



***Five Days at Memorial: Life
and Death in a Storm-Ravaged
Hospital***

by Sheri Fink

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Children's and Teens Read-A-Likes
- Reviews of 'Five Days at Memorial'
- Related Reads
- Other Resources



Children's and Teen One Book Read-A-Likes

Children's:

Zane and the Hurricane: A Story of Katrina, Rodman Philbrick (Hurricane Katrina)

I Survived: Hurricane Katrina, Lauren Tarshis (Hurricane Katrina)

Saint Louis Armstrong Beach, Brenda Woods (Hurricane Katrina)

Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes, Eleanor Coerr (Death/Grieving)

Bridge to Terabithia, Katherine Paterson (Death/Grieving)

Teen:

Tuesdays with Morrie, Mitch Albom (Life/Death)

The Last Lecture, Randy Pausch (Life/Death)

My Sister's Keeper, Jodi Piccolt (Life/Death, Medical Decisions)

Fault in Our Stars, John Green (Life/Death, Medical Decisions)

Deadline, Chris Crutcher (Life/Death)

Reviews of 'Five Days at Memorial'

Although she had the material for a gripping disaster story, Dr. Fink has slowed the narrative pulse to investigate situational ethics: what happens when caregivers steeped in medicine's supreme value, preserving life, face traumatic choices as the standards of civilization collapse. This approach is a literary gamble, demanding more of readers than a standard-issue medical thriller would. But Dr. Fink...more than delivers. She writes with a seasoned sense of how doctors and nurses improvise in emergencies, and about the ethical realms in which they work.... Sheri Fink has written an unforgettable story. Five Days at Memorial is social reporting of the first rank.

Jason Barry - New York Times

Though not present during the disastrous days, [Fink] interviewed more than 500 participants, from hospital executives to family members, prosecutors and ethicists, recording their comments and descriptions so meticulously that her gripping narrative captures not only the facts of the situation, but the thoughts of her witnesses and the feverishly unfolding disorder, confusion and tragedy. Her choice of sentence structure, the almost staccato voice, and the starkness of style and language reflect the circumstances so well that the reader cannot help being pulled into the discordant rhythms of those chaotic hours...The tone is...visceral and very appropriate to the atmosphere created by the storm and its consequences. What we have here is masterly reporting and the glow of fine writing.

Sherwin B. Nuland - New York Times Book Review

Fink has done a masterful reporting job, and Five Days at Memorial is often engrossing, particularly those pages that take readers inside the hospital...Fink's book is essential reading for anyone who cares about New Orleans, the breakdown of order in disaster zones, and medical dilemmas under crisis circumstances.

Boston Globe

A triumph of journalism...Fink re-creates this world with mastery and sensitivity, revealing the full humanity of each character. Unlike post-storm commentary that jumped to black and white conclusions, painting the doctors as heroes or villains, Fink's narrative wades through the muck and finds only real people making tough choices under circumstances the rest of us, if we're lucky, will never experience

Houston Chronicle

Every page gives evidence of meticulous research, thousands of hours spent interviewing, prowling the halls at Memorial, reviewing legal documents and transcripts...[Fink] offers no easy answers, no rush to judgment. But she does deliver an amazing tale, as inexorable as a Greek tragedy and as gripping as a whodunit.

Dallas Morning News

In this astonishing blend of Pulitzer Prize–winning journalism (Fink, who also has an M.D. and Ph.D., won the award for the investigative reporting on which this book is based) and breathtaking narration, she chronicles the chaotic evacuation of the hospital and the agonizing ethical, physical, and emotional quandaries facing Memorial nurses and doctors, including a nightmarish triage process that led to the controversial decision to inject critically ill patients with fatal doses of morphine.

Publishers Weekly

Fink’s six years of research and more than 500 interviews yield a rich narrative full of complex characters, wrenching ethical dilemmas, and mounting suspense. General readers and medical professionals alike will finish the book haunted by the question, "What would I have done?"

Library Journal

[Fink] offers a stunning re-creation of the storm, its aftermath, and the investigation that followed.... She evenhandedly compels readers to consider larger questions, not just of ethics but race, resources, history, and what constitutes the greater good.... And, crucially, she provides context, relating how other hospitals fared in similar situations. Both a breathtaking read and an essential book for understanding how people behave in times of crisis.

Booklist

Pulitzer Prize–winning medical journalist/investigator Fink War Hospital, 2003 submits a sophisticated, detailed recounting of what happened at Memorial Medical Center in New Orleans during and after Hurricane Katrina. Fink draws those few days in the hospital’s life with a fine, lively pen, providing stunningly framed vignettes of activities in the hospital and sharp pocket profiles of many of the characters.

Kirkus Reviews

*(All reviews sourced, by permission, from Litlovers.com
<http://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/14-non-fiction/9466-five-days-at-memorial-fink>
Accessed 01/10/2015)*

Related Reads

- **Fink, Sheri. "War Hospital: A True Story of Surgery and Survival", New York: Public Affairs, 2003. ISBN 9781586482671. NON-FICTION**

In April 1992, a handful of young physicians, not one of them a surgeon, was trapped along with 50,000 men, women, and children in the embattled enclave of Srebrenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina. There the doctors faced the most intense professional, ethical, and personal predicaments of their lives.

Drawing on extensive interviews, documents, and recorded materials she collected over four and a half years, doctor and journalist Sheri Fink tells the harrowing--and ultimately enlightening--story of these physicians and the three who try to help them. American Medical Writers Association book award; Citation for Excellence, Overseas Press Club; finalist, PEN-Martha Albrand Award.

(Book description quoted from Quotes from Sheri Fink's website: <http://www.sherifink.net>)

- **Gawande, Atul. "Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance", New York: Picador Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0312427658. NON-FICTION**

The struggle to perform well is universal: each one of us faces fatigue, limited resources, and imperfect abilities in whatever we do. But nowhere is this drive to do better more important than in medicine, where lives are on the line with every decision. In his new book, Atul Gawande, the New York Times bestselling author of *Complications*, examines, in riveting accounts of medical failure and triumph, how success is achieved in this complex and risk-filled profession. At once unflinching and compassionate, *Better* is an exhilarating journey, narrated by "arguably the best nonfiction doctor-writer around" (Salon.com).

(This content is taken from the book jacket of the Picador Press 1st paperback edition of *Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance*)

- **McKeon, Darragh. "All That Is Solid Melts into Air", McKeon, Darragh. "All That Is Solid Melts into Air", USA: HarperCollins USA. ISBN-13: 978-1586482671. FICTION.**

Russia, 1986. On a run-down apartment block in Moscow, a nine-year-old prodigy plays his piano silently for fear of disturbing the neighbors. In a factory on the outskirts of the city, his aunt makes car parts, hiding her dissident past. In a nearby hospital, a surgeon immerses himself in his work, avoiding his failed marriage. And in a village in Belarus, a teenage boy wakes to a sky of the deepest of the deepest crimson. Outside, the ears of his neighbor's cattle are dripping blood. Ten miles away, at the Chernobyl Power Plant, something unimaginable has happened. Now their lives will change forever.

(This content is taken from the book jacket of the Harper Perennial 1st paperback edition of *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*)

Other Resources

- <http://www.sherifink.net/resources/> - Includes interactive map of Memorial, timeline, photos, and the original series of articles: The Deadly Choices at Memorial. *Accessed 01/10/2015.*
- <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/was-it-murder/> - 60 Minutes episode featuring Dr. Pou. *Accessed 01/10/2015.*
- <http://www.nola.com/katrina/> - This Times-Picayune site includes original local reporting on the disaster. *Accessed 01/10/2015.*
- http://youtu.be/eHcyC5sc_so - 105 minutes of archival 24 hour news footage from a variety of media outlets. *Accessed 01/10/2015.*