

DAMAGED HEART: A MEDICAL TALE

WILLIAM S. FRANKL, INFINITY PUBLISHING.COM, Haverford, PA, \$13.95, paperback, (156p)

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William S. Frankl's "Damaged Heart: A Medical Tale" focuses on the protagonist Charles W. Gates, III, M.D., a brilliant cardiologist who believes in upholding the principles of Hippocratic oath, even at the cost of professional advancement and personal family life. This book recounts the details of a day in his busy life. Reporter Ed Clark is assigned a human-interest story on doctors and Healthcare Maintenance Organizations (HMOs), and their apparent responsibility for patient suffering. Ed has the opportunity to spend one day with the famous physician at the hospital and frankly discuss various issues relating to healthcare and hospital practices.

Though Charles strives to get the best care for his patients, several constraints, including the bureaucratic hassles of HMOs, insurance companies, hospital managers, and inappropriate official policies affect his honest efforts to save lives. Ed is shocked by Charles' disclosure that lack of dedication and interest by poorly trained medical personnel, malpractice suits, and cost reduction policies result in patients being denied proper diagnosis and care.

This book makes a break from the conventional narrative style by detailing the events in a single day of the protagonist's life in order to reveal his entire life. During the course of his day, Charles loses two of his patients whom he had previously referred for surgery. They die because Charles' fellow surgeons are careless. However, Charles continues to put up a tough fight to protect the interest of his patients; but Charles must still contend with the corrupt members of the medical fraternity, headed by University Vice President Jose Quinones, Chairman of Medicine Ed Lang, and his partner Ivan Galunchuk. Will he be able to overcome the board's vested interests? Can this doctor, who is trying to help patients, ultimately prevail over the many forces working against him? Or will he succumb to the corruption?

Through Charles, Frankl gives the reader a chance to look into the little-known world of hospitals and doctors. Drawing on his own experiences as a doctor, he portrays the immaculate world of operating theaters as well as hospital boardroom politics, making this book a thrilling read and real eye-opener.

BookWire Review
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