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## David Chase & Maryanne O'Hara

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## David Chase & Maryanne O'Hara

### Cover Page Footnote

I want to acknowledge two very important teachers of mine, David Chase and Maryanne O'Hara.

This essay explores the subtle yet powerful Narrative Medicine themes that underly the television show *The Sopranos* and the novel *Little Matches*, by David Chase and Maryanne O'Hara respectively.

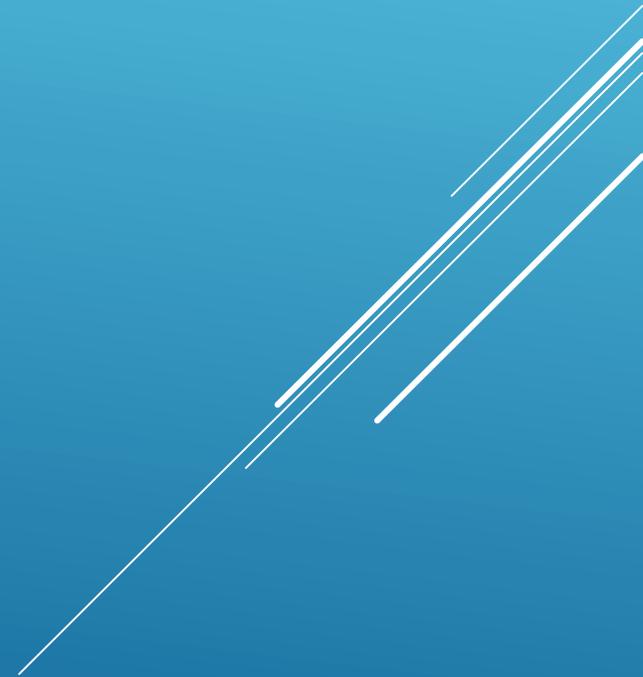
AUTHOR: DAYNE R. SMERINA

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Eighty percent of a diagnosis comes from the History of Present Illness (HPI). When writing the medical chart, the HPI goes in the 'subjective' patient's observations section. That means a majority of the diagnosis comes from the patient's personal story. This idea is the foundation of narrative medicine, a discipline that emphasizes the healing power of telling stories. By physician, patient, parent, and partner all contributing their unique perspective, we can enable diversity and equality in the medical profession. By telling a story, a person can also become a teacher to the ones that listen.

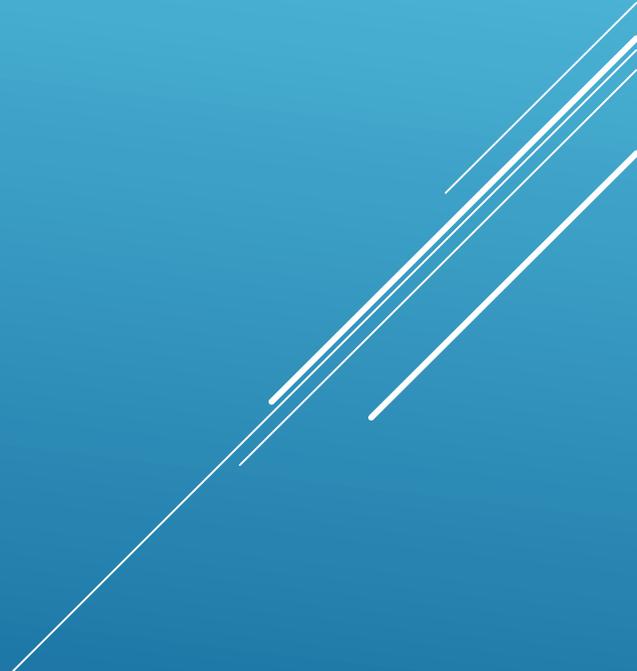
There are two people that I believe embody the idea of narrative medicine through their stories. They are David Chase, creator of the tv show, *The Sopranos*, and Maryanne O'Hara, author of Little Matches. I consider these people to be important medical teachers of mine, even though they are not directly from the medical field. David Chase's creation, *The Sopranos*, is a phenomenal show loved by many. I personally enjoy it because of the relatable Italian – American family anecdotes. Although there are many reasons why the show is popular, its underlying narrative medicine themes are what make it so powerful. The show is centered around the main character's mental health journey. The first scene is set as we watch the main character sitting in the waiting room for his first psychiatry appointment, and the last scene alludes to his demise. Throughout the show we have glimpses into other characters' health issues, Sal's spondylolysis, Adriana's irritable bowel syndrome, and Christopher's drug addiction. One can argue that the diseases are manifestations of the grip their stress and guilt have on them. By bringing these controversial but universal topics to the screen, David Chase created an entertaining narrative medicine television show

Another unique narrative medicine example is the book Little Matches by Maryanne O'Hara. This book was without a doubt the most important piece of writing I read in college to prepare me for medical school. The author writes about the journey that her, her husband, and daughter Caitlin navigated Caitlin's cystic fibrosis diagnosis. The book includes some of Caitlin's own writings including her emails and text messages with her mom. This gives the reader the ability to understand who Caitlin is as a person, and her perspective as a patient. The moving themes of the novel show the power a nonfictional narrative medicine story can have. In many ways, my most influential teachers have not been from a classroom. My teachers have influenced me through their stories, regardless of if the story is fiction or nonfiction. You can learn from anyone and you never know who you can be a teacher to, which is why narrative medicine is such a valuable teaching tool



Dayna Smerina is in her first year of Osteopathic Medical School at KPCOM. . She was introduced to the discipline of Narrative Medicine in college, and wants to continue her creative writing endeavors through medical school.

*I want to acknowledge two very important teachers of mine, David Chase and Maryanne O'Hara.*

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