

BOOK REVIEW

Hospital! A Medical Satire of Unhealthy Proportions

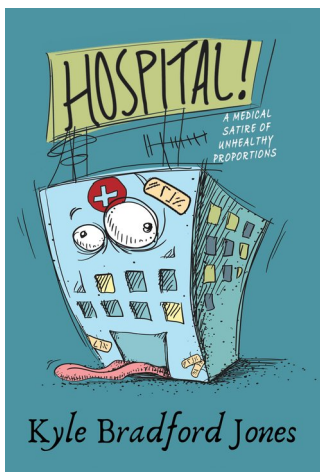
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**Book Title:** Hospital! A Medical Satire of Unhealthy Proportions**Author:** Kyle Bradford Jones, MD, FFAFP**Publication Details:** Black Rose Writing, 2022, 127 pp., \$17.95, paperback

Not surprisingly, most medical shows and movies take place in hospitals. Hospitals are indeed distinctive environments. These institutions are hundreds of years old and can be associated with great suffering and death. At the same time, they are workaday for many, congregate people of different backgrounds and professions, and provide unusual encounters.

Hospital! A Medical Satire of Unhealthy Proportions, written by family physician Kyle Bradford Jones and narrated in an *Arrested Development* style, is an absurdist comedy novella about an extremely unpleasant doctor who works at a hospital. Readers follow the doctor, who has no positive attributes, as he manages to offend every character he encounters and is finally obliged to face the (rather soft) consequences of his actions.

The nonsensical approach allows the story to get away with some inconsistencies. For example, readers are told that the protagonist is such a terrible physician and awful human being that he would never be hired; “He simply kept showing up after his residency ended” (p. 3). But the main disparity of the narrative is that the doctor is causing the hospital to lose money and must be suspended until he fixes his behavior. So, was he hired by the hospital? And why can he not be fired? The author gives a vague, unconvincing explanation: “The CEO couldn’t go that far without the Board’s approval, but given the number of infractions against him, it wouldn’t be that hard” (p. 47).

The book is quick paced with mostly light humor that sometimes manages to sting a bit. For example, included are stereotypical hospital habits such as making rare diagnoses (“This lady has pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoniosis.” “She didn’t.” [p. 9]) and having a business-driven structure (“The CEO decided that more business would come if the hospital grounds were a bit more beautiful. A nice flower garden outside the windows of the patient’s [sic] rooms is what would lead to better business, er, patient care” [p. 76]). The narrator mocks the band Nickelback, ventriloquists, and the name Blaine. Nonetheless, for a book that calls itself a “medical satire,” it lacks criticism of the health care world and the peculiarities of the nosocomial environment. With a family physician as author, more moments like this would be very welcome: “It didn’t matter that Camus was a hospitalist. Anyone can do outpatient medicine, right? Right?! (The answer is no.)” (p. 83).

Fit to an audience broader than health care workers, *Hospital!* is a good pick for anyone looking for a fun, quick distraction.