



# **Prescription for Disaster: The funny side of falling apart**

*Candace Lafleur*

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## **Prescription for Disaster: The funny side of falling apart** Candace Lafleur

This is not a book about a disease itself, nor does it have any 'woe is me' or forced epiphanies on the meaning of life and health. It's a book about sobbing student nurses wielding sharp needles, falling hospital elevators, having to be surgically removed from your own sweater for an x-ray and support group brawls. About getting my whole family pulled off into a cement bunker at British customs for being more radioactive than a truck full of Russian nails. It's about sneaking nachos into the hospital at seven in the morning and making sweet, sweet love to the back of a parked taxi while having a stroke. This is a book about laughing and joyfully embracing the bizarre and the truly funny side of being ridiculously incurably diseased.

So sit back, take a hit of your oxygen tank and get ready to laugh at the funny side of falling apart.

At the very least you'll never look at a bed pan or an IV pole the same way again.

## **Prescription for Disaster: The funny side of falling apart Details**

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## **Betty says**

Whether or not you deal with illness, you will find this a thoroughly entertaining and inspiring read. It's not often I read a book and laugh out loud; with this book I found myself laughing out loud over and over.

We all have struggles in our life. A good way to deal with them is to remember to keep our sense of humor. This book will show you how to do just that. Candace is a master story teller, and you can picture yourself right there with her as she makes her way through her challenges with always an eye for the hysterical.

I highly recommend this book, especially if you or anyone you know has ever had to deal with pain or illness.

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## **Gisela Hausmann says**

'Prescription for Disaster' with subtitle 'The funny side of falling apart' is foremost a moving book; it is a book which should remind us, what our life's purpose is and that we need to enjoy whatever that is. Unexpectedly, the author, Candace Lafleur falls ill and eventually finds out that she has Sarcoidosis,

"an inflammatory diseases that can affect almost any organ in the body. It causes heightened immunity, which means that a person's immune system, which normally protects the body from infection and disease, overreacts, resulting in damage to the body's own tissues."

No, neither have I ever heard of this disease.

I would wish and hope that this book is being sold in every hospital's shop because it is an eye opener. Even though normally I hate hearing about illnesses and hospitals, I found this book riveting. Candace tells of the enormous journey to even find out what's wrong with her; this disease is not like an inflamed appendix or a broken bone. She is getting admitted into the hospital, and suddenly her life revolves around tests, procedures, nurses, and other patients. Eventually, she also has a rare type of stroke (again a type of stroke nobody has ever heard of). Her eyes are affected, she cannot read or watch TV, she is in a way like a leaf floating on a brook, which becomes a river, and then a stream, and all she can do is, try to see what's out there and see it in the best light. And, that she does.

While others

"... responded to me with sympathy or sadness. Trying to be reassuring. Saying meaningless phrases like "you'll pull through this" or "at least it's not \_\_\_\_". My own mother whipped out a couple of doozies like "Do you have any ideas how this is affecting ME?"

Candace learns to see things differently very quickly. Her humor is breathtakingly beautiful.

"... I am not sure if I should take that as a compliment or not but it is a bit strange to have a degree of disease so rare and interesting that it changes the career path of your A & E doctor..."

And, then there is the human side mixed with HUMOR. Candace describes her difficulties of being wheeled in and out hospital rooms and labs, has a prisoner next door, disgusting patients elsewhere, there is also a failing elevator, chemo therapy, and a heart-scan heart throb... and so much more. Candace never gives up on looking at the funny side of things and that's why her book is humorous even though having this terrible disease is immensely tragic.

While this book is probably not for everyone, it is or should be for everyone, who is in a hospital, has a relative or friend in the hospital, and everybody, who wants to become a better person without volunteering at a hospital. Reading 'Prescription for Disaster' will give everybody a better perspective on life and that we have to see the fun moments in every event because living tragedy is not an option.

Candace, make a deal with the chain which supplies hospital book stores. They will want this book! 5 stars.

Gisela Hausmann, author & blogger

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## **Nelia says**

I'll start with a Facebook post I wrote while I was reading this book -

"That moment when you are reading Candace's book and you are thinking, "I really have to pee." But then you see the next section is titled "The Bed Pan Incident" and your brain literally goes, "Oh goddamn it, now I have to wait" as if you actually have no choice in the matter."

Candace of the sort of person to whom things happen. I won't spoil it, but she starts the book with a story from her camp counselor days. It is the kind of insane story that most people would live off at cocktail parties for the rest of their lives. Not Candace, this story is only one of many bizarre and hilariously worrying experiences she recounts in her book.

Not everything about Candace's book is funny. Her disease, her love for her family, and her unbelievably resiliency create a poignant picture of a woman who has had more than anyone's fair share placed on her plate. However, I'm not going to use the phrase "it will make you laugh AND cry" because that is a cliché that I find supremely annoying. So there.

I will say that in addition to making me laugh and providing me with an armful of stories that I will be sharing at cocktail parties (if I ever go to one), Candace's book gave me an insight into what it is like to be chronically ill that I did not have before. While I can't pretend to truly understand what she and others like her have gone through, her tales will engage your empathy as well as your sympathy.

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## **Tuppence says**

Candace's largely autobiographical book gave me both chills and thrills as it had me bouncing from cringing at needles (I admit I am squeamish) to laughing until I had tears. She has such a knack of making ordinary events extraordinary, not to mention probably the worst luck on the face of the earth.

One thing I really liked was the book stepped beyond her illness. It wasn't about just her being sick, but the people around her as well: her family, her medical professionals, complete and random strangers, and how they directly affect and influence her life. We get to see the world through her eyes as she goes about living with this wretched disease (I admit I googled it. Holy crap Sarc is nasty). But that is the thing- she is living, getting on with her bad self, and she is not the guest of honor at a pity party. Trust me, she has done quite a

bit of living- for better and for worse- between the front and back cover of this book.

Her writing style and humor are bawdy, raw, yet still manages to stay this side of offensive. I wouldn't be ashamed to hand this book to my grandmother. And she wears pearls. For the record, I haven't laughed at poop jokes since I was 12 years old. Candace takes you on a journey (literally) through poop hell and to date it is one of the small handful of times that had me howling and nodding my head at unfortunate bowel movements. It wasn't a cheap laugh by any stretch of the imagination, but something any of us could have lived through. I think that is probably the key to this book: any of us could have had these antics happen at some point in our lives. She writes her adventures in a way that is identifiable even if you aren't sick. You don't have to "be it" to "get it."

The book is written more like a personal journal or collection of short stories (it reminds me of that one person at a cocktail party with the huge crowd around them with the frequent uproar of laughter). You could pick it up and put it down frequently making it ideal to read on your commute. Or in a waiting room. Or during softball games while your kid is stuck on the bench.

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## **K.T. says**

Where do I start? There are so many funny anecdotes in which I can see myself inserted into Candace's life and re-enacting her spectacular gaffs. I think that is the secret of the book - we can all laugh because we all did it, only perhaps didn't find it quite so funny at the time but now see that we missed an opportunity to celebrate life instead of complaining. What parent hasn't had the vomiting child with the carrier bag which considerably contains holes so they don't suffocate? And I remember one long-anticipated holiday at Centre Parc during which one of my children rode their bicycle off the beaten track and into the undergrowth - loudly. We've done food-poisoning and I've face planted in the street and I would relish the opportunity to sit with Candace in a hospital waiting room and see life through her eyes because right now with my own medical condition - it's all doom and gloom and I can't see the kind of crazy that I know she would find.

There were times in this book in which I laughed until I hurt, wailing and crying loudly in public places and especially when it was wholly inappropriate. Then the next moment, the writer would have unexpectedly touched something very raw and tender, that I didn't see coming and I would be crying real tears and marvelling that someone else in the world understood how I felt. When Candace writes about her angst at paying privately to see a doctor she could have waited months to see on the public system - I get that. I've done it, with exactly the same qualms, inner wrangling and tears over those who can't wave a credit card in the hope of being fixed. I've been surprised and I've been disappointed - really disappointed. I've been prioritised and then forgotten. I've contemplated hunger strikes and media intervention and I've wanted to make the system feel ashamed, but never managed any of it. Tomorrow I'm going for an MRI by myself. I don't know why because I'm not privy to those decisions about my care, or what will happen whilst I'm there, but like Candace, I approach any procedure with hope and anticipation and a sealed tin of 'realism' that I won't open unless I really have to.

I loved this book. It's for anyone stuck in the health system, travelling round and round on the rollercoaster they didn't want to be on, but can't seem to find the exit for. It's for those who've lost hope and those who haven't quite - yet. Prescription for Disaster is the place for a good laugh, a jolly good cry and then another laugh.

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## **Darren Worrow says**

As an avid reader and writer I often get asked what my favourite genre is and man, I hate that question. I don't want to put books into boxes (you can't read them if they're in a box now can you?) rather I favour to find books that are different, original and if possible, funny. This is not an easy task, so many clichés and banalities lie out there through influences and contemporary twists on the archaic narratives and what is more, bad senses of humour.

So to outline the design of Candace Lafleur's "Prescription for Disaster," one might be excused by thinking that this book sounds like the sad rants of a hypochondriac and far from the originality and good humoured read I was searching for but I can assure you now nothing could be further from the truth. Candace is the exact opposite of a hypochondriac, using humour as a mechanism to deal with the tribulations of her disease (a rare condition known as sarcoidosis) and the madcap mishaps of her Calamity Jane life.

So as we go on a real life journey with Candace in a kind of personal blog or secret diary fashion we take with us the feeling that she is not only one unfortunate individual but that she has taken heed of the words of Monty Python and looks always on the bright side of life. She sprinkles the fact and pain of her condition and the fact that a concoction of terrible events seem to happen to her with some very amusing anecdotes that will have you laughing through the tears.

With some peculiar touches such as the Americanisms set in England (Candace is a Canadian living in the UK) where pants meaning trousers I can accept but I had a hard time swallowing "downtown London!" this book is a real treasure of pragmatism, unabridged originality, sublimely funny and also very inspiring. So hats (and gowns) off to our brilliant but often higgledy-piggledy NHS for influencing some of this author's most prominently hilarious tales of sorrow and join with me in wishing Candace, who through this book, I feel like I know like a personal friend now, all the best of health and continued happiness.

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## **Heather Osborne says**

Danger! Do not read on trains!

Especially when there are people in the car with you! Also, do not read while stage managing a play that requires complete silence backstage.

I loved this book. Really, I say that with complete sincerity. As someone who has autoimmune antibodies (lupus) and a son with a congenital heart defect, I have plenty of experience with the NHS. I am so glad the author draws attention to an underappreciated system. I laughed, cried, and sat in awe. This is an amazing book for anyone suffering from chronic illness and struggling with finding something that works. I will recommend this book to everyone who needs to see that non-sick life really isn't that bad!

Kudos to the author for also keeping her job and raising twins. Damn. You have my respect!

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## **Meg says**

Although Lafleur's first book could certainly benefit from professional editing, there's no question that she writes with a unique voice and a fantastic sense of humor. At varying times inspiring, insightful, and informative, above all else her narratives make the reader laugh out loud and admire the strength it takes to find humor in some of life's most desperate situations.

I eagerly await her next collection and would love to see what she could produce with the help of a good editor.

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## **Teresa says**

Hilarious.

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## **Sharon Delarose says**

Having both a morbid fascination and a distrust of medical, I had to try this one out. We were forced to switch doctors when my husband changed employers, and when I downloaded my medical records, I was STUNNED to discover that they had erroneously "diagnosed" me with a man's worst nightmare of a diagnosis, except that I'm female and the diagnosis does not physically apply. So you can see my mindset upon entering this book wondering... what did the doctors do to Candace?

The oddest thing stood out to me — her absolute and utter fear of needles before being diagnosed with a disease that guarantees you to become a human pincushion for life. My husband was the same way, he couldn't even LOOK at a needle on TV, and then he was diagnosed with a genetic blood disorder where he has to have a phlebotomy (old fashioned blood letting) several times a year, for the rest of his life. I kid you not.

So I wonder... does the little voice inside somehow just know that needles are going to become a big part of your life, so the fear sets in early? I am hoping that my irrational fear of sharks won't be resolved in the same way.

Prescription for Disaster had me cracking up at one point, first a grin, then a snicker, then I busted out laughing. I won't tell you why and spoil the discovery. Oh geez, now she's got me laughing again. And again.

This book isn't funny, but it's HILARIOUS. How else do you describe watching a medical train-wreck as told by a woman with an innate sense of humor? It's heartbreaking sad, and yet it's slapstick comedy. I say "watch" rather than "read" because she made it easy to visualize, especially with the stroke and the eyeball incident, which wasn't at all what you'd expect.

Besides being a surprisingly fun read, Prescription for Disaster is also inspirational. It's amazing to watch the triumph of the human spirit against all odds.

Favorite quotes:

"The only difference between an ordeal and an adventure is Attitude."

"I had found... my people. And they were wonderful."

"Above all, keep smiling. Keep laughing. Keep living. Whatever condition you may have it may control you, it may change you, but it doesn't have to define you."

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### **Celia Kennedy says**

There are not enough good words in the universe to describe the wonderfulness of this book. Candace La Fleur takes us on a journey into her real life and reveals her greatest conflicts and conquests with so much humor and grace, you just shake your head. Then you keel over laughing.

I will be honest and say that this book took me longer than average to read, but only because I was either laughing so hard my side hurt, or I was crying because I had been touched incredibly or felt sorrow keenly. Ms. La Fleur shares her story of dealing with a rare and incurable, but non-fatal disease. The chronic pain and on-going challenges would have left me cowering in a corner - but not Candace La Fleur. She rises to the challenge beautifully and helps us all see her life not as one full of crisis, but one of opportunity to live life fully.

To top it all off, not only does Ms. La Fleur have a remarkable sense of humor and the emotional strength of a super hero, she writes extraordinarily well. Her work will definitely pull you in and have you feeling, not leave you on the surface, just reading.

My hat off to her on every level. I hope one day my path crosses with hers, I would very much love to meet her.

As the saying goes... If laughter is the best medicine... Candace can cure you of anything!

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### **Grace Sutherlin says**

Initially, I wanted to read this book because I have all sorts of unusual and strange disorders that have plagued me since age four when my parents almost lost me to Bacterial Meningitis. I survived Meningitis and then went on to develop Uveitis in only my right eye at age sixteen, Meniere's disease in only the left ear at age eighteen, Uveitic Glaucoma at age thirty-five, and I have some underlying autoimmune disease which my specialists at Duke have yet to identify, but I was tested for Sarcoidosis and my test results came back negative. Still, I really wanted to know what it was like to be diagnosed and treated for Sarcoidosis. This book definitely didn't let me down in that regard and it was told in a quite humorous manner, too.

So when I came across this book by Candace Lafleur who recounts her experiences being diagnosed with Sarcoidosis, I just had to read it as I have encountered some truly hilarious and horrifying medical experiences myself. After reading Prescription for Disaster: The funny side of falling apart, I definitely understood to a much better extent how to identify the symptoms of Sarcoidosis. And though Sarcoidosis is a serious disorder, Candace Lafleur has some of the most hysterical hospital and medical personnel stories that at times while reading this book, I had to take a moment and recover from laughing so hard at some of the



absurdities those of us with strange disorders often encounter. From hospital personnel not being able to locate Ms. Lafleur as a patient to being stopped by border patrol because the author's treatment left her emitting too much radiation and her husband trying to help her juggle her career, twins, and a carousel of medical crisis, this book kept me in stitches.

I have to say that having never been to Canada, England, or China as Ms. Lafleur has and relates in the book, there were some parts of the story where I had to look up a word or phrase she was using which translates to mean something quite different if you reside in the United States. Other than that though, I thought this book was quite well-done! Kudos!

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### **Leslie says**

Bravo!! As a human being and a chronic illness patient who also has sarc, this is brilliant. Hilarious. Exciting. Fun. What a journey, thank you! Leslie, Dallas, TX

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### **Anne Price says**

A book that brings some humour and understanding of sarcoidosis.

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### **Jamie says**

I loved this book and highly recommend it. My full review is available here:

<http://www.acrockofschmidt.com/2014/0...>

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