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## Didn't Get Frazzled

**David Z. Hirsch**
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Didn't Get Frazzled *is by turns sardonic, touching, raucous, sexy, and sometimes downright gross. It's also hugely entertaining.*

Who knew that going to medical school was so funny? David Z. Hirsch's *Didn't Get Frazzled* spins an episodic tale of four years in the life of Seth Levine, a future doctor in a New York City medical school. With a deadpan delivery and a marvelous sense of the ridiculous, Hirsch turns even the bleakest and most grotesque aspects of his snarky protagonist's training into comic fodder.

A cocky anatomy student bets that he will eat any part of a cadaver that he cannot name; a gynecological examination training session goes embarrassingly awry; and hapless interns, overenthusiastic gastroenterologists, and blasé pathologists encounter every sticky, slimy, and smelly substance a human body can emit. Squeamish readers should be warned that some parts of the story are scatological in the most literal sense.

Outside of the hospital, Seth and his cohort struggle to reconcile the round-the-clock stresses of medical training with their need for personal relationships and interior lives. Long-term relationships fail in agonizing slow motion; lonely survivors pine for idealized lost loves, rage inwardly against romantic rivals, and pursue forgetfulness in casual sexual hookups while tentatively dreaming of something better. The sensitivity and understanding found in these paralleling story arcs are a pleasing contrast to the hard-shelled attitude that Seth and his compatriots display in the hospital.

Amid the black humor, the misbegotten hookups, and the farcical mishaps, Seth's encounters with patients who desperately need his help suggest that despite all his surface sarcasm and cynicism, he is, indeed, learning to be a sympathetic and humane healer. The episodes in which Seth comes to understand a patient's true needs better than the presiding physician does, simply because he takes the time to observe and communicate with the human being in the hospital bed rather than simply glancing at a chart and checking a box, are a reminder that this kind of human contact is desperately needed in our health care system. One hopes that in their future careers, Seth and his real-life counterparts in medical school will remember the need for such human contact and communication when the pressures of their profession start to push them toward the kind of impersonal, dismissive treatment of patients that Seth observes (and Hirsch implicitly criticizes) among some established physicians.

David Z. Hirsch is a pseudonym. Although he swears that the story is fiction, readers may be pardoned for suspecting that many of the events in the story have some basis in reality, either in his own training or that of an acquaintance. Reminiscent of a cross between the television sitcom *Scrubs* and a medical version of *One L* by Scott Turow, *Didn't Get Frazzled* is by turns sardonic, touching, raucous, sexy, and sometimes downright gross. It's also hugely entertaining.

BRADLEY A. SCOTT (July 27, 2016)

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