



The Shift: One Nurse, Twelve Hours, Four Patients' Lives

Theresa Brown

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In a book as eye-opening as it is riveting, practicing nurse and *New York Times* columnist Theresa Brown invites us to experience not just a day in the life of a nurse but all the life that happens in just one day on a hospital's cancer ward. In the span of twelve hours, lives can be lost, life-altering medical treatment decisions made, and dreams fulfilled or irrevocably stolen. In Brown's skilled hands--as both a dedicated nurse and an insightful chronicler of events--we are given an unprecedented view into the individual struggles as well as the larger truths about medicine in this country, and by shift's end, we have witnessed something profound about hope and healing and humanity.

Every day, Theresa Brown holds patients' lives in her hands. On this day there are four. There is Mr. Hampton, a patient with lymphoma to whom Brown is charged with administering a powerful drug that could cure him--or kill him; Sheila, who may have been dangerously misdiagnosed; Candace, a returning patient who arrives (perhaps advisedly) with her own disinfectant wipes, cleansing rituals, and demands; and Dorothy, who after six weeks in the hospital may finally go home. Prioritizing and ministering to their needs takes the kind of skill, sensitivity, and, yes, humor that enable a nurse to be a patient's most ardent advocate in a medical system marked by heartbreaking dysfunction as well as miraculous success.

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