



You Might Feel a Little Prick

Reuben Leder

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You Might Feel a Little Prick is a suspenseful medical thriller that incorporates dark humor into its peek behind the surgery room curtain.

In Reuben Leder's satirical thriller *You Might Feel a Little Prick*, lovers and friends avoid arrest while fighting the medical corruption that has turned their lives upside down.

Nick and Julie were high school sweethearts leading a normal life. Both worked for EZ Care until they landed on the dark side of the health conglomerate's practices. After suffering a suspicious back injury at the hands of his own boss, Nick is subject to a variety of medications and surgeries in what he is told is an attempt to fix him, but the tortuous and ineffective procedures are really lining the pockets of his employer.

When Julie suffers the devastating losses of a patient, her job, and her health, the duo opts for revenge over recovery. A series of practically accidental mishaps wreak havoc on those responsible for their pain. But as they test the boundaries of justice, Nick and Julie don't count on an old-time detective making theirs his last case; he follows the bodies right to them, and shares duties narrating the story.

Nick and Julie's stable, communicative relationship helps to temper the bizarre situations they face as they work to fix Nick's surgery nightmares. Nick's runaround with medical interventions, though filled with absurdist humor, highlights the pain and difficulty of chronic conditions; the pharmaceutical experimentation has side effects, and he faces the threat of overwhelming medical debt.

Meanwhile, Julie's internship is ruined by a spiteful supervisor; her tense dynamic with him speaks to field sexism. Here and elsewhere, the book is accessible and knowledgeable when it comes to covering medical procedures and lingo. Many passages are complemented by footnotes—some of which are comedic, and others of which lend credibility to incredible situations by providing information on real studies and cases.

The secondary cast features evil doctors and a misfit group of homeless youth living in a hospital basement. The doctors function as representations of medical arrogance and greed—especially Nick and Julie's boss, who is cruel, callous, and wealthy from exploiting his employees and sick patients. Meanwhile, Nick and Julie's young, basement-dwelling friends help when it comes to bridging differing aspects of the story, though they are individually disconnected from much of the plot. Unpredictable twists move the often preposterous narrative toward its cohesive conclusion, which leaves ethical questions in its wake.

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DELIA STANLEY (March 5, 2021)

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