



## **OCD/Doctor-As-Patient Graphic Medicine Discussion Guide:**

*The Bad Doctor* by Ian Williams

From the publisher... “Meet Dr. Iwan James: cyclist, doctor, would-be lover, former heavy metal fan, and, above all, human being. Weighed down by his responsibilities – from diagnosing personality disorders to deciding who can hold a gun license – he doubts his ability to make decisions about the lives of others when he may need more than a little help himself. Cartoonist and Doctor Ian Williams introduces us to Iwan’s troubled life as all humanity, it seems, passes through his surgery doors.”

### **Why a Graphic Novel?**

- Research suggests that we are better at understanding and absorbing information presented in visual forms, such as comics.
- Stories are more engaging than factual information alone. How much easier is it to remember and empathize with something a friend experienced versus hard statistics alone?
- Coined by Ian Williams, a physician in the UK, Graphic Medicine “is the intersection of the medium of comics and the discourse of healthcare.”
  - Graphic medicine, then, combines visual storytelling and medicine, creating a unique opportunity for readers to experience and learn about healthcare experiences through comics.

### **To Learn More...**

- [www.graphicmedicine.org](http://www.graphicmedicine.org) – The home base for all things graphic medicine.
- [www.graphiclibrarian.wordpress.com](http://www.graphiclibrarian.wordpress.com) – A librarian-run blog with weekly updates on graphic medicine news, book reviews, research resources, and more.
- *The Graphic Medicine Manifesto* by MK Czerwiec et al. Available from Penn State University Press.



Created by Matthew Noe as part of the NNLM Region 7 Graphic Medicine Initiative.

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## Questions for Discussion

1. *The Bad Doctor* gives us a unique look into the life of a rural UK doctor. How does this tale differ from what you would typically picture when you hear “rural UK doctor”?
2. Did you appreciate the visual aspects of this book? Do you think the format of a graphic novel is more or less effective for a memoir than for a fictional account? How is it different than a memoir written in prose?
3. Does the book remind you of an aspect of your own life? A particular event? A person – like a friend, family member, co-worker, etc.?
4. Can you point to specific passages/panels that struck you personally? Why?
5. OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) is one of the most inaccurately portrayed conditions in all of mass media. Did *The Bad Doctor* change your perception of what OCD is? If so, how?
6. There is an old adage that doctor’s make the worst patients. Do you think that adage holds true for Iwan? Consider how his condition impacts his practice.
7. *The Bad Doctor* is a complex comic, two main reasons being that it is a combination of memoir and fiction that addresses at least two different complex problems: OCD and doctors-as-patients. How do you think the comic handles blending all of these aspects? Is it too much? Just right?
8. Physician burnout is one of the hottest topics in medical education right now and there is a great deal of that exhaustion shown in Iwan’s life. How might we better address these stresses? Does *The Bad Doctor* provide any guidance? Does it provoke any ideas for you?
9. Have you read other memoirs or stories about OCD or doctors-turned-patients? How does *The Bad Doctor* compare?
10. Current medical students who read *The Bad Doctor* often point out that Iwan represents some of their worst fears about losing the ability to feel empathy and relate to their patients. Do you think that is accurate? How important is empathy in medical practice?
11. Would you share *The Bad Doctor* with people in your life? Why or why not?

**Remember:** These are just suggested questions and there could be many, many more. Don’t feel tethered to these – let the conversation flow naturally and use these questions as starting points when conversation stalls.

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Please fill out a brief feedback survey about your experience with this book club kit at the following link:  
<https://redcap.iths.org/surveys/?s=3MATWHPXYT>