

# Reader Views

Book reviews, for readers, by readers.

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## *Straightjacket*

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BookSurge (2006)

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Reviewed by Joanne Benham for Reader Views (5/06)

When Dr. Joe Grady refused to write a prescription for painkilling drugs for Trick Edwards, Mr. Edwards called the hospital administrator and threatened to go to the media. Joe is called on the carpet to explain why he denied care to a patient, especially one who threatened to jeopardize funding on the fifty-million dollar expansion planned for Detroit General Hospital. Displeased with Joe's reasoning, the administrator decides to punish him by making him complete his residency in 30 days. In order to reach that goal, Joe must complete ten major cases during that time. So the race is on.

As Joe struggles to find, and finish, his ten cases, he is also engaged in other struggles. One of them is to persuade Linda to marry him, even though her mother, a whacked-out loon with Mob connections, threatens to have him offed if he doesn't stay away from her daughter. Another is discovering the reason for a patient's mysterious death. Is it linked to another death in the hospital, which could mean they have a serial killer loose? His biggest struggle is with the hospital administration as they ruthlessly slash costs, firing nurses and technicians and replacing them with poorly trained and under-supervised drones, who will work for much less money.

I truly enjoyed this book. The characters are well-developed, the dialog is crisp and not too crowded with doctor-speak. I can't even remember how many times I found myself laughing out loud, especially when reading about Linda's mother, truly the mother-in-law from hell. There is also an underlying message in this book, as it details just what happens when hospitals start worrying more about the financial bottom line than their patients.

I highly recommend this book.