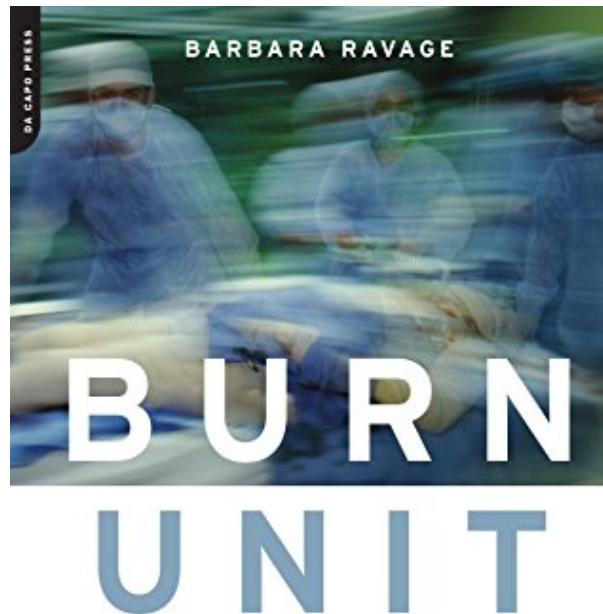


BURN UNIT: SAVING LIVES AFTER THE FLAMES BY BARBARA RAVAGE

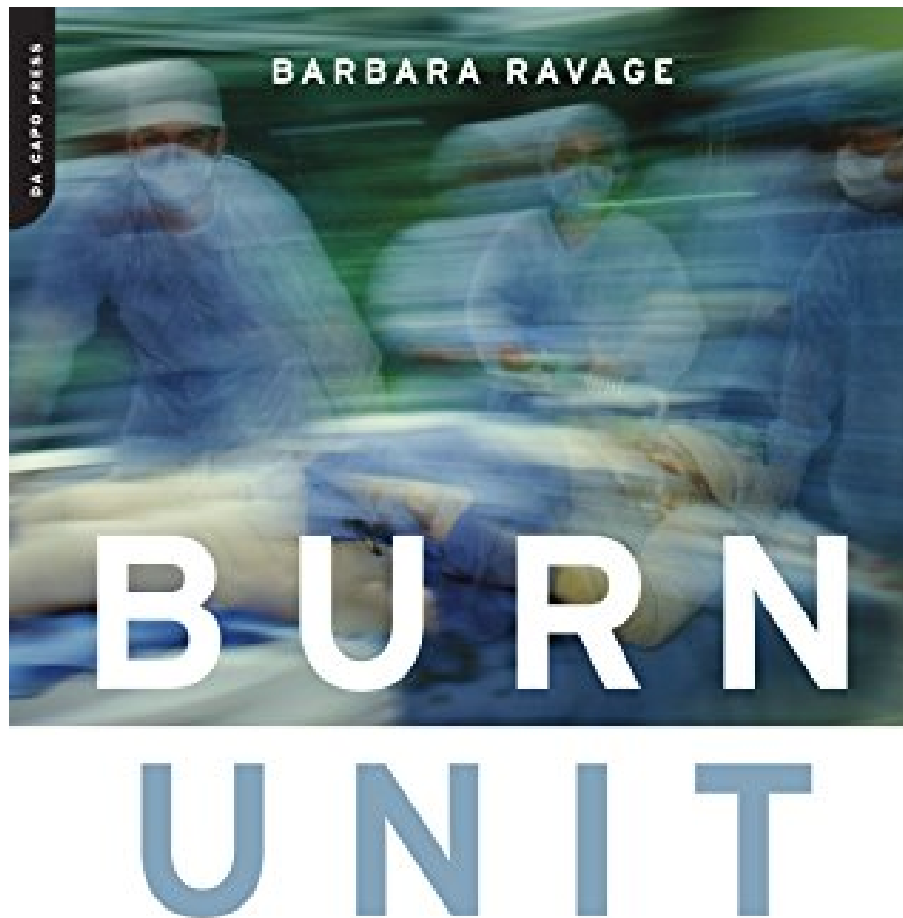


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“A compelling blend of science, history and storytelling. Barbara Ravage has fashioned an enlightening, invaluable book.” —Stewart O’Nan, author of *The Circus Fire: A True Story of an American Tragedy* Though each of us is just a spark away from being a burn victim, the public knows little and understands less about the world that patients inhabit. Pulling the curtains back on this private and sterile environment, *Burn Unit* is a riveting account of the frontline efforts—both modern-day and historical—to save lives devastated by fire. With unflinching urgency, Barbara Ravage follows an extraordinary team of healers at Massachusetts General Hospital, the cradle of modern burn treatment and the site of one of the best burn units in the world. From Boston’s Cocoanut Grove fire of 1942 to the treatment of the victims of the Rhode Island nightclub fire in early 2003, we watch everyday heroes do their incredible but punishing work against the backdrop of history. Both a moving human drama and an engrossing scientific exploration of this little-known field of medicine, *Burn Unit* is an unforgettably powerful read.

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FROM A BURN PATIENT'S SPOUSE TO ANYONE

By Miami Bob

On August 3, my wife was burned in central Anatolia. On August 15, we med-vaced her to the United States. On September 1, I bought this book. On September 20, I received the book. I was so rapt by the writing that I finished this book in two days. Understand, my wife was in the hospital at the time. Reading was not a priority. I visited my wife daily while I ran a family and my own business.

Sometimes a writer's capabilities can so overwhelm the topic. A good writer can make the worst topics readable. Burns, sores, sepsis, pain, and scars are what I neither care to read about nor wish others to read about. The sterile black ink on the white pages cannot deliver the sensations to you of the stench associated with the dead skin, nor show you the grotesque complexity of the red and yellow skin which bleeds easily and often.

I no more would ask a person to experience what my family has lived the past few months, than I would ask

them to clean my plumbing. Burns are a horrible topic which Ms. Ravage has managed to make less horrible.

I used this book for something more than enjoyment. The doctors' mouths, often as clasped as the arteries of their surgical patients, tell little to the patients' family, and when they speak, the language is too often clichéd with inexplicables and nondeterminatives. This book answered questions, told me what to look forward to, and outlined what to anticipate. This was my "Burn Patients' Questions for Dummies." But, written well.

I cringed. I cried. I swallowed hard. And, at times, I had to leave the book. The writing and insight were as razor sharp as the scalpels discussed and referenced in the portion discussing grafting.

Good work Ms. Ravage! You helped a great deal. I can only tell others in my predicament, read this book. And, after you read the book, you will feel better about what there is looming in the slowly progressing and little discussed world of burns.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Fascinating, informative

By Karen McAuley

This is a powerful book, packed with information about the history of burn treatment, the structure and nature of skin, medical techniques, how the body heals and what it takes to work in the demanding field of burn care. The personal stories of the physicians, nurses, inventors, patients and their families sparkle with life.

At times, I must admit, I became impatient with the structure of the book, the deep dives into details about historic fires or what felt like more information than I wanted to know about a particular medical technique. I longed to get back to what was happening with the people who came to feel like my patients, my staff.

The wonderful thing is that Barbara Ravage can make you feel so intimately connected to the people she interviewed, the scenes she witnessed. You sense her driving curiosity and fascination. She makes descriptions of complicated information such as the body's responses to burns or difficult medical procedures vivid and clear. Sometimes her analogies will even make you smile.

I plan to recommend this book to several friends.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Fascinating - impossible to put down!

By Amelia Hard

Being neither a medical professional nor a burn survivor, I didn't expect to be completely fascinated by this book, but I was - once I started reading it, I really couldn't put it down until I'd finished it.

Ms. Ravage's skill in weaving together vivid details of life in the burn unit with overviews of burn science reminded me of one of my favorite writers, John McPhee. Like McPhee, she's able to take a subject the reader knows little about and within a few pages make that subject completely riveting. She also has McPhee's rare ability to illuminate her subject from every possible angle: this book covers the history of burn treatments, stories of some of the most deadly U.S. fires, how the human body responds to burns, the heroic daily work of burn doctors and nurses - and, most unforgettably, the hell endured by recovering burn patients. I was especially impressed by how perfect Ms. Ravage's tone was throughout the book: the scientific passages are easily understandable but not dumbed-down, and the descriptions of the emotionally-charged interactions among the burn unit staff, the patients, and their families are unforgettably moving without a hint of sentimentality.

Despite the grimness of the subject, this book leaves you feeling wonderfully inspired by what ordinary people are capable of: unbelievable courage, endurance, devotion, and compassion.

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