

Do We Not Bleed?

Daniel Taylor

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This is a lively and thoughtful hybrid of detective story and psychological literary fiction.

Daniel Taylor's *Do We Not Bleed?* is presented as a detective story, but that's only half of its appeal. This is a witty and thoughtful story about an accidental detective whose first and greatest problem is solving the mystery of his own troubled and troublesome humanity.

Jon has taken a new job as a life-skills counselor in the group home where his cheerfully optimistic but mentally challenged sister, Judy, lives. Jon himself wrestles internally with his parlous relationship to the world and to a god in whom he no longer believes.

Judy's sunny faith offers a counterpoint to Jon's painful rejection of his religious upbringing. Jon may be more outwardly capable of dealing with the world, but who is really happier and more stable? The other people in Jon's charge are an entertainingly motley crew, drawn with lively humanity.

Jon's distinctive voice is a pleasure throughout, as he questions everything from corporate proceduralism to religious orthodoxy and, inevitably, his own sense of normality.

No detective novel is complete without a crime, of course. About a third of the way into the novel, a girl is found murdered, and one of Jon's charges is accused of the crime, forcing him once again into the role of reluctant amateur investigator. The evidence is damning, but the accusation is completely contrary to Jon's knowledge of the accused—a gentle, vague man unable to tell time and eager to please everyone. Jon's efforts to discover the truth will require him not only to act on his own, but to understand and trust unlikely sources of help.

Reminiscent of Walker Percy, *Do We Not Bleed?* is a lively and thoughtful hybrid of detective story and psychological literary fiction.

BRADLEY A. SCOTT (March/April 2017)

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