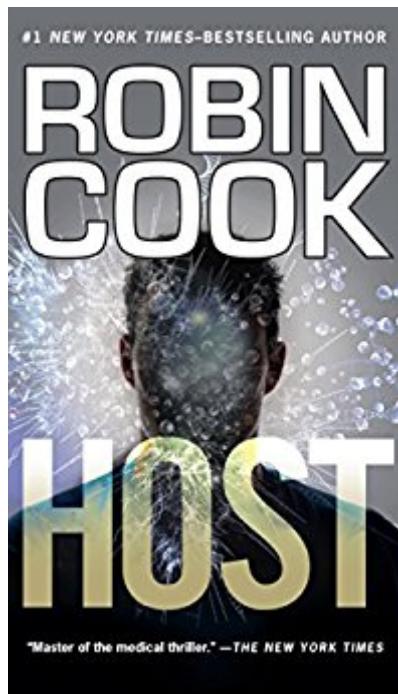


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Host



Synopsis

The explosive new thriller from *A New York Times* bestselling author and master of the medical thriller, Robin Cook. Lynn Peirce, a fourth-year medical student at South Carolina's Mason-Dixon University, thinks she has her life figured out. But when her otherwise healthy boyfriend, Carl, enters the hospital for routine surgery, her neatly ordered life is thrown into total chaos. Carl fails to return to consciousness after the procedure, and an MRI confirms brain death. Devastated by Carl's condition, Lynn searches for answers. Convinced there's more to the story than what the authorities are willing to reveal, Lynn uses all her resources at Mason-Dixon—including her initially reluctant lab partner, Michael Pender—to hunt down evidence of medical error or malpractice. What she uncovers, however, is far more disturbing. Hospitals associated with Middleton Healthcare, including the Mason-Dixon Medical Center, have unnervingly high rates of unexplained anesthetic complications and patients contracting serious and terminal illness in the wake of routine hospital admissions. When Lynn and Michael begin to receive death threats, they know they're into something bigger than either of them anticipated. They soon enter a desperate race against time for answers before shadowy forces behind Middleton Healthcare and their partner, Sidereal Pharmaceuticals, can put a stop to their efforts once and for all. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Well I have enjoyed many Robin Cook novels in the past, I found this one a little too formulaic and a little too reminiscent of previous work. Unfortunately I could guess the outcome by about a third of the way in the book. I also found that the main female character's lack of involvement with the parents and decision-making in a partner to whom she was nearly engaged somewhat unbelievable. Her rather unemotional response to who your partner's death and the idea that she had to be stoic because of her role as a medical student was really just plain ridiculous. I suppose in this particular genre it is difficult after time to keep up something new and fresh. Unfortunately new and fresh are not the words that I would use to describe the last few Cook novels I have read.

This is a very poorly written book disguised as a medical thriller but with a premise and outcome that is obvious within the first few chapters. The conversation is stilted and in genuine; Cook often tries to explain certain aspects of medicine in a way that would otherwise be a paragraph in a Reader's Digest but instead implausibly flows out of people's mouths. Adding to the triteness of this book is the fact that one of the victims is the lover of one of the protagonists; but the protagonist hides that relationship from everyone for what would truly be no reason. She sneaks into the intensive care unit to see him because Cook ridiculously asserts she would be denied visiting privileges because she is not immediate family. While I did finish the book, I honestly have no idea why I did so. It truly was a waste of time.

I have generally liked Robin Cook's novels. This one...no. I left off at 62%. And, as I paid for the book, I hardly ever do this. The main character Lynne is sophomore. Did Cook really expect me to believe that she has almost graduated from medical school? That it doesn't occur to her to contact Carl's parents? That Russians are the bad guys? That Michael, her friend sidekick would not only follow her lead, that could get him kicked out of medical school, but possibly thrown in jail as well? I've read here that some believe the novel is a "softer" rewrite of his great novel, Coma. It's not even close. Do not buy this book. Buy Coma if you have not read it.

"The explosive new thriller from New York Times' best-selling author and master of the medical thriller, Robin Cook." -- is in bold on the amazon.com page for this book. Explosive? Thriller? It really isn't either. It seems that I have read this story before. As they say, the names and places have been changed, but the story is the same. The book is okay. That is the best that can be said for it. Cook made a big thing about stereotypical black male/white female. Why? He tossed in a lot bad Russians as well, who are intent on making trillions while using their thugs to take care of problems. The medical parts ... okay. The occasional diatribe on big pharma ... to be expected. It was a good book to read at bed time. A sleeper it was, most of the time. I am going in for surgery next week. When I first started reading the book, I thought "Do I really want to read this?" I read it and it was nearly as good as the anesthesia I will get. Maybe I should bring the book and save the cost of an anesthetist.

It's been many years since I've read a Robin Cook book. While I do appreciate them, and give him full props for pretty much starting the Medical Thriller genre with books like Coma, I got just a bit tired of the formula. Having read Host, I may go back and see what Robin Cook books I've missed. The medical thriller portion of the book was intriguing and suspenseful and the action is great. (Note: the formula is still there. This really is very much like Coma.) But you'll notice I gave this two stars. There was one major distraction. I liked the characters, but I loved Michael. He's handsome, smart, funny, and a good friend. And black. Michael is black. Normally, that isn't something I would tell you about a character. Unless it's central to the plot, his race isn't important. It's like hair color or eye color - just description. But I know Michael is black because the author reminds us every time Michael is in a scene. Michael knows poverty. He's black. He can speak intelligently or like he's from 'the hood'. He's black. He can yell 'Mothaf____' at all the right moments (because top of their class medical students totally do this). He's black. He knows what people are thinking about him when he talks to his best friend, who's a southern white woman. Because he's black. And he can charm Russians because Russians love black people and, in case you haven't figured it out, Michael? He's black. I was 60% through the book and I didn't really know much about our medical mystery, but you know what I did know? Michael...was black. Now if only his being black HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE STORY. The thing is that Robin Cook is a good guy. You can tell from his descriptions of Michael that Cook thinks racism is idiotic. He loves his own character and Michael is a really good one. But there was so much emphasis on his race that, instead of worrying over the characters and the dangerous people they were encountering, I was just racing to see how Cook would emphasize Michael's blackness in the next chapter. I'll accept that maybe it's just me, but SPOILER ALERT!!!!

Michael...is black.

Cook uses the same formula in each book, but his fans don't mind, and, in fact, may look forward to it. Lots of medical terminology, bad dudes doing bad deeds, and women in peril, but he does shed light on the dark side of the medical industry. There is a ton of money to be made, leading to great temptations to cast aside the warning, "first, do no harm." Some of the action in this book seems quite far-fetched, but it's fiction, and a thriller, after all.

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