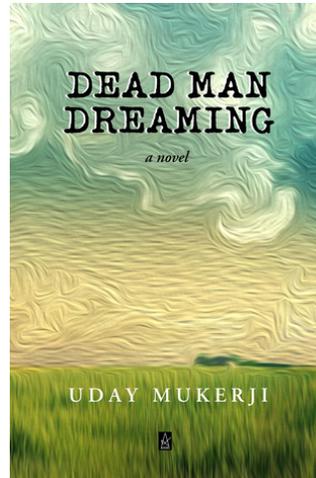


## "Dead Man Dreaming" by Uday Mukerji



Set in Calgary, Canada, the US, and in Central Europe, *Dead Man Dreaming* is a literary fiction about one man's fight against hereditary genetic diseases—from losing his girlfriend to finding love again—and how he overcomes his fear and frustrations and comes to terms with his own Huntington's disease.

David, a senior resident physician, suddenly finds his coveted heart surgeon's job in jeopardy as he could be a victim of Huntington's chorea. After much deliberation, as he takes the pre-symptomatic test, his life turns upside down. He tests HD positive. And the result takes a toll on his love life too as his girlfriend leaves him for he decides not to have kids in that condition.

Although he secures the job at the hospital, he declines the offer. Emotionally charged, David dedicates his life to finding a solution to prevent all hereditary genetic diseases. He believes if medical science could prevent fatal diseases like cholera, malaria, and tuberculosis, it must have a solution to genetic diseases as well. Months go by, but David finds nothing new to help his research. The confirmation of HD also disrupts his private life, and he hallucinates at night. He becomes frustrated and accepts a job in the R&D division of the same hospital.

One day, he accidentally meets his old classmate, Jessie. She is recovering from a bad marriage and her son is suffering from a genetic disease called hemophilia. Although he had never liked her before and they had nothing in common, he couldn't help admiring her after hearing what she had gone through in life. Jessie points out that the solution to David's research is already half-way there. A simple carrier screening test can easily identify parents with genetic disorders. The affected ones can then look for viable alternatives like sperm or egg donation, surrogacy, gene editing, or adoptions. But the research shows only one in six OBs and gynecologists are offering carrier screening tests in the preconception period. So, all they need is to fill the void with an awareness campaign.

David likes the idea, and together, they start a website to get others' feedback on introducing a parental fitness test before having a child. If other jobs can ask for a

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fitness test, why the toughest job in the world can't have one? They get an overwhelming response from all over the world, people rallying for a Carrier Screening Test, but not without condemnations. The number of signatories reaches millions.

Meanwhile, their common miseries and hardships in life also bring them closer. David falls in love with Jessie. However, his impending sickness prevents him from expressing his love and he suffers silently. But his interactions with million other victims open his eyes. He realizes while he may not have any control over how long he lives, but he can always choose how he lives the remaining days. And he decides to propose to Jessie.

Dead Man Dreaming is a story of a desperate and dying young man spiraling downward with anger and frustrations and how he bounces back with new love as he comes to terms with his life-threatening disease.

### Reviews/Blurbs

#### **Advance praise for Dead Man Dreaming from Midwest Book Review (Diane Donovan)**

"Part love story and part life story, *Dead Man Dreaming* does an outstanding job of capturing the dilemmas posed by advance knowledge of the future in general and medical conundrums in particular. Uday Mukerji excels at closely examining confrontation's roots in ideology and clashing belief systems. . . .

How characters handle what circumstance gives them—even life-threatening diseases—is one mark of a good read if the story is done right. *Dead Man Dreaming* is particularly thorough and poignant in its discussions of life, death, and the choices that lie in-between.

It's a solid, absorbing read highly recommended for readers interested in the foundations of choice in navigating the pitfalls of life and medical challenges—one that superbly examines the foundations of good choices that stem from bad situations."

#### **Where can I get a copy?**

Will be available on Amazon, B&N and other select book stores

Due for release later this month.

#### **My Review: \*\*\*\*\***

David thought that he had it all figured it. He'd work hard throughout school, dedicated himself to his university medical studies and internship, met a lovely

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woman, with whom he planned to settle down and have a family, and had a chance at his dream job as a heart surgeon. But that was before he received the diagnosis: Huntington's disease.

His father had suffered from it, and David spent much of his youth watching his dad's physical and psychological degeneration as the result of the progressive breakdown of the nerve cells in the brain. Despite knowing that it was a hereditary, David had actively avoided confronting the possibility that he may also have the condition. But now he knows.

Having witnessed the pain and sacrifice of his mother, David decides not to impose upon, or risk destroying the life of others. He breaks up with his girlfriend, turns down his dream job, and sets about finding a different path and way to contribute to the world. He wants to help people facing a similar future to himself.

"Dead Man Dreaming" takes the reader on David's heart wrenching journey, as he comes to term with his diagnosis, and future options. We are there with him as he second-guesses every opportunity, set back, minor illness, and moment of forgetfulness, as he worries about how soon to expect the onset of his symptoms, and eventual death.

Mukerji's style of writing is engaging and endearing, and the short chapters make it great for reading in short bursts (like public transport rides). This novel is well worth the read, so pick up a hard copy or e-book today. You won't be disappointed.

I received a pre-release copy of this book in exchange for frank and fair review. Having said that, I've read this author's previous release "Love, Life and Logic" and would have bought a copy of this the second it hit the shelves.

### **A quick interview with the author:**

#### ***What was your inspiration to write "Dead Man Dreaming"?***

In 2016, Shivani Nazareth, a genetic counselor in New York, published a piece in US News: 'Genetic testing before pregnancy should be as common as taking folic acid'. She wrote, while medical societies agree that preconception is the ideal time to offer carrier screening, a recent study showed that only 1 in 6 family physicians or OB/GYN providers offered carrier screening in preconception care. She also wrote that many parents learned they were carriers of rare diseases only after their child was born. My whole life I had believed that parenting was the hardest job in the universe. Then, why the would-be parents weren't doing their part before giving birth? Why do we make the innocent kids suffer? Was it the lack of information or

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something else? ... I wanted to find out more, and I jumped in. And that's how Dead Man Dreaming came about.

### ***Why Huntington's Disease?***

Huntington's Disease here is just a case in point. The pivotal question is can we really stop inherited genetic diseases with a carrier screening test in the preconception period? Apparently, we can. There are more than six thousand single-gene diseases Although the protagonist suffers from incurable HD, the book is more about all single gene diseases that is passed from parents to children. There are over six thousand such hereditary genetic diseases, and it's a worldwide problem. Many of those diseases have no cure till date, and thousands of people are dying every day. Each disease is as bad as the other one.

### ***Audience may not know much about diseases like Huntington's. Do you intend to provide links or resources to information on this and other diseases via you author page/book page?***

I'm a fiction writer. So, I am not really qualified to give any links to resources or to any information. But I strongly believe hereditary genetic diseases are avoidable in most cases. Maybe, gene editing isn't legal yet in many countries, also, kind of expensive for many, but a carrier screening test is legal, and it's right here. With awareness, maybe, someday we will be able to completely remove many of these single-gene diseases from our gene pool.

### ***What kind of research was involved?***

Genetic disease is a delicate subject, and it needed a lot of research. In spite of having a carrier screening test in place, why weren't people taking the test? I had to get close to some of the victims to understand the issues. Talking to people who are suffering from irreversible diseases isn't easy. Basically, I wasn't offering them anything, except for taking their sufferings to my readers. I'm ever grateful to everyone I came in touch with in this process, and I wish them the best. Their smile, strength, and their support kept me going.

### ***What do you enjoy reading?***

I enjoy reading classics. Some of my all-time favorite books are Anna Karenina, Crime and Punishment, Jane Eyre, Pride and Prejudice, The Castle, The Unbearable Lightness of Being, and The Outsider.

### **About the Author: Uday Mukerji**

## "Dead Man Dreaming" by Uday Mukerji



Uday Mukerji was born in India and had worked as a creative director in advertising agencies in Singapore for nearly twenty years. He started his career as a copywriter and soon moved up to assume bigger responsibilities. While working on various advertising campaigns was great fun, in 2009, he decided to change gear and pursue a career in writing.

His first literary fiction – a 2017 Readers' Favorite Award Winner – *Love, Life, and Logic* was published by Harvard Square Editions, NY in November 2016.

### Links:

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### Also by the Author:

