

Synopsis

After misreading his medical records and convincing himself he has a brain tumor, a recently divorced professor decides he has nothing left to lose. Certain of his impending death, he burns every professional bridge he has, abandoning institutional decorum to say what he has always believed about academic decay, masculine performance, and wellness culture.

When he later learns the diagnosis was a sinus infection, he is left alive inside the wreckage he created.

Adrift and professionally ruined, he becomes increasingly attached to Helena, a colleague whose opaque role in academia conceals deeper entanglements. Following Helena to Belarus, he becomes entangled in the margins of competing intelligence schemes—complex maneuvers he persistently misunderstands. Sophisticated forces move around him; he remains convinced he is exercising agency. His usefulness lies precisely in his confusion.

Running parallel to this widening farce is a reckoning with his family history, specifically the long-suppressed knowledge that his younger brother's predatory behavior was absorbed into silence and shame. As his public certainty begins to fracture, he is forced to confront the limits of his moral clarity.

Complete at 58,000 words, **NO SLEEP IN ZANESVILLE** is a tightly structured literary novel chronicling an intellectual's slow self-sabotage. It will appeal to readers of Jordan Castro's *The Novelist* and Emma Cline's *The Guest*, combining self-immolating interior voice with slow-building psychological unease.