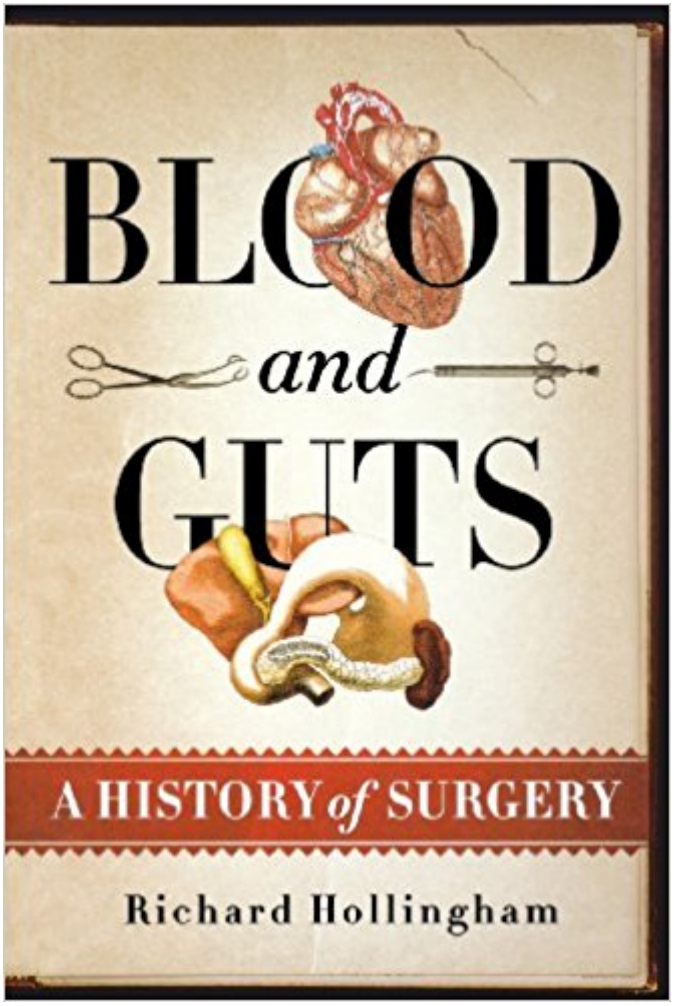
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Blood And Guts: A History Of Surgery



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Synopsis

In Blood and Guts, veteran science writer Richard Hollingham weaves a compelling narrative from the key moments in surgical history. We have a ringside seat in the operating theater of University College Hospital in London as world-renowned Victorian surgeon Robert Liston performs a remarkable amputation in thirty secondsÃ¢â ¬â ¢from first cut to final stitch. Innovations such as Joseph Lister's antiseptic technique, the first open-heart surgery, and Walter Freeman's lobotomy operations, among other breakthroughs, are brought to life in these pages in vivid detail. Today, astonishing surgical breakthroughs are making limb transplants, face transplants, and a host of other previously un dreamed of operations possible. But getting here has not been a simple story of medical progress. This is popular science writing at it's best. "Ã¢â ¬Â|a quick, entertaining read filled with operating-room dramas that end in disaster or triumph and a wide variety of heroes and villains." -Kirkus Reviews

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Customer Reviews

Glove up and dive in to what Hollingham describes as a whistle-stop tour of a gruesome and fascinating field. The BBC journalist and author (How to Clone the Perfect Blonde) is a deft storyteller who probably never met a dry fact he couldn't infuse with juicy detail. But there's more here than the drive, energy and bravery of medical pioneers, both doctors and patients, from Galen treating gladiators in the second century B.C.E. to Stuart Carter, the first person to have electrical brain implants to treat Parkinson's disease. Hollingham gives us a tribute not only to saving lives but

to making them better. Still, it’s the missteps that remind us of the human fallibility of even the greatest doctors. [Robert] Liston’s operations were messy, bloody and traumatic, Hollingham writes of Britain’s most famous 19th-century surgeon, describing a procedure in which Liston accidentally lopped off an assistant’s fingers. The patient died of infection, as did the assistant, and an observer died of shock. It was the only operation in surgical history with a 300 percent mortality rate. What better medical history than one that recounts both successes and failures with honesty and gratitude. 16 pages of b&w photos. (Dec. 8) Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Blood and Guts is an excellent history of surgery... a highly readable book, full of gripping anedcotes" Irish Mail on Sunday --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I purchased this book for my wife and me (we are both medical students who are planning on entering surgical residency next year), and we both enjoyed it immensely! Very well-written, and a pleasure to read.Speaking as a "lay-person" who would never want to be referred to as such - please do not be deterred by reviews that describe this as a superficial/lay-person’s text - it is not a comprehensive account of the minutia of surgical history, nor is it a surgical reference book, and I am confident that Richard Hollingham never intended it to be either. It is, however, a well-composed, engaging narrative of several key moments in the history of surgical practice. This book was recommended to me by one of the core surgical faculty at my home institution - he wanted to spark my curiosity, and he succeeded. I will certainly continue to read other surgical history books - dryer, deeper, longer books - but I will never discount the value of this book. This is the book that made me excited to learn about the history of surgery, and I am grateful to the surgeon who recommended it to me!

I thought this book was nicely written with quite graphic depiction of various surgical events, which has made my reading experience immersive.The author is very honest about the fact that this book cannot be comprehensive in covering the history of all the surgical specialties or advances. However, in the specialties/advances that he wrote about, he did a good job on providing detailed history (like anesthetics, antisepsis, cardio surgery, etc.).Just for people who don’t like or cannot stand gruesome scenes, some of the historical events that he wrote about are rather graphic and detailed. Therefore, this book might not be for everyone.

Reviewer's background- I'm a a general surgery resident; I might be harsher than other reviewers, but I hope I can give a review helpful to everyone.This book is a nice appetizer for anyone interested in the history of surgery. It was written in conjunction with a BBC television series, and it reflects an episodic TV format (for better and for worse).The good- This is a fun, well written, and fast book to read. The author covers a large swath of surgery: cardiac, transplant, reconstructive and even neurosurgery. Every page has a notable scene / anecdote. Blood and Guts spans centuries, from Galen in Ancient Rome to modern hand transplant surgeons. Despite the pop aspects to Blood and Guts, this is also a smart read. The author trained for 5 years to be a physician, and I think this makes Blood and Guts more intelligent than most journalistic fluff. There aren't the grating errors that make medical professions cringe (unlike most news articles or pop TV). I think the final product belies the amount of research the author put into his work.What's 'lacking'- Because of the breadth tackled by this book, it doesn't flow seamlessly and lacks a unifying theme. This is fine if you're reading in short bursts (e.g. sitting on the can) but cumbersome if you're reading for long stretches. Also, because of the brevity and quick pace of the book, it doesn't really delve into what the patients or surgeons experienced while encountering such dramatic diseases. Children dying after cardiac surgery, RAF airmen disfigured from battle wounds, terrible surgeons, and great surgeons- it's like you're speed dating them. This book lacks a significant emotional impact for such a potentially powerful subject.Summary- This is good fast food. Not the stuff you get in the airport, but something tasty you would get every week or so when you could spare a few minutes. For someone interested but new to the medical field, a 5 star read. For medical professionals, 3 stars. For someone totally uninterested, it may provide you with some entertainment, but it won't linger like the best books.

This book had me hooked from the very first chapter when the author used himself as a guinea pig to test the old practice of using leeches for medicinal purposes. This got the conversational ball rolling for me and my friends, and we went on to more conversations about the ethics of doctors doing cosmetic surgery that they know will shorten the patient's lifespan. The author went from one fascinating topic to another. I did not know that at one point cosmetic surgery was done by injecting super hot wax under the skin, and then molding it before it hardened. The chapter about repairing the bodies of horribly mutilated soldiers during WWI and II was amazing. Some stories were just humorous. For instance, one wartime surgeon had the idea of using electro- magnets to pull shrapnel out of wounds. Unfortunately, he didn't think about all the metal knives in the OR, so when

they turned the magnet on sharp surgical instruments started flying from everywhere. Oooops. Then there was the funny story about the pig that was brought in as a source for a transplant. It got loose, and the doctor had to go chasing it. Some hospital visitors were startled to find a pig on the elevator. I learned a lot, and had a lot of fun learning it. I wish there were more books by this author. I'm thinking about trying to find a DVD of the TV series that inspired this book.

rambled a mite. would have read better with a little more cohesion between stories.

I purchased Blood and Guts after watching The Knick, a series the shows the evolution of medicine at the turn of the 20th century. This book is n amazing historical piece about the History of Surgery. I have a doctorate in education, not medicine, as when I was growing up it was frowned upon for women to be anything but a teacher, nurse or marry a rich man. This book gives testimony to the trials of medical practice. It also made me laud the medical practice today even more than I did prior as a patient.

A very good read!

A superficial but entertaining and accurate summary of the development of modern surgery. No illustrations, unfortunately, as that would have materially enhanced the book. (They are all in the BBC film series of the same name upon which the book is based.)

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