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In "Not Going Gently," Constance Vincent writes about how Alzheimer's disease destroyed her mother and drove a wedge between family members.Share on PinterestAlzheimer's is a family disease.That's partly why Constance Vincent, Ph.D., thinks people ought to be more frightened of it than cancer."Most cancers can be treated," she said.That's not the case with Alzheimer's.An expert in developmental psychology and a former university professor, Vincent has written a book about her family's struggle with the disease, documenting the long, sad decline of her once-vibrant mother. "Not Going Gently" is a tale that will resonate with more and more families as dementia claims more and more victims.And that population is only going to increase, Vincent noted, as baby boomers move from caring for aging parents to becoming aged themselves.The cost of caring for patients with dementia is expected to reach \$1.2 trillion by 2050. Get the Facts: What Is Alzheimer's Disease? » The book's title comes from a famous poem by Dylan Thomas."Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night" is about fighting the helplessness often associated with old age and death."I wasn't particularly aware of Alzheimer's disease when I saw my parents slip into cognitive decline," Vincent said.Vincent began keeping records of the changes. The material became the basis for the book when her mother, Madeline, was denied surgery on the grounds that she was too old. "There were too many things going on here. I wanted to tell her story, but I also became engrossed by the research [into Alzheimer's]," said Vincent. "I thought it would be interesting to combine research and the personal story.""Not Going Gentle" records Madeline's gradual loss of function and memory, and Vincent's despair at her inability to help. Read More: Alzheimer's Begins Much Earlier Than Previously Thought » The book is also quite frank about the problems in the family (Madeline and her husband Michael raised three daughters and a son) and the factionalism that separated the children. They did not all see eye to eye on where Madeline should live, what level of care she needed, and who would know all the details.That struggle has made Vincent an advocate for parents to have serious — and early — discussions with their adult children on finances, care, and other end-of-life issues.The subject is one that readers of the book have taken seriously, she said. Some have told her the book motivated them to initiate family talks."We need different ways of caring for people," she said. "And they need to be more humanistic and less about institutions." Read More: New Antibody May Treat Brain Injury and Prevent Alzheimer's » The second function of the book is to examine the scientific research and possible preventive strategies.Vincent discusses the importance of a vitamin regimen that includes the B vitamins, vitamin D, glutathione, essential fatty acids, and alpha-lipoic acid. She also details the benefits of the Mediterranean diet, which features fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. "I'm not consistent or scientific" in taking pills, Vincent admitted. "I try out supplements, but they're not the same every day."Even so, she's noticed that she's more forgetful if she doesn't take the pills for a few days.Vincent bases her choices on current research, which offers no cure or definitive treatment but does suggest that certain behaviors reduce risk.For example, regular exercise appears to lower risk by building more neurons in the brain. Vincent said she has noticed the same risk factors that contribute to cardiovascular disease contribute to dementia as well. Those conditions include unhealthy weight, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, smoking, and high cholesterol.The conclusion she draws from her research is: "Up to half of the risk for Alzheimer's disease is potentially under our control."However, Vincent's knowledge of health strategies came too late to help her mother."Alzheimer's disease prevention starts young," she said. "There's damage in the brain decades before any symptoms appear." Amazon and Hachette, a publisher of well-known authors including J.K. Rowling, are fighting over e-book royalties — and their customers are the big losers. Amazon has apparently decided to punish the publisher by making it hard to purchase Hachette books. The online retailer is reportedly saying certain titles are out of stock and removing "preorder" buttons from certain titles. The listing for the Hachette paperback of J.D. Salinger's "Nine Stories" says it "usually ships in two to four weeks" and offers "Similar items at a lower price," including a collection of Ernest Hemingway stories published by Scribner. The Los Angeles Times says numerous Hachette authors have criticized Amazon in recent weeks, including Sherman Alexie (one of my favorites) and James Patterson, who on his Facebook page noted that the purchase of his books, as well as books by Malcolm Gladwell and Nicholas Sparks, has been made more difficult. "What I don't understand about this particular battle tactic is how it is in the best interest of Amazon customers," Patterson wrote. "It certainly doesn't appear to be in the best interest of authors." After being silent for days and receiving widespread criticism, Amazon spoke up on Tuesday: "At Amazon, we do business with more than 70,000 suppliers, including thousands of publishers. One of our important suppliers is Hachette, which is part of a \$10 billion media conglomerate. Unfortunately, despite much work from both sides, we have been unable to reach mutually-acceptable agreement on terms." It's important to note Amazon's immense power in the book industry. Its market share of ebook sales is about 60 percent; its share of all books sold is about 30 percent, according to The Times. It has a history of aggressive actions with publishers, most dramatically in 2010 when it removed the buy buttons for releases by Macmillan, whose authors include Jonathan Franzen, Bill O'Reilly and Augusten Burroughs. It fought with Apple over ebook prices and lost, but Apple's victory was overturned after the U.S. Department of Justice intervened. Amazon hardly stands alone in a tech industry dominated by a handful of companies. For years, Microsoft enjoyed a near monopoly in the OS market. Now Google holds a similar position in search, Intel in processor manufacturing, and four companies — AT&T, Verizon, Sprint and T-Mobile — dominate the wireless market. I'm an avid reader, and this really rubs me the wrong way. Amazon has already done a lot to try to destroy its brick and mortar competitors. Like it or not, the seismic shifts in publishing may well be an inevitable part of a larger shift to digital technology and new consumer buying habits. But bullying, which is what this appears to be, is not inevitable and is flat out wrong. Now and then I name an industry figure the "Tech Bozo of the Month." Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos gets that honor in May. The battle of Waterloo, fought all day on June 18, 1815, is one of the most famous events in Europe's entire history. Although the climax of the Napoleonic Wars, the battle is sometimes examined as an event in its own right. The 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo produced a lot of new works, and this is a cracking one: a narrative history of the key four days with all the verve and skill of a story and the analysis of a historian. Put aside an afternoon, and enjoy this tremendous event. Bernard Cornwell has written a Sharpe adventure about the battle of Waterloo, and here he brings a novelist's eye to the history. Clayton's book above does not lack for drama and speed, but Cornwell's style has created a popular history which has found widespread appeal. A fascinating book which looks at what happened after the battle in much greater detail than the usual 'no more Napoleon, see you for the Congress of Vienna.' Obviously, don't start with this book, but do fit it in after you've read others on this list. This is eighty pages of text on the battle for the farmhouse of La Haye Sainte. Does Simms convince that these men won it? Maybe not, but as a look at one part of the battle, it's excellent. Obviously, a broader book will provide context, but this is worth the couple of hours to nip through. A concise narrative, clear maps and full color pictures of the various combatants combine to make this a good introductory book on Waterloo. It doesn't tell you everything or give you much idea of the many debates that continue today, but all ages can enjoy this smart volume. English language works on Waterloo have, in the past, focused on the Allied army. Field has dived into the French sources to look at the other side of the battle, and argues for conclusions at odds with other writers. It is a worthwhile second volume to read. Uniforms of Waterloo is a superb achievement, cramming in a formidable level of detail and art for the low price. Using 60 full color plates, a few line drawings and over 60 pages of text, the authors and illustrators describe and explain the dress, uniforms, weapons and appearance of Waterloo's combatants. This is a well-written and measured account of the whole hundred days by one of the world's leading military experts on Napoleon, David Chandler. You may not agree with his conclusions, but he does outline the key areas of debate, and a selection of excellent maps and black and white pictures round out a good narrative which is slightly more than an introduction. Combining acute and detailed analyses with a multi-lingual examination of often overlooked sources, Hofschroer's two-part account of the 'Waterloo Campaign' is profoundly revisionist and has upset more than a few traditionalists. Volume One covers the earlier events. Part 2 of Hofschroer's monumental study is considered to be slightly weaker than the first, because of a misjudged balancing of sources; however, as most accounts contain an over-reliance on French and English documents, the focus on Prussian material is welcome. If you've read a lot on the battle you owe it to yourself to enjoy this exuberant tale: how the news of the battle was taken to London in a time before phones and telegraphs. It's the sort of fun history, filled with little details, that can convert people. The title explains why this is an interesting book: 'Voices from the Battlefield'. Kershaw has mined down to the first person accounts we have available and has filled it, with hour by hour coverage, with interesting vignettes. There's some analysis from the author. Regarded by some as a classic and informative text, and by others as an exciting, but flawed, account which accepts too many myths, Weller's book has divided opinion. As such, I would not advise this to a beginner in the subject (the volume is also too detailed to be an introduction), but I recommend it to everyone else as one component of a large historical debate.

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