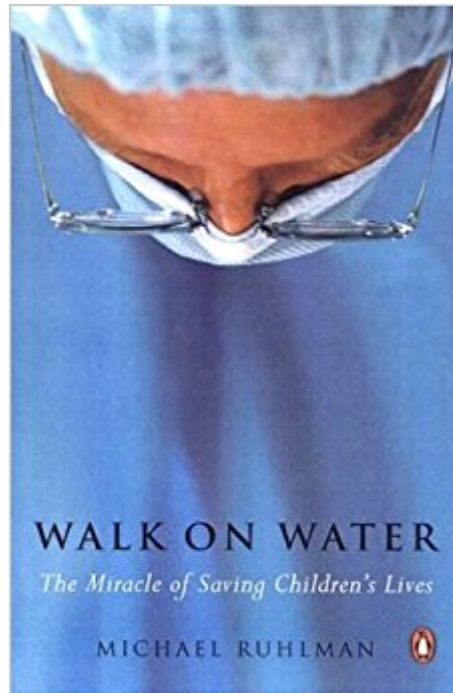




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Walk On Water: The Miracle Of Saving Children's Lives



Synopsis

Described by one surgeon as “soul-crushing, diamond-making stress,” surgery on congenital heart defects is arguably the most difficult of all surgical specialties. Drawing back the hospital curtain for a unique and captivating look at the extraordinary skill and dangerous politics of critical surgery in a pediatric heart center, Michael Ruhlman focuses on the world-renowned Cleveland Clinic, where a team of medical specialists—led by idiosyncratic virtuoso Dr. Roger Mee—work on the edge of disaster on a daily basis. *Walk on Water* offers a rare and dramatic glimpse into a world where the health of innocent children and the hopes of white-knuckled families rest in the hands of all-too-human doctors.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

What kind of person operates on babies' hearts for a living? This is the question Ruhlman set out to answer when he entered the pediatric heart center at the Cleveland Clinic, in Ohio, to observe Dr. Roger Mee, one of the best pediatric heart surgeons in the world, and his team at work. Ruhlman, who has written two other books about people striving for excellence (*The Soul of a Chef* and *Wooden Boats*), describes with awe the precision, speed and ingenuity required to repair or transplant an infant's tiny heart. His gripping OR scenes capture the life-and-death nature of each surgery and illustrate why only perfection is good enough in this new and rapidly developing specialty. As the clinic's physician's assistant tells Ruhlman with a bluntness characteristic of the people he depicts, This is a kid, not a Yugo here. The anguish the families endure only adds to the

pressure on the surgeons. And while congenital heart defects are the most common kind of birth defect, the book reveals that most parents are unaware of the vast difference between having surgery performed by a virtuoso like Dr. Mee and an average surgeon whom a local cardiologist might feel compelled to refer patients to because of HMO protocols. Ruhlman also provides some historical context, weaving in the stories of the maverick surgeons who pioneered the specialty. Although the medical terminology can slow the reader down at times, most will tear through this engaging and often wrenching account. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Michael Ruhlman is the author of *The Making of a Chef*, *The Soul of a Chef*, and *Charcuterie*. He has also collaborated with Thomas Keller on two cookbooks, *The French Laundry Cookbook* and *Bouchon*. Additionally, Ruhlman has written for *The New York Times*, *Gourmet*, *Saveur*, and *Food Arts* magazine, as well as being featured on the PBS series *Cooking Under Fire*.
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This was the first book I read after my daughter was diagnosed with a critical congenital heart defect following my 20 week ultrasound. Even though I am an RN, this book provided me with an excellent foundation from which to pursue the medical treatment my daughter needs. It provides a very rare opportunity to view pediatric cardiothoracic surgery through the medical teams eyes. After reading this book, I've been passing it along to various family members as well. I would highly recommend this book.

This is the third time I have purchased and read this book, and it moves me close to tears each time. Mark Ruhlman went to observe Dr. Roger Mee in 2000. Dr. Mee and his staff had saved the life of my son in 1996-97. Thanks to God and Dr. Mee my son is now 20 years old with a full life ahead of him. It was amazing to watch the miracles occur at the Cleveland Clinic. I hope that in the last 20 years there has been an improvement in the way parents and children get referred to the right surgeons for these perilous operations, but I fear that that improvement has not happened. In our case it was nothing but luck that we were delivered into the hands of Dr. Mee and his staff. If you want to read a well written book about how amazingly gifted people use their gifts to help babies, I recommend this book highly.

A real fan of Ruhlman's previous books, I knew that this would make for good reading. Squeemish at times for those of us not use to inside O.R. environments with all the procedures and organs

being talked about, this rivets one to pediatric heart surgery. Fashioned around a premier surgeon at a leading hospital, the reader is taken on a whirlwind of living on the edge of technology and skill and emotions as heart defects are diagnosed during pregnancy while others found at birth and thereafter are the daily routine of this top notch surgical team which Ruhlman lived with and writes about. One is touched by the intensity of the whole enterprise, the stark reality of it all, day after day, year after year. The enormity of it all. Patching this, switching that, shunting here, stitching this together---all to keep young precious life. The history of the discipline and current happenings are reviewed, with its emphasis on comparative mortality stats for various surgical procedures. Scary to think one's future might well be determined by where one lives and where taken when heart defects occur. The precision and dedication of those who live in this arena is beyond most of our scopes to even begin to fathom, but this book seems to take one there in spirit and interest. The compassionate care looms ever large. Thoughtful, provocative and reflective view of speciality surgery at the leading edge and all the while on edge.

Girlfriend wanted this because this is the doctor that saved her life when she was younger. She loves it. 4 stars cause she's always reading it and never cuddling...

I work in the field of pediatric cardiology, and a coworker recommended this book to me. To be honest, I was expecting a much less humble account from the perspective of the surgeon. I found "Walk on Water" to be a beautiful tribute to the complexity of congenital heart disease, as well as an intimate account of the family experience. It highlighted the inner workings of what it takes to operate on the hearts of small and fragile children, which I found fascinating -- however, it also highlighted the impact of the intra-op and post-op teams that keep these children alive. The technical jargon was, I feel, understandable and easy to comprehend. It might be a little difficult for a non-medical person, but Ruhlman provides decent explanations at every turn. Overall, a captivating look at a tiny subset of medicine.

I read this book while my son was still hospitalized due to his serious heart defect. We had already been thrown into the world of CHD and it was nice to read about others in the same position. It was a great insight to the surgeons and what really goes on in the OR. It might be too much for some parents to know all the details, but I am the person who wants to know it all. I couldn't put this book down. It was so well written and as it tells a story, it also gives great information about many types of heart defects. As I was finishing the book, my son was on his last attempt to extubate before they

were going to do a tracheostomy. We were discouraged because they said he was doing so well and we would be home within 10 days, and then they said he would probably need a tracheostomy due to breathing problems from the heart defect. The last line of the book said something to the effect of "you are your child's ultimate advocate." After I read that I knew I had to go to the docs the next day and demand they give him more time to show them he could breathe on his own. It proved to be the right thing. After a long 99 day stay, mostly due to airway complications, our son came home within a couple weeks, without a tracheostomy. The book is not in my possession now, as many family members have asked to read it and it is making the rounds. It helps family members to understand CHD better, the surgeries, and what we have gone through. Can't say enough good about this book!

What an incredible book! *Walking on Water* is a very honest portrayal of what goes on behind the operating doors for the doctors caring for children with Congenital Heart Defects (CHD). As a mother of a child with a CHD it was a very descriptive and heart wrenching read that allows you to be a fly on the wall once the OR doors close. It is the amazing story of Dr. Mee and his daily fight to extend the quality of life of those children with the worst CHD's. I recommend this book for those who want to be inspired and empowered to make the right decisions for their children based on the information that is revealed in this book. Thank god for all those doctors who make it their life's mission to help improve the quality of life for those with CHD.

great read!

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