
John A. Eleftheriades

Transplant

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An ageless paradox in medicine allows society to define boundaries for physicians and scientists while quietly encouraging them to push the limits of technology and avant-garde therapies. In *Transplant*, John Eleftheriades unravels the seemingly ethereal world of heart transplantation down to its lucid core of competing forces: empathy and self-preservation; denial and acceptance; fortitude and desperation; life and death.

The reader experiences these complexities through the eyes of Dr. Athan Carras, an eminent cardiac surgeon charged with reconciling the moral dichotomies that surround transplantation every day. But if you anticipate a predictable, colorless account of medical ethics, think again. *Transplant* is a textured and provocative thriller that examines every dimension of the surgeon's ethos, encompassing his personal relationships, professional responsibilities, unspoken passions and palpable temptations. We may convince ourselves that physicians disengage from their private lives to maintain objectivity in medicine, but this novel illustrates the reality that personal experiences are inextricably intertwined with professional conduct.

In that context, Dr. Eleftheriades invites us inside the world of a cardiac surgeon, which could only be believable when constructed by someone who stops and starts the heart of a patient

each day, balancing a life in his hands to attempt to improve or prolong it. What happens when this noble commitment is targeted by the seduction of power and privilege? It allows the author to weave a seamless tale that begins inside Operating Room 15 in New Haven, Connecticut, and ends off the southern coast of the United States in international waters.

Although the main character believes that his a priori concern has always been the welfare of his patients, he is rapidly confronted with a vortex of personal conflicts and ethical dilemmas that would threaten any moral foundation. It is a superb creation of medical fiction that offers a thus far unprecedented clinical scenario, yet it is an entirely plausible one that medical professionals could encounter any day.

You may find that you choose to pace yourself throughout this book to savor the dulcet prose and to digest the compelling plot, and you will have to accept the disappointment that is obliged when the author shifts to a parallel storyline with you fully entangled in the grips of the current one. Dr. Eleftheriades offers just enough suspense with each passage to keep the pages turning and the pace quickening until you arrive at the climactic conclusion; this is where power and vulnerability, protagonist and antagonist, survival and defeat will become decidedly less distinguishable. When you find yourself here, you will realize that your definition and interpretation of *Primum, non nocere* (First, do no harm) has abruptly been turned upside down. And, in fact, this is just where the author wants you to be.

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