



Beat the Reaper: A Novel (Package May Vary)

By Josh Bazell

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Dr. Peter Brown is an intern at Manhattan's worst hospital, with a talent for medicine, a shift from hell, and a past he'd prefer to keep hidden. Whether it's a blocked circumflex artery or a plan to land a massive malpractice suit, he knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men.

Pietro "Bearclaw" Brwna is a hitman for the mob, with a genius for violence, a well-earned fear of sharks, and an overly close relationship with the Federal Witness Relocation Program. More likely to leave a trail of dead gangsters than a molecule of evidence, he's the last person you want to see in your hospital room.

Nicholas LoBrutto, aka Eddy Squillante, is Dr. Brown's new patient, with three months to live and a very strange idea: that Peter Brown and Pietro Brwna might-just might-be the same person ...

Now, with the mob, the government, and death itself descending on the hospital, Peter has to buy time and do whatever it takes to keep his patients, himself, and his last shot at redemption alive. To get through the next eight hours-and somehow beat the reaper.

Spattered in adrenaline-fueled action and bone-saw-sharp dialogue, BEAT THE REAPER is a debut thriller so utterly original you won't be able to guess what happens next, and so shockingly entertaining you won't be able to put it down.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Making a hit man turned medical intern a sympathetic figure would be a tall order for most authors, but first-time novelist Bazell makes it look easy in this breezy and darkly comic suspense novel. The Locanos, a mob family, take in 14-year-old Pietro Brwna (pronounced Browna) after a couple of thugs gun down the grandparents who raised him in their New Jersey home. Bent on revenge, Pietro pursues the killers and executes them a year later. Impressed by Pietros performance, David Locano recruits Pietro as a hit man. After more traumas, Pietro tries to make a break from his past by entering the witness protection program. Now known as Peter Brown, he eventually lands a position as a doctor at a decrepit Manhattan hospital, where by chance a former Mafia associate turns up as a patient and threatens to rat him out. The hero's wry narrative voice, coupled with Bazells artful use of flashbacks to sustain tension and fill in Pietro's past, are a winning combination. (*Jan.*)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Beat the Reaper, a criminal and medical thriller, received praise across the board. Written in a tough pulp-fiction style, this debut, with "enough male fantasy packed into these pages to temporarily relieve the worst case of mid-life crisis," noted the *Washington Post*, won't fail to entertain. But despite its quirkiness and brutality, it contains surprisingly thoughtful scenes. *Beat the Reaper* also addresses real—and serious—issues that both doctors and hospitals face. A few critics commented on the ludicrous love scenes and disagreed over whether the footnotes added value, but all commented on the ending (imagine a locked medical freezer—we won't say more). But since this is the first novel in a planned series, we're pretty sure the adored protagonist survives.

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From [Booklist](#)

Who would have thought that extreme violence liberally sprinkled with obscenities could be both funny and tender? That's the case with this first-person story of Dr. Peter Brown, a successful Mafia hit man as a teenager who enters witness protection and turns to medicine. After the grandparents who raised him are murdered when he's 14, Brown is virtually adopted by the family of his best friend, Adam Locano, and his desire for revenge is channeled by Adam's father into killing by contract. A falling-out with the Locanos, after Peter throws Adam out a sixth floor window (for ample reason), leads to his new life. But when he runs into a patient from his old world at the Manhattan hospital where he's now an intern, it appears his own death warrant may have been signed. First-novelist and medical resident Bazell appears to have had as much fun writing this fast-paced, absorbing entertainment (complete with romantic subplot) as many will reading it. A remarkably accomplished debut. --Michele Leber

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jerry Petrus:

The knowledge that you get from *Beat the Reaper: A Novel (Package May Vary)* will be the more deep you looking the information that hide in the words the more you get serious about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to be aware of but *Beat the Reaper: A Novel (Package May Vary)* giving you joy feeling of

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