissue taken from patients is of limited use. But there are those rare times when a single person's cells have the potential to break open the worlds of science and medicine, to the benefit of millions and the enrichment of a very few. Such was the case with the cells of cervical cancer taken from Henrietta Lacks at Johns Hopkins University hospital. HeLa cells grew in the lab of George Gey. And grew. And grew, unlike any cell before it. Next, they were carried to a different laboratory at the University of Pittsburgh, where Jonas Salk used them to successfully test his polio vaccine, and thus the cancer that had killed Henrietta Lacks directly led to the healing of millions worldwide. Soon HeLa cells would be in almost every major research laboratory in the world. They traveled to Asia to help find a cure for hemorrhagic fever and into space to study the effects of zero gravity on human cells. Even today, almost 60 years after Henrietta's death, HeLa cells are some of the most widely used by the scientific community. With such immeasurable benefits as these, who could possibly

doubt the wisdom of Henrietta's doctor to take a tiny bit of tissue. But the real story is much complicated. Henrietta Lacks was uneducated, poor and black. Her cancer was treated in the colored ward of Johns Hopkins. Her death left five children without their mother, to be raised by an abusive cousin. Should any of that matter in weighing the morality of taking tissue from a patient without her consent, especially in light of the benefits? God knows our country's history of medical experimentation on the poor and minority populations is not pretty. Ironically, one of the laboratories researching with HeLa cells in the 1950s was the one at the Tuskegee Institute at the very same time that the infamous syphilis studies were taking place. In light of that history, Henrietta's race and socioeconomic status can't help but be relevant factors in her particular case. But her children's status? What bearing does that have? According to author Rebecca Skloot, in ethical discussions of the use of human tissue, there are, essentially, two issues to deal with: consent and money. Both become issues for Henrietta's children. The family didn't learn until 1973 that their mother's cells had been taken, or that they'd played such a vital role in the development of scientific knowledge. They spent the next 30 years trying to learn about their mother's cells. As they learned of the money made by the pharmaceutical companies and other companies as a direct result of HeLa cells, they inevitably asked questions about what share, if any, they were entitled to. As Henrietta's eldest son put it, "If our mother so important to science, why can't we get health insurance? But even than financial compensation, the family wants recognition and respect for their mother. They want the woman behind her contributions acknowledged for who she is: a black woman, a mother, a person with a name longer than four letters. And they want to know the mother they never knew, to find out the facts of her death. In the lab at Johns Hopkins, looking through a microscope at her mother's cells for the first time, daughter Deborah sums it up: "Johns Hopkins is a school for learning, and that's important. But this is my mother. Nobody seems to get that." Would a fully informed Henrietta Lacks have made the decision to give her tissue to George Gey if asked? Would her decision either way have had any affect whatsoever on her children's future lives? We'll never know, of course. But reading the story behind the case study makes these questions far more potent than any ethics textbook can. And as science now unravels the strains of our DNA, thanks in no small part to HeLa, these are no longer inconsequential questions for any of us. Perhaps we, too, like the doctors and scientists who have long studied HeLa, can learn from the case study of Henrietta Lacks. Fascinating and Thought Provoking Strengths: Fantastically interesting subject. One woman's cancerous cells are multiplied and distributed around the globe, enabling a new era of cellular research and fueling incredible advances in scientific methodology, technology, and medical treatments. This strain of cells, named HeLa after Henrietta Lacks, their originator, has been amazingly prolific and has become integrated into advancements of science around the world: space travel, genome research, pharmaceutical treatments, polio vaccination, etc. Thought Provoking Ethical Questions: This book makes you ponder ethical questions historically raised by the unfolding sequence of

events and still rippling currently Ex 1 Informed consent Henrietta did not provide informed consent not required in those days Ex 2 Genetic rights non rights her family whose DNA also links to those cells did not learn of the implications of her tissue sample until years later Ex 3 Patents and profits for biologic material zero profits realized by Henrietta or her descendants multiple millions in profits have been realized by individuals and corporations utilizing her genetic material Biographical description of Henrietta and interviews with her family The biographical nature of the book ensures the reader does not separate the science and ethics from the family These are not abstract questions, impacts and implications We re reading about actual, valuable people and historic events Weaknesses Framework the book is framed around the author s journey of writing the story and her interactions with Henrietta s family I thought the author got in the way and would have preferred to have to read less of her journey and coverage of the science involved and its ethical implications I found myself distinctly not caring how many times the author circled the block or how many trips she made to Henrietta s birthplace Lack of Clarity By mid point through the book, I was wishing the biographical approach was refined and focused The narrative swerved through the author s interest in various people as she encountered them along the way Henrietta, Henrietta s immediate family, scientists, Henrietta s extended family, a neighborhood grocery store owner, a con artist, Henrietta s youngest daughter, Henrietta s oldest daughter, etc Everything was a side dish no particular biography satisfied as a main course Bottom Line This book won t join my to re read shelfbut has whetted my appetite for further exploration of this important woman, fascinating topic and intriguing ethical questions.I was left wanting detail surrounding the science involved, coverage of past and present ethical implications a refined biography of Henrietta, and a focused look at the impact and implications of the HeLa cell strain line on Henrietta s descendants. #FREE ? The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks Í Intimate In Feeling, Astonishing In Scope, And Impossible To Put Down, The Immortal Life Of Henrietta Lacks Captures The Beauty And Drama Of Scientific Discovery, As Well As Its Human Consequences Her Name Was Henrietta Lacks, But Scientists Know Her As HeLa She Was A Poor Southern Tobacco Farmer Who Worked The Same Land As Her Slave Ancestors, Yet Her Cells Taken Without Her Knowledge Became One Of The Most Important Tools In Medicine The First Immortal Human Cells Grown In Culture, They Are Still Alive Today, Though She Has Been Dead For Than Sixty Years If You Could Pile All HeLa Cells Ever Grown Onto A Scale, They D Weigh Than Million Metric Tons As Much As A Hundred Empire State Buildings HeLa Cells Were Vital For Developing The Polio Vaccine Uncovered Secrets Of Cancer, Viruses, And The Atom Bomb S Effects Helped Lead To Important Advances Like In Vitro Fertilization, Cloning, And Gene Mapping And Have Been Bought And Sold By The BillionsYet Henrietta Lacks Remains Virtually Unknown, Buried In An Unmarked GraveNow Rebecca Skloot Takes Us On An Extraordinary Journey, From The Colored Ward Of Johns Hopkins Hospital In The S To Stark White Laboratories With Freezers Full Of HeLa Cells

From Henrietta S Small, Dying Hometown Of Clover, Virginia A Land Of Wooden Slave Quarters, Faith Healings, And Voodoo To East Balti Today, Where Her Children And Grandchildren Live And Struggle With The Legacy Of Her CellsHenrietta S Family Did Not Learn Of Her Immortality Until Than Twenty Years After Her Death, When Scientists Investigating HeLa Began Using Her Husband And Children In Research Without Informed Consent And Though The Cells Had Launched A Multimillion Dollar Industry That Sells Human Biological Materials, Her Family Never Saw Any Of The Profits As Rebecca Skloot So Brilliantly Shows, The Story Of The Lacks Family Past And Present Is Inextricably Connected To The Dark History Of Experimentation On African Americans, The Birth Of Bioethics, And The Legal Battles Over Whether We Control The Stuff We Are Made OfOver The Decade It Took To Uncover This Story, Rebecca Became Enmeshed In The Lives Of The Lacks Family Especially Henrietta S Daughter Deborah, Who Was Devastated To Learn About Her Mother S Cells She Was Consumed With Questions Had Scientists Cloned Her Mother Did It Hurt Her When Researchers Infected Her Cells With Viruses And Shot Them Into Space What Happened To Her Sister, Elsie, Who Died In A Mental Institution At The Age Of Fifteen And If Her Mother Was So Important To Medicine, Why Couldn T Her Children Afford Health Insurance Intimate In Feeling, Astonishing In Scope, And Impossible To Put Down, The Immortal Life Of Henrietta Lacks Captures The Beauty And Drama Of Scientific Discovery, As Well As Its Human Consequences On October 4, 1951, Henrietta Lacks, a thirty one year old black woman, died after a gruesome battle with a rapidly metastasizing cancer During her treatment, the doctors at Johns Hopkins took some cells from her failing body and used them for research This was not an unusual thing to have done in 1951 But the cells that came from Ms Lacks body were unusual They had qualities that made them uniquely valuable as research tools Labeled HeLa , Henrietta s cells were reproduced by the billions over the following sixty years and have been instrumental in experiments across a wide range of biological science Today, HeLa cells are sold by the vial at impressive prices Yet, Ms Lacks family has seen not a penny of compensation from the work that has been made possible by their relative s unique cells.Rebecca Skloot from Powell sRebecca Skloot, a science writer with articles published in many major outlets, spent years looking into the genesis of these cells The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks tells four stories First is the tale of HeLa cells, and the value they have been to science second is the life of, arguably, the most important cell donor in history, and of her family third is a look at the ethics of cell donation and the commercial and legal significance of rights involved and fourth is the Visible Woman look at Skloot s pursuit of the tales Each story is significant The contribution of HeLa cells has been huge and it is important to know how these cells came to be so widely used, and what are the characteristics that make them so valuable Skloot goes into a reasonable level of detail for those of us who do not make our living in a lab coat She adds information on how cell cultures can become contaminated, and how that impacts completed research She also

offers a description of telomeres, strings of DNA at the end of chromosomes critical to longevity, and key to the immortality of HeLa cells Fascinating stuff. Henrietta Lacks From Science And Film Skloot constructs a biography of Henrietta, and patches together a portrait of the life of her family, from her ancestors to her children, siblings and other relations It is with a source of pride, among other emotions, that her family regards Henrietta's impact on the world Skloot delves into these feelings, and the experiences the Lacks family members have had over the decades with people trying to write about Henrietta, and people trying to exploit their interest in Henrietta for dark purposes. The author had to overcome considerable family resistance before she was able to get them to meet with and ultimately open up to her She takes us through her process, showing who she talked with, when, and the result of those conversations, what institutions she contacted re locating and gaining access to information about Henrietta and some other family members Most interesting, and at times frustrating, is her story of how she gained the trust of some, if not all, of the Lacks family This is like presenting a how to of her research process, a blow by blow description of the way research is done in the real world, and it is very enlightening The Immortal Tale of Henrietta Lacks has received considerable acclaim It is all well deserved The book is an eye opening window into a piece of our history that is mostly unknown It presents science in a very manageable way and gives us plenty to think about the next time we have a blood test or any other medical procedure This book may not be as immortal as Henrietta's cells, but it will stay with you for a very long time. The HBO Film airs on April 22, 2017 EXTRA STUFF 8 13 NY Times article A Family Consents to a Medical Gift, 62 Years Later 3 29 17 Washington Post On the eve of an Oprah movie about Henrietta Lacks, an ugly feud consumes the family by Steve Hendrix This is a very powerful and informative story Also, with the history of personal freedoms, civil rights, and right to privacy requiring consent, this is a very important book I am not sure the details about the science involved in the story will appeal to all Just the same as how those who are here for the science may be disinterested in the background stories of the people involved But, if you think you will like one of the other, I don't think the one you don't care for will be distracting. With that in mind, I will continue with the statement that it really is two books the science and the people First, the background of cell and tissue research in the last 100 years is intriguing and to hear about all of the advances and why Henrietta Lacks was key to them is fascinating Second, the background of not only the Lacks family, but also others who have had their tissues cells used for research without permission, gives a lot of food for thought Almost every medical advancement, and many scientific advancements, in the past 60 years are because of Henrietta Lacks But, questions about the consent she gave, what she understood about her cells being used, and how much the family has benefited are all questioned and discussed It really hits hard to think that you may have no control over parts of you once they are no longer part of your body Also, the fiscal and research ramifications of giving people rights over their body tissue cells really creates a huge Catch 22 As I had

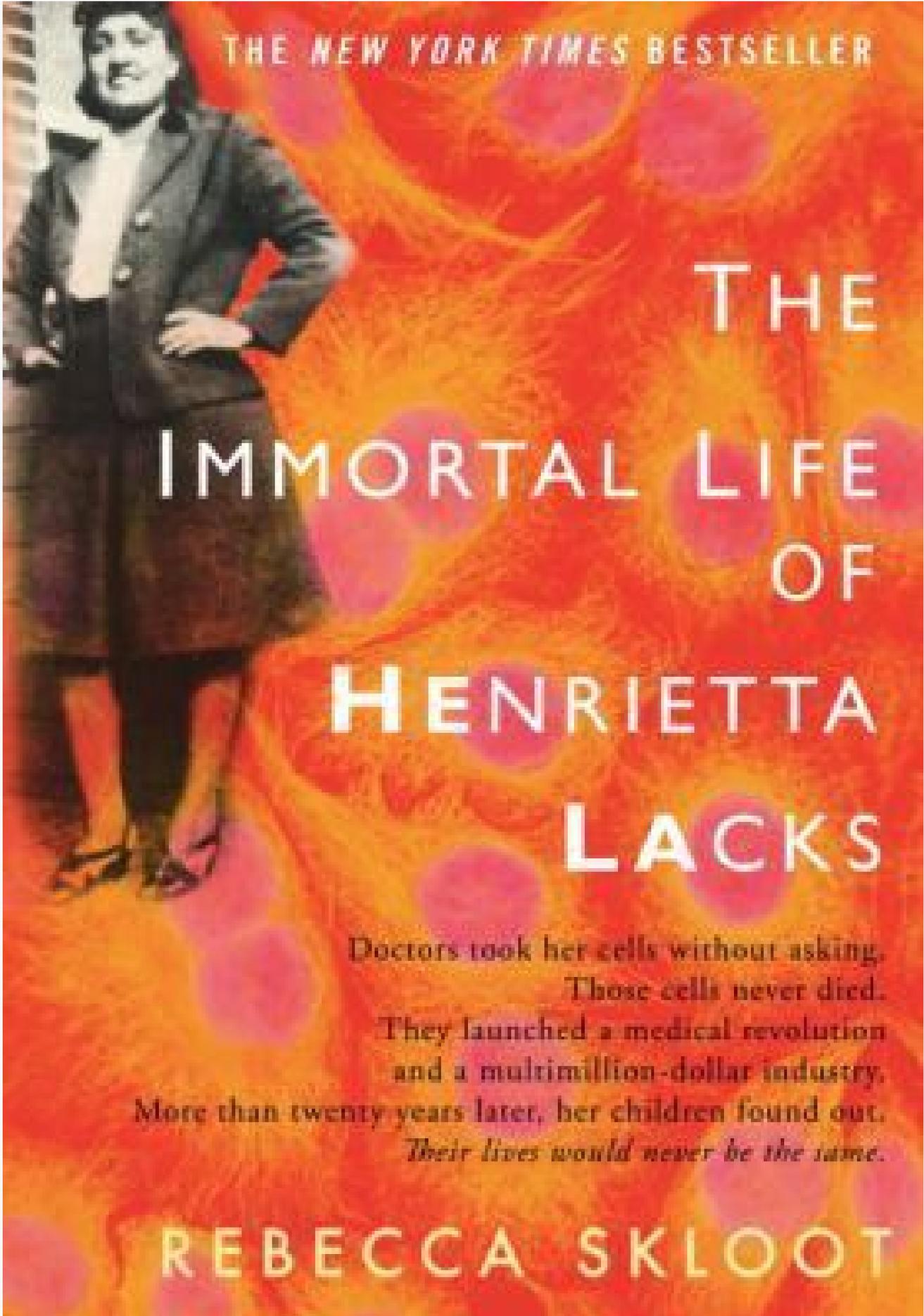
surgery earlier this year that involved some tissue being removed for analysis, it started to make me wonder what I signed on all those forms and if my cells might still be out there being used for research. The only part of the book that kind of dragged for me was the time that the author spent with the family late in the book. After listening to an interview with the author it was surprising to hear that this part of the book may have been her original focus, how the family has dealt with the revelations surrounding the use of their mother's cells, but to me it kind of dragged and got repetitive. I don't think it is bad and others may find it interesting, it just was what brought down my interest in the story a little bit. If you like science based stories, medical based stories, civil personal rights history, and or just love a decent non fiction, I think this book is very worth checking out. 4.5 stars

A young black mother dies of cervical cancer in 1950 and unbeknownst to her becomes the impetus for many medical advances through the decades that follow because of the cancer cells that were taken without her permission. This book evokes so many thoughts and feelings, sometimes at odds with one another. It is thought provoking and informative in the details and heartbreaking in the rendering of the personal story of Henrietta Lacks. I was madder than hell that people/companies made loads of money on the HeLa cell line while some members of the Lacks family didn't have health insurance. Yet, I am grateful for the research advances that made a polio vaccine possible, advanced cancer research and genetics, and so much. Rebecca Skloot does a wonderful job of presenting the moral and legal questions of medical research without consent meshing this with the the human side giving a picture of the woman whose cells saved so many lives. We get to know her family, especially her daughter Deborah who worked tirelessly with the author to discover what happened to her mother. This made it all so real not just a recitation of the facts. The scientific aspects are very detailed but understandable. It was the sections on Henrietta and her family that I wanted to read the most. In 1950 there was no formal research oversight in the United States. Years later there are laws on informed consent and how medical research is conducted, and protection of privacy for medical records. Yet even today, there are controversies over the ownership of human tissue. The in depth research over years in writing this book is evident and I believe a heartfelt effort to recognize Henrietta Lacks for her unwitting contribution to medical research. This could have been an incredible book. Henrietta Lacks story is finally told and Skloot makes very clear how important Lacks cells have been to the last 60 years of science and, paradoxically, how much Henrietta and her family suffered because those cells were taken from Henrietta without her consent. But in her effort to contrast the importance and profitability of Henrietta's cells with the marginalization and impoverishment of Henrietta's family, Skloot makes three really big mistakes. First, she's not transparent about her own journalistic ethics, which is troubling in a book about ethics. Did the Lacks family end up benefiting from her book financially? Did all Lacks give permission for their depictions in the book? We never know. Second, Skloot's narration when describing the Lacks family suffering sexual abuse, addiction, disability,

mental illness lacks sensitivity it often feels clinical and sometimes even voyeuristic Again, this is disturbing in a book that concerns the importance of dignity, consent, etc. Finally, Skloot inserts herself into the story over and over, not so subtly suggesting that she is a hero for telling Henrietta's story Sometimes, it appears that she is making the very offensive suggestion that she, a highly educated unreligious white woman, has healed the Lacks family by showing them science and history. This is such an important story HeLa cells were a miracle to humanity and all thanks to Henrietta Lacks and the doctor. It is a must read. This is an all gold five star read. It's actually two stories, the story of the HeLa cells and the story of the Lacks family told by a journalist who writes the first story objectively and the second, in which she is involved, subjectively The contrast between the poor Lacks family who cannot afford their medical bills and the research establishment who have made millions, maybe billions from these cells is ironic and tragic It has been established by other law cases that if the family had gone for restitution they would not have got it, but that's a moot point as they couldn't afford a lawyer in any case I have seen some bad reviews about this book People who think that the story of the Lacks poor rural African Americans who never made it up from slavery and whose lifestyle of decent working class folk that also involves incest, adultery, disease and crime, they just dismiss with heard it all before and my family despite all obstacles succeeded so what is wrong with the Lacks I wonder if these people who not only totally can't see the wonderful writing that brings these people to life and who so lack in compassion themselves are the sort of people who oppose health care for the masses As an extremely wealthy American tourist once put it to me, he had earned good health care by his hard work and success in life, it was one of the perks, why waste good money on, say, a triple bypass on someone who hasn't even succeeded enough to afford health insurance That they were a drain on society, non contributors and not the way America needed to go to move forward. I don't think you can rate people by what they have achieved materially Success depends a great deal on opportunity and many don't have that Henrietta Lacks didn't have it and her children didn't have it, not even her grandchildren made much of a way for themselves, but the next generation, the great grandchildren ah now they are going in for Masters degrees and maybe their children will be major contributors The author intends to recompense the family by setting up a scholarship for at least one of them All of us came originally from poverty and to put down those that are still mired in the quicksand of never having enough spare cash to finance an education is cruel, uncompassionate and hardly looking to the future. HeLa cells have given us our future They are the most researched and tested human cells in existence All of us have benefited from the medical advances made using them and the book is recognition of what a great contribution Henrietta Lacks and her family with all their donations of tissue and blood, mostly stolen from them under false pretences, have made Indeed one of the researchers who looks like having told a lot of lies and then lied about that in order to get the family to donate blood to further her research is still trying to get them to donate She's a hard nosed

scientist, with an excellent job and income and to her the Lacks are no than providers of raw material Sometimes you can t make hard and fast rulings No I don t think we should have to give informed consent for experiments to be done on tissue or blood donated during a procedure or childbirth that would slow medical research unbearably I don t think cells should be identifiable with the donor either, it should be quite anonymous as it now is However, there is only ever one first in any sphere and that one does deserve recognition and now with the book, some 50 years after her life ended, Henrietta Lacks has it Good on yer, Rebecca Skloot, you ve done a good thing here.

THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER



THE
IMMORTAL LIFE
OF
HENRIETTA
LACKS

Doctors took her cells without asking.
Those cells never died.
They launched a medical revolution
and a multimillion-dollar industry.
More than twenty years later, her children found out.
Their lives would never be the same.

REBECCA SKLOOT

She s the most important person in the world and her family living in poverty If our mother is so important to science, why can t we get health insurancel ve moved this book on and off

my TBR for years The truth is that, with few exceptions, I m generally turned off by the thought of non fiction I m a fan of fictional stories, and I think I ve always felt that non fiction will be dry, boring and difficult to get through Especially a book about science, cells and medicine when I m of a humanities social sciences kinda girl. But this book it s just so interesting It s written in a very easy, journalistic style and places the author into the story some people didn t like this, but I thought it felt like you were going along for the journey It s all the interesting bits of science, full of eye opening and shocking discoveries, but it s also about history, sociology and race. I started reading *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* while sat next to my boyfriend Every so often I would unknowingly gasp or mutter oh my god and he was like what what and I hadn t even realized I d done it out loud It s just full of surprises and every one is true It uncovers things you almost certainly didn t know about And it just shows that sometimes real life can be nastier, shocking, and wondrous than anything you could imagine. Maybe you ve heard of HeLa in passing, maybe you don t know anything about these cells that helped in cancer research, in finding a polio vaccine, in cloning, in gene mapping and discovering the effects of an atom bomb either way, this tells an incredible and awful story of a poor, black woman in the American South who was diagnosed with cervical cancer She is given back her humanity, becoming than a cluster of cells and being shown for the tough, spirited woman she was From her own family life to the frankly nauseating treatment of black patients in the 1950s, her story emerges. Not only that, but this book is about the injustices committed by the pharmaceutical industry both in this individual case how is it that Henrietta s family are dirt poor when she has revolutionized medicine and on a larger scale during the 1950s, many prisoners were injected with cancer as part of medical experiments It s hard to believe what so called professionals have gotten away with throughout history things that we generally associate with Nazi death camps. I honestly could not put it down Maybe because it s not just about science and cells, but is mainly about all of the humanity and social history behind scientific discoveries Maybe because Skloot is so damn passionate about her subject and that passion is transferred to the reader Whatever the reason, I highly recommend it. [Blog](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#) [Youtube](#) [Store](#)

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