



The Cure for Modern Life

Lisa Tucker

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From Lisa Tucker, the critically acclaimed author of "Once Upon a Day" and "The Song Reader," comes an extraordinary novel about the way we live now: the choices we make and the decisions we let life make for us. Matthew and Amelia were once in love and planning to raise a family together, but a decade later, they have become professional enemies. To Amelia, who has dedicated her life to medical ethics, Matthew's job as a high-powered pharmaceutical executive has turned him into a heartless person who doesn't care about anything but money. Now they're kept in balance only by Matthew's best and oldest friend, Ben, a rising science superstar -- and Amelia's new boyfriend.

That balance begins to crumble one night when, coming home to his upscale Philadelphia loft, Matthew finds himself on a desolate bridge face-to-face with a boy screaming for help. Homeless for most of his life, ten-year-old Danny is as streetwise as he is world-weary, and his desperation to save his three-year-old sister means he will do whatever it takes to get Matthew's help. What follows is an escalating game of one-upmanship between Matthew, Amelia, and Danny, as all three players struggle to defend what is most important to them -- and are ultimately forced to reconsider what they truly want.

Dazzlingly written with a riveting story that will resonate with readers everywhere, Lisa Tucker's "The Cure for Modern Life" is a smart, humorous, big-hearted novel about what it means in the twenty-first century to be responsible, to care about other people, and to do the right thing.

The Cure for Modern Life Details

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From Reader Review The Cure for Modern Life for online ebook

Suesaroo says

Somewhat improbable but, still an enjoyable light listen

JoAnne Pulcino says

In this heartfelt and touching novel, a high-powered pharmaceutical executive who only cares about money finds his balance threatened when he encounters a homeless ten year old boy screaming for help. The boy and his three year old sister appear to be in dire straits. The boy, however, is a street-wise and world-weary child who will do whatever it takes to get the help he needs. Through the wiles of the young boy, the executive finds himself with two children on his hands. He then enlists the aid of his ex-girlfriend (who has dedicated her life to medical ethics), and his best friend (a rising science superstar) to help him resolve his unexpected situation. As the homeless children work their way into the hearts of these hard driving individuals, the three adults are forced to consider their life choices. They also discover new emotions and feelings which change them all. This is a compelling, modern relationship book that deals with serious social issues such as addiction, ethics, and genetics and also explores our shifting morality in the 21st century. It's also a tender tale of struggles with universal themes that masterly evolves into a smart, humorous, big hearted and wonderful book. It's a book for today's world and one that will touch your heart in a very special way.

Sharon says

This should really be one and a half stars, it's a bit better than "I didn't like it" but not really good enough to be in the "it was ok" star rating. It was okay - but only just! If this is the only thing left unread on your bookshelf then go ahead, but if the library is open then go there instead :)

Wendy says

Ugh. Predictable and trite.

Laura K says

I liked this book enough to finish it, but by the time I reached Chapter 10 I was marveling at how one book could have so many unlikable characters. At that point, the only one I could stand was the little girl Isabelle since she was the only one not openly scheming, lying and manipulating everyone. However, Danny and Matt did have underlying good qualities. Danny was doing what he had to, and doing it for the right reasons. It was obvious that Matt was only able to continue on his current path by denying his basic tender feelings and good-heartedness. But Amelia is a different story. What a controlling, obnoxious bitch. When she forced

her way into Matt's home on Thanksgiving, demanding answers, insisting that he rent the apartment to her and Ben, and locked herself in Danny's room in order to interrogate him, I lost any respect or feeling for her. That, plus the fact that she was a judgmental do-gooder who preached at everyone else while living on a trust fund. Why didn't either man have the balls to stand up to her? Not even her later troubles were enough to redeem her, and I was disappointed that she was going to get a second chance with Matt and the ability to be around Danny and Isabelle. Her character ruined the book for me.

Auntjenny says

I had high hopes for this book. At least, I hoped to enjoy this book, which initially seemed promising. For the first 100 pages. Then, it turned to crap.

You know a book is bad when characters can't seem to see the obvious. In this book, it started when the main character, Matthew, suddenly had the problem of desperately needing to pretend he was going to be a father. He simply couldn't figure out to solve this "sudden" problem, even though there just happened to be two young homeless children camped out in his apartment at the time. Of course, he didn't realize the homeless kids were still there, due to a series of unrealistic events that had transpired...and from there, the book continued its downward slide.

Furthermore, all the characters were annoying, mean, and just generally unlikeable (except for the children).

I felt like this book was grown organically, and not in a good way. The book was a mess, the plot was ridiculous, the characters unlikeable. Don't waste your time with this book!

treehugger says

This was a surprisingly good book - I'm arguing with myself about 3 vs 4 stars as I write this review...

It's about a brilliant but fairly callous guy that works for a Big Pharma drug manufacturer and collects up money and women, etc. etc. with the proceeds from his blockbuster pain medication. And here is where I was probably more interested than the general public, because, as a pharmacist, all of the drug companies seem pretty evil and out for money rather than the public good. So..this point of view was int-er-est-ing...

Queue his ex-girlfriend, the bioethicist, and all of her issues with Big Pharma, and you've got a great debate disguised as a beach read.

The homeless kids and the junkie mom add another layer of intrigue and really let us see 360 degrees around the 2 major characters, and how peoples' values can change, even without their own knowledge.

This is a great novel of redemption, hope, and who the hell makes all of our medicines! Worth it. I'm going with 4 stars.

Jessica says

Radnor Library was closed on Saturday and I am a little bit mad at them because I forgot to anticipate this and was stuck with very few options for reading material in my apartment...to the "Never Got Around to Reading Pile" we go and away we come with a bit of a turd.

Okay, maybe that's a bit harsh but this was really just not a good book. The story was a little on the trite side: Matthew allows two homeless children -- Danny, 10, and Isabella, 3 -- into his apartment late one night while he is high on E because Isabella is sick. He passes out before the situation can get sorted out, and wakes up to discover that their drug addict mother has robbed him and left the kids behind. Matthew's got to catch a flight to Tokyo but Isabella is still asleep so he tells Danny to get out once she wakes up. Predictably, Danny decides to take advantage of the fact that Matthew's going to be out of town for a week and has a swanky apartment with electricity and food and a bed.

Then there's the situation between Matthew, his best friend Ben and his ex/Ben's current girlfriend Amelia. Amelia and Ben broke up, essentially, because Amelia had ethical issues with Matthew's decision to abandon med school for a career as a pharmaceutical exec. Knowing that Ben always had a crush on Amelia, Matthew decides to play matchmaker. Amelia's convinced that he did it to prevent her from protesting a medicine made by Matthew's company, which could also hurt Ben.

I don't know, it was hard to follow.

The major problem with this book is the characters. It's like Tucker decided to write this book and sat down to do the Creative Writing 101 character sketches but decided to rush through them and only got the roughest, briefest idea of who these people are. I want to say they're cookie-cutter, but that's in inaccurate adjective. It's just that their actions and motives aren't believable to me, and I'm frustrated by how they see the world in such black-and-white terms. Especially Amelia. From the get-go, she assumes that Matthew has sinister intentions for every action but she's the one intentionally trying to bring down his company. Gah! She irritated me so much, and I really didn't get why she continued to interact with Matthew on any level. Matthew could be bizarrely sinister at times, and I was never sure what he was up to. I really super didn't understand Matthew's motivation for having Danny and Isabella pose as children he intends to adopt, just to show off to Amelia and Ben that he can be a grown-up.

So: Convoluted plot and unlikable, half-assed characters. Not a great start to this year. Also, once I leave Philadelphia this summer, I am never reading a novel that takes place here ever again.

Janet says

Moved this into "read" but actually didn't read--other than a quick cover of the beginning, middle and end. Didn't grab me--very blah blah blah.

Kaethe says

Another great read from Lisa Tucker. She always delights and surprises me.

Shannon says

This got a low rating because I didn't like any of the characters in this book...except maybe the kids, Daniel and Isabelle.

Erin says

Awful, terrible, horrible ending. And I can't decide if I like any of the main characters. The book does raise the question of financial security vs corporate greed, and allows the reader some 'what would you do' moments, but when it's all said and done, this book is terribly disappointing.

Marnie says

This book wasn't nearly as good as Lisa Tucker's other books. All the characters are unlikable: There's Matthew, the greedy CEO who only cares about making money, Amelia, the bleeding heart do-gooder who thinks capitalism is evil & that she needs to take care of the world because she thinks she knows what's best, & Ben, the nerdy scientist with no people skills who ends up getting Amelia pregnant & not supporting her. There are also 2 foster kids, Danny & Isabelle, who Matthew & Amelia use to blackmail each other, & the kids' druggie mom. When Matthew meets the kids Isabelle is very sick. She's 3 but she doesn't walk or talk & throws up all the time. Once Matthew takes her in she makes a miraculous recovery: She starts walking & learns to talk by watching TV. Amelia seems to like "helping" others to make herself look good, not because she really cares about them, & Ben is too out of it to worry about anything except his science experiments. The story has no real ending & it just wasn't very good.

Danielle West says

I enjoyed it, but the characters were a little one dimensional. Still, not a bad book.

Daci Jaye says

I suppose I can't complain about the plot of this book, seeing as once I started reading I felt like I needed to find out what happened. That doesn't mean I really enjoyed the journey, though.

I think my problem with this book is that I hated every character. Amelia was over the top annoying, and I couldn't bring myself to feel sorry for her in the parts where I know I was supposed to. Matthew had his moments, but he never really won me over; and from the very beginning I wondered why Ben was such a helpless idiot.

Something about the writing was also just irritatingly ordinary. Needless to say, I wasn't too impressed with

this book. Disappointing, since I remember loving The Song Reader.

Dannaca says

It's hard to review this book. At times it was really hard to even read it, but I wanted to see how it ended.

First the good:

I liked a few of the characters. Matthew was interesting. At times he was funny in the dry way that I like and he was multi-faceted and complex the way that well written characters are. I also liked Danny as a character and Kim, his mother was a well written, complex, secondary character.

I loved the way that the writer dealt with drug users. She didn't relegate them so much to the background. The effects that they have on society as a whole as well as individuals was well done and deeper than some author's bother to go. They weren't written as "bad" or "stupid" but rather as flawed people with deeper problems than substance abuse. I really can't say enough about how refreshing it was to see them portrayed outside the usual light.

Now the bad:

Amelia and Ben were horrible characters. Amelia was flat out unlikable and Ben was almost nonexistent until the narrative needed him which is just bad writing. Amelia's story took a turn for the terrible writing as well, as she was a staunch supporter of doing good in the world until she was called to make a sacrifice, or live with the consequences of a choice. Then she went running back to a man she had hated and literally persecuted for the entirety of the book so that she could wallow in self pity. That made me hate her even more than I already did and that was quite a feat, because she was AWFUL.

This part is nitpicky and I admit it. Isabelle was adorable, but I don't buy the whole thing about how she miraculously began talking so quickly. I get that it's cute and that it was meant to show that Matthew isn't the devil that Amelia sets him up to be, but there are better ways to show that.

The coincidences come hard and fast through the whole book. Matthew just happened to be under the influence when he met Danny. He just happened to fall asleep. He just happened to be in a hurry the next day. He just happened to tell a meaningless lie that forced him to hang onto the kids. Amelia just happened to do the one thing that would come between her and Ben (a thing that was set up to be pretty much impossible). And so on, and so on.

The ending could really have been clearer, but it wasn't too horribly vague. Given the rest of the story I can piece together what probably happens.

So, all in all, not that great, but not as horrible as it could be.

J.M. Cornwell says

A tale of relationships growing and changing in a corrupt and moral modern world.

Danny accosts Matthew at just the right time, while he is high on Ecstasy for the first and only time, to help him, his sick three-year-old sister, Annabelle, and his drug addict mother for a night that turns into more than any of them bargained for. Matthew wakes to find a filthy little boy adamant about staying until Annabelle wakes and has a chance to get better. Matthew's money, watch, cell phone and credit cards disappeared with Danny's mother on the morning he has to be at the airport to fly to Japan. Matthew agrees to let Danny stay a few hours and leaves with the promise that he will send the security guard, and the police if necessary, to throw Danny and his sister out if Danny reneges on the deal. Unable to reach his assistant Cassie while en route to Japan, Matthew finds his well orchestrated life in a shambles and his quick trip the beginning of an eight-day trek that takes him from Japan to Jakarta to Paris and home to find Danny and Annabelle eating gourmet meals at his very expensive table. It isn't enough that his ex-girlfriend Amelia nearly destroyed the successful launch of a break-through in pain medication that promises to be a pharmaceutical cash cow but to find two homeless children he was assured had gone comfortably ensconced in his home is too much. On the other hand, Danny and Annabelle may be the answer, at least temporarily, to keeping Amelia off his back and out of his professional life for good. And the fun is just beginning.

It is difficult to write a novel about corporate America besieged by a moral and ethical journalist bent on an ex-boyfriend's professional destruction while being thrown together with homeless addicts and their children without becoming preachy or constructing nothing more an exaggerated caricature. Lisa Tucker never falls into this trap. Without rushing the story or contriving quick solutions fobbed off for the sake of a happy ending or hackneyed and soppy plot points, Tucker crafts a well thought out tale full of complex and fascinating characters that give new dimensions to the shadowy dimensions of corporation, pharmaceuticals, drug addicts, homelessness and the nature of emotions and relationships in *The Cure For The Modern Life* that never panders to the party line. There are no real villains, except for one inept and greedy CEO, only people doing their best to find where they fit in a multifaceted world of infinite choices.

At the heart of *The Cure For The Modern Life* is a man driven by his past to succeed and make a better life for himself and those he loves and a woman, born with a silver spoon in her mouth, who sees the world as black and white, moral and immoral. What makes the story so good you can't put the book down, is seeing the characters and the world through the eyes of the ten-year-old son of a drug addict mother who believes in chivalry and knights who live honorably in the face of daunting odds and misfortune, helping Matthew and Amelia come to terms with the central truths of their own lives and careers. There are no easy answers and Tucker offers none.

Tucker's writing is descriptive and filled with believable nuance and a genuine understanding of people and relationships that is authentic and touching and sincere. This is what the Great American Novel should be and, in the case of Tucker's *Cure For The Modern Life*, definitely is.

Diane says

Spoiler alert: This book suuuuuuucked.

Very predictable. Little thought to plot and character development. The author gave up on it while writing it, and I wish I had given up on reading it.

Pam Dauby says

Lisa Tucker chooses three of the most radical characters to illustrate the love triangle story. Amelia is the extreme Liberal (very generous with the poor and has made it her life's work to fight capitalism). Matthew is the extreme Fiscal Conservative (greedy and over-spender). Ben is the extreme scientist (so intelligent that he lacks emotion until a loved one paints him the picture). There is a homeless family weaved into the story. I believe Tucker uses this family to show the more human side to Matthew. I want to finish this book so I can discover what her point is. Who does she want Amelia to be with? Will Matthew ever grow from all of Amelia's lectures? Is it possible for Ben to love someone other than himself? (Yes, I know he is working on cures for the sick but he is not modest about it).

Laura Kulson says

One of my all time favourite books.
