

Meaningful

By Daniel Waters

Surgeon (sir-jun); from the late Latin *chirurgire* – “to cut”

1. (n) an individual who uses sharp instruments to cut on or into the body of another in order to effect relief or cure of a malady;

Alternate but acceptable meanings: **2.** (n) a person who performs an act in a precise manner; **3.** (n) someone who stabs people for a living and gets paid for it (see also: *hit man, button man, assassin, hired gun, Mack the Knife*); **4.** (n) a person who waits until people are asleep and then scars them for life; **5.** (n) someone who thinks they are better and smarter than everyone else on the frickin’ planet (*note:* this is the definition most often cited by medical internists); **6.** (n) an individual granted the most intimate contact with another human being outside of procreation; **7.** (n) member of a sacred healing guild whose worth is known only to God and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid; **8.** (n) a physician who often causes pain and suffering in the name of healing and somehow learns to live with it; **9.** (n) a wanton butcher who regularly botches simple procedures and cares only about prompt remuneration for said botching (*note:* this is the definition most often cited by plaintiffs’ attorneys). **10.** a physician who, in the instant before scalpel touches skin, silently prays that he or she is doing the right thing.

Daniel Waters is a native of Southern New Jersey and has been cardiothoracic surgeon practicing at Mercy Medical Center in Iowa for over 25 years. He is a 1982 graduate of the University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey/School of Osteopathic Medicine and completed his specialty training at The Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Cleveland, OH, in 1989. Waters had his first story published as a 3rd year medical student and has had a number of short stories and essays published since then, as well authoring two small books of surgical advice. Still in full-time practice, he is currently pursuing graduate studies in Narrative Medicine at Lenoir-Rhyne University, Asheville, NC

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