

LIFE // BLOG CRITICS

## Book Review: 'Cookie's Case,' A Tug Wyler Mystery by Andy Siegel

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Many things bring people together, common goals, interests and attraction. However sometimes it is basic need that is the culprit. Need is not the greatest of ties, for when need dissipates so does the attachment in many cases.

Tug Wyler returns in Andy Siegel's *Cookie's Case*. With Tug's background in getting his clients insurance settlements he is intrigued when he meets Cookie, a young dancer who wears a metal head brace. The fact that she is still dancing disturbs him, and yet, it seems to be a part of who she is. Her beauty and grace, especially with such an unattractive device attached is amazing, and he finds himself a bit smitten.

When he is introduced to her friend, an elderly Doctor, he finds the relationship a bit odd. The Doctor provides a medical procedure called a spinal tap to help her with pain, and the symbiotic relationship seems to work for them in a strange and unnatural way. When he discovers a conflict of interest with her attorney, her boyfriend, and the doctor and hospital where her surgery was done he offers to take over the case. He has no idea of the depths of cover-up he is soon to be involved with.

There is something that worries him about the case, and as his investigation begins in earnest, he begins to untangle a web of deceit. Yet as he finds evidence of possible neglect during surgery, even his own specialists have doubts, for all the evidence points in conflicting direction. Can he get his client the money to help her regain her prior life, before she hurts herself any further?

When he is fired from the case it only tweaks his curiosity further. What nerve has he touched, and how can he save his client from her own decisions? He knows there is more to what is going on in her life, and many of the leads seem to tie to her protector. Can he find the answers before it is too late?

Siegel's characters are a great mix of needy and diabolical. His protagonist in the form of Tug Wyler is a fun and energetic man, always looking out for the money, but hiding a heart that is not necessarily in his best interests. He really cares about his clients and is like a bulldog when he gets hold of a case.

Cookie is a fun and brave character, and her protector is just a bit creepy, but it is hard to decipher why he creates that feeling, for he has nothing but care for Cookie. To create that type of character and to have you questioning yourself takes skill.

If you enjoy a fun and slightly bizarre mystery you will find Tug Wyler the guy to follow. His investigations are both interesting and often funny, but he delivers the goods. The medical drama is also well written, and you will find yourself immersed in a strange and fascinating story of need.

This would be a great book for a reading group or book club with lots of questions and decisions that would keep the dialogue going for some time.