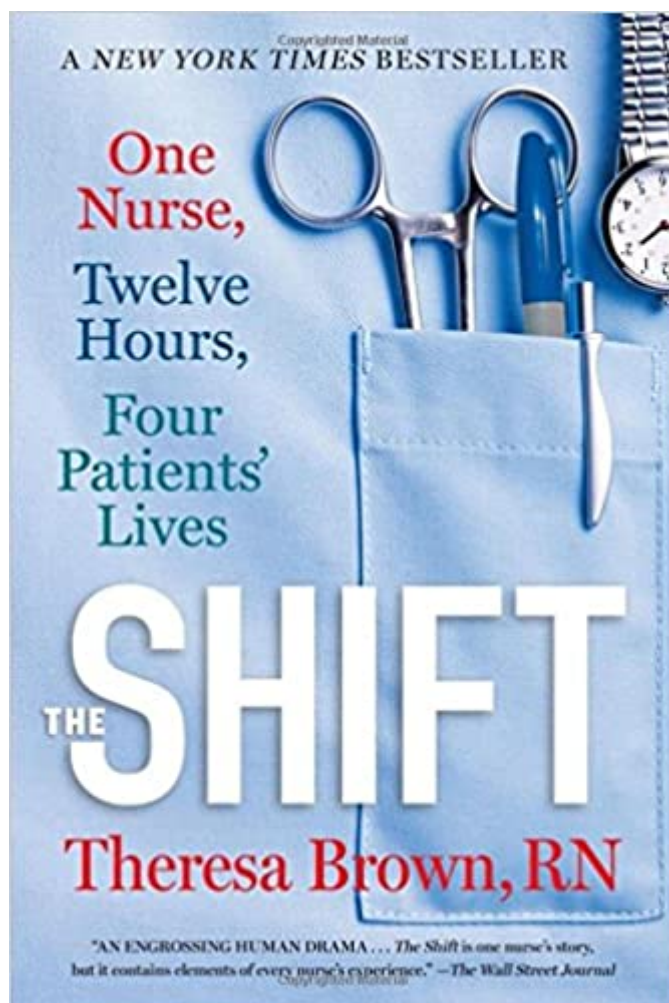


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# The Shift: One Nurse, Twelve Hours, Four Patients' Lives



## Synopsis

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 busy teaching hospital's cancer ward. In the span of twelve hours, lives can be lost, life-altering treatment decisions made, and dreams fulfilled or irrevocably stolen. Unfolding in real time--under the watchful eyes of this dedicated professional and insightful chronicler of events--The Shift gives an unprecedented view into the individual struggles as well as the larger truths about medicine in this country. By shift's end, we have witnessed something profound about hope and humanity.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"An engrossing human drama . . . The Shift is one nurse's story, but it contains elements of every nurse's experience." --The Wall Street Journal "This riveting account of a day in the life of a highly competent and compassionate but overtaxed bedside nurse provides an up-close, insider's view from the perspective of one of the worker bees of the medical world. It raises important questions about staffing, shift lengths, various protocols, and the role of touch, empathy, and record keeping in healthcare . . . The living, breathing heart of Brown's book lies in her vivid, composite profiles of the handful of patients (disguised for privacy) who come under her watch on the day in question, and her enormous concern for them." --The Barnes & Noble Review "The Shift . . . should be required reading for all incoming medical and nursing students--or anyone who is a patient or visitor in a

hospital . . . Her story is riveting in the exacting way she recounts the way her day unfolds. **•** **•** Pittsburgh Post-Gazette **•** “Brown does an excellent job of taking us moment by moment through her day . . . keeping the narrative flowing. The reader feels her affection and deep sense of responsibility for her patients.” **•** **•** Minneapolis Star-Tribune **•** “What makes Brown’s story shine are the touching and sometimes bizarre moments that make real life in a hospital stranger than fiction . . . Brown is able to make her case from the strongest possible vantage point: inside the hospital, where she is doing the work so few of us have the guts to do.” **•** **•** The Boston Globe **•** “This meticulous, absorbing shift-in-the-life account of one nurse’s day on a cancer ward stands out for its honesty, clarity, and heart. Brown . . . juggles the fears, hopes, and realities of a 12-hour shift in a typical urban hospital with remarkable insight and unflagging care. Her memoir is a must-read.” **•** **•** Publishers Weekly (starred review) **•** **•** **•**

**•** “A wonderfully told story of the life-and-death reality of a hospital . . . . Theresa Brown helps us understand the dramas and the dangers as the beautifully evocative stories of nurses and doctors, patients and family members, overlap and entwine during a twelve-hour shift.” **•** **•** Perri Klass, MD, author of Treatment Kind and Fair: Letters to a Young Doctor 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 busy teaching hospital’s cancer ward. In the span of twelve hours, lives can be lost, life-altering treatment decisions made, and dreams fulfilled or irrevocably stolen. Unfolding in real time--under the watchful eyes of this dedicated professional and insightful chronicler of events--The Shift gives an unprecedented view into the individual struggles as well as the larger truths about medicine in this country. By shift’s end, we have witnessed something profound about hope and humanity. **•** “Meticulous, absorbing . . . Stands out for its honesty, clarity, and heart. [Brown] juggles the fears, hopes, and realities of a twelve-hour shift in a typical urban hospital with remarkable insight and unflagging care. Her memoir is a must-read.” **•** **•** Publishers Weekly (starred review) **•** **•** “Riveting . . . Should be required reading for all incoming medical and nursing students--or anyone who is a patient or visitor in a hospital.” **•** **•** Pittsburgh Post-Gazette **•** “What makes Brown’s story shine are the touching and sometimes bizarre moments that make real life in a hospital stranger than fiction.” **•** **•** The Boston Globe **•** “An empathetic and absorbing narrative as riveting as a TV drama.” **•** **•** Kirkus Reviews **•** “Captures perfectly [a nurse’s] central role in any

patient's life. • Susan Love, MD, author of Dr. Susan Love's Breast Book

If you are a nurse you will appreciate Ms. Brown's book. A realistic look at a 12 hour nursing shift, hers in an oncology ward, but with a few simple changes could be on any ward. Truthful in its reality (no bathroom break I noticed....not unusual where I work! ) a 30 min lunch break in 12 hours? Ha! Maybe every other day! I not only loved her honest approach to telling it like it is within the world of nursing, (all those damned interruptions when you are trying to give out meds!) but she's not afraid to show her compassionate side too, following up on transferred or discharged patients. If you want to be a nurse, are a nurse, or just want to see how a nurse's day REALLY looks like, then I highly recommend this read. If you already belong to the sisterhood, reading this book will let you will rest assured knowing someone else has crazy work days too. If you've never walked a mile in nursing shoes, this book will let you try on a pair for size to see if nursing is a good fit. Ms. Brown surely proves that technology, brains and compassion DO belong together, and she has them all.

This is a very gratifying read. I felt understood as a nurse. I felt compassion toward the patients whose needs for nursing care were portrayed realistically. I did wonder about the role of the patient care technician as it was shown; they certainly play a larger role in my hospital and can make or break a shift for me. Also, did I miss something or was this nurse still in the room taking report at 0830? Overall this is a great description of life as a nurse. I'm jealous she only has to take care of 4 patients at a time!

As a nurse I can really relate to the craziness a floor nurse must overcome to get through a shift. There are never enough hours in a shift to get all the work done and the unexpected interruptions are extremely frustrating. Patients think nurses don't care but we really do, we just don't have the time to show it like we would like to. Extremely well written and a unique perspective on the life of a floor nurse. A good example of why the high burn out rate. All hospital nurses should be admired for their dedication and perseverance in a very difficult job.

Had a hard time putting this book down. I worked in the medical field prior, retirement and this is so true to life. I think it portrays a day in a nurses life very accurately. So many times our nursing staff is not appreciated for their knowledge, the care and time they spend with their patients. It was very easy to understand the medical jargon also for someone that is not acquainted with all of the terms.

If you are into medicine, especially nursing, this is THE book for you. It takes you through the personal daily interactions of one nurse, her struggles to provide the best of care under the restraints of management demands, limited time with each patient, more patient needs than can be reasonably be met, and both needs of patients' families and needs of her own family. And more! I came away from this book with great admiration and appreciation for hospital nurses, and a sense of amazement at how they can continue to meet so many demands so well, day after day. If you know a nurse who works in a hospital, this is the perfect gift for them (plus a month of vacation in Hawaii!)

This book takes us through the day of an oncology nurse's 12-hour shift, from the time she leaves her home for work until the time she leaves work for home. It's obvious that the truly nurse cares for her patients and this was a really good read. I will caution that since this is an oncology ward, some patients don't get to leave the hospital. Despite the subject matter, this was an easy, compelling read and I highly recommend this book especially if you enjoy a view from the inside.

A short, very honest book giving a day in the life of an oncology nurse. Theresa (T.) starts with waking in the morning and takes us through her morning routine. Once she arrives at the hospital, we get a colorful, honest, sometimes sad look at the world of a nurse. The description is rife with information about body systems, cancers, and the variable regulations that come with nursing. A good, quick read and I recommend it to those interested in a nursing career.

I'm a retired RN who spent much of my career in the hospital caring for cancer patients. I still have dreams about not getting everything done. The author hit the nail on the head describing a typical shift: the constant reshuffling of priorities, the extra time required by admissions and discharges, the panicky feeling of not getting back to your sickest patient as often as you should, and not having time for a lunch break. I devoured this book and hope it doesn't increase the frequency of my nightmares of feeling like I just can't get it all done. A great read.

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