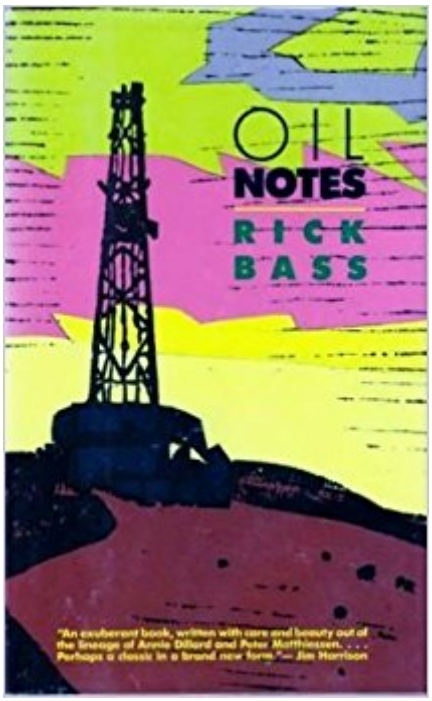
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# Oil Notes




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## Synopsis

The author of this book is a development geologist, advising oil companies where to drill and how to assess oil quantitities. The book describes his reflections on life, on nature and the excitement of discovering oil. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The young man invites his girlfriend to a picnic lunch: he takes her to the park, plugs his microwave oven into a lamp standard by the tennis courts, and provides her favorite sandwich. Bass, author of The Deer Pasture and award-winning short stories, displays equal imagination and intelligence in these journal-form entries. Relating oil with life--certain that neither will last forever--he reflects on his relationships with his family and his work. Bass tells us how a landowner gets paid for an oil well; he discusses state laws for the gas and oil industry ("brutally fair") and introduces a drill crew. He rescues a pair of abandoned puppies from the roadside, spends a weekend well-sitting. With the awareness and eye of a naturalist and a writer’s gift with language, he offers a low-key, upbeat work that celebrates youthful energy and optimism. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc.

RICK BASS is the author of many acclaimed works of fiction and nonfiction. His first short story collection, The Watch, set in Texas, won the PEN/Nelson Algren Award, and his 2002 collection, The Hermit's Story, was a Los Angeles Times Best Book of the Year. The Lives of Rocks was

a finalist for the Story Prize and was chosen as a Best Book of the Year by the Rocky Mountain News. Bass's stories have also been awarded the Pushcart Prize and the O. Henry Award and have been collected in The Best American Short Stories. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Rick Bass, a petroleum geologist and environmental activist is known for his knowledge of the earth and oil. The book, Oil Notes, written by Bass, gives the readers the feeling that they are petroleum geologists. Bass allows the reader to understand what he is referring to and how everything on an oil rig works. At first glance or first read, the reader might think that the book is solely about oil. But as the reading goes on, the reader finds out differently. Oil Notes is not only about oil; it is an analogy for life. Bass also uses searching for the number one oil field, the one that will make someone rich, as an analogy for a man trying to find his place on earth. Throughout the book, many facts that are in oil exploration also coexist in life. For example, Bass claims that "Nothing lasts. Old seas are buried" (42). Not only is Bass talking about the soon to be scarcity of oil, he is talking about life. No matter how much you try, you will not live forever. Rocks do not last forever; eventually they become stones, pebbles, and eventually sand. That is the same with life. Life does not last forever. Unfortunately, death is inevitable. Everything that is thought to last forever...love, hatred, and friendship...will cease to exist when the person dies. Another example of life being told in terms of oil is when Bass talks about leadership in the field of geology: "A leader-in a profession of men and women who cannot be led, and will not" (135). Bass says that those are the type of geologists that everyone needs to stay away from. They are the geologists with the egos that are bigger than their head. In life, staying away from people like that would help a lot. People with big egos refuse to help people and also refuse to be helped. They are solely dependent on themselves. Unfortunately, they will not learn in life until they drastically fail at something. Only then will they hopefully realize that there are sources other than themselves. Time and change coexist and have a big effect on the oil business and life. Everything revolves around time. Bass is amazed that in a lifetime "you will see a picture more different than could ever be imagined" (134). Things can change drastically in a lifetime. Just look around a city. Remember what it was like 10 years ago or 20 years ago. No matter what duration of time, change always occurs. In the oil business, drilling can go smooth for fifteen hours, and then it becomes tough due to different rock. The flow of oil can trickle and then it can spew out one-thousand barrels per day. It can change that drastically in a short period of time. In life, the health of a person can drastically change as the person ages. In the oil business assumption can make or break your career as an oil person. In life assumption can do the same.

Bass says, in reaction to not knowing about your oil well, "You've got to be careful not to judge it too quickly or too harshly" (145). If a person assumes an oil well is in shale, and uses a bit that only goes through shale, it will ruin their day to find out that the $10,000 bit is useless because they are actually drilling through granite. The oil well can be lost and the geologist can be out of a job. In life, the same can occur. If a person judges another person before getting to know them, that can prove to be a big mistake. Maybe that person could have been a good friend or something more. Finding the perfect oil field is similar to one's efforts to try to find out where they belong in the world. Bass claims that "Someday I am going to drill my own well. There is no geologist who does not dream of this. It is what you are after" (89). In any profession, a goal is set. A pilot might want to fly a certain plane or so many hours. In oil, the goal is to own a big money making petroleum company, owning a well. Life provides goals similar to those and with a similar pay off. The fact that Bass says "someday" means he is going to try. That is an analogy for life. A person may look all of their life to find out who they are, where they belong. Once the person "knows himself" then the world is his. They know what they are capable of and what they are made of. Not only is Oil Notes about oil, it is about life in general, about one person's effort to find their place in the world.

You can almost feel Rick Bass' concentration as he considers each and every word before adding it to this sparkling little journal. The resulting prose is lean and crisp, fresh as the air after rain. I savored the writing in these little essays almost as much as I enjoyed the bits of life-wisdom found a dash here and a pinch there.No matter how intriguing, these elements are relegated to the status of sub-currents within the framework. On the surface, Bass treats the reader to a large helping of fascinating details about the oil business, and it was this that first attracted me.Of course, as I read the author began to make contact on a second level, and my interests shifted. Years later, original motive no longer relevant, I enjoyed Oil Notes again. There is much to be learned here. Bass seemes to be that rare creature; the sensitive male. I'm not sure, but now that I've read it several times, I think maybe some of it might be about to rub off.Art Tirrell - author of The Secret Ever Keeps - Mar 2007 from Kunati Book Publishers.

Oddly enough, I was far from home doing field work in North Georgia when I found Oil Notes in a little bookstore. I am a geologist. However, unlike Rick Bass my job was to look for fresh drinking water, not oil. I found time to read his book between logging boreholes and setting wells. By the time I was finished I (with the book) I had a renewed interest and spirit in my profession and in the environment around me. Rick Bass found a way to express in words, the excitement and passions

associated with being a field geologist, environmentalist and a man in love.Oil Notes is a fantastic book, and Rick Bass is an equally outstanding author. I have since read everyone of his books. He vividly defines his feelings and passions in everything he writes about, be it drilling for oil or studing wolves.

Oil notes struck me not so much as a description of a mans first job and all it entails, but rather a young man beginning his adult life who was open to any and evry new expieriene life through at him. His optimism shown through in that he loved his work and he always felt something better was just around the corner. Underneath it all was also a man coming to grips with how to handle relationships, both personal and professional. He showed his failings as well as his triumhs. To me it is an adult version of a seperate peace. This is a writer that I will read for a long time because as he ages he will describe lifes changes with the same brilliance he has described his lifes beginning.

Geologist and writer Rick Bass muses about time and natural processes, both human and geological, creating a metaphorical experience for the reader. In his journal, he tells each anecdote with lyrical descriptions, but then goes one step beyond with some illumination about love, living, human beings, even existence itself. At this point, the body of the text becomes a secondary experience as the reader begins to feel the truth in his 'illuminations.' Many entries make the reader laugh out loud while others will instill the deep impulse to go hug a loved one. This book will make anybody remember how lovely life really is.

Rick Bass does an excellent job of using short, usually off topic notes, that when put in chapter and book form are most enjoyable. He intertwines his geological skills with his philisophical view on humanity and also his personal life-well done. He has some very unique analogies, such as a geologist drawing a surface map thousands of feet below the earth's surface by using basically what he sees through a hole the diameter of a fire hydrant. Mr. Bass is also very ecologically concerned with our planet, his views on this subject are quite refreshing.

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