

The Professor and the Suicide Girl

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The novel offers doses of thrills, intrigue, oddball characters, and a splash of romance for those who like their fiction weird.

An ironic moment of serendipity brings two strange people together in *The Professor and the Suicide Girl*, beginning a surrealist thriller that's more a humorous love story than it is a suspense novel.

The professor, whose latest virology research was stolen and published by a colleague, meets the "suicide girl," a dancer who is not at all suicidal, on the beach one night. Both believe that they've saved the other from drowning, and so they open up about their respective searches for meaning.

This odd encounter launches them on a dangerous quest to create the most deadly virus imaginable. It's not a journey with a distinct spiritual or physical goal of any kind, but one they begin just because. What better reason is there?

The characters appear to be based on tropes at the start of the story, but as their personalities develop and their true intellects become more apparent, the plot comes together. The sullen professor and the young woman soon bond over their obsession with a religious text and develop a uniquely strong relationship. The unlikely pair learn invaluable lessons from each other about the limits of a single human mind and the power of knowledge.

The metaphysical conversations between the characters have the potential to go awry, but they are perfectly balanced with a suspenseful plot; the philosophizing instead adds contemplative depth to the thriller-like story line. Biological warfare and a vengeful nemesis provide the fast pace and excitement, while the intersections of academic disciplines brings a twist to the otherwise simple premise.

And there are more twists than just that. Some scenes and lines of dialogue are nothing short of hilarious. Bring a dark sense of humor to the reading, and *The Professor and the Suicide Girl* offers a little dose of everything to those who like their fiction weird: thrills, intrigue, oddball characters, and a splash of romance. This philosophical romp proves that love trumps even a thirst for knowledge.

AIMEE JODOIN (July/August 2017)

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