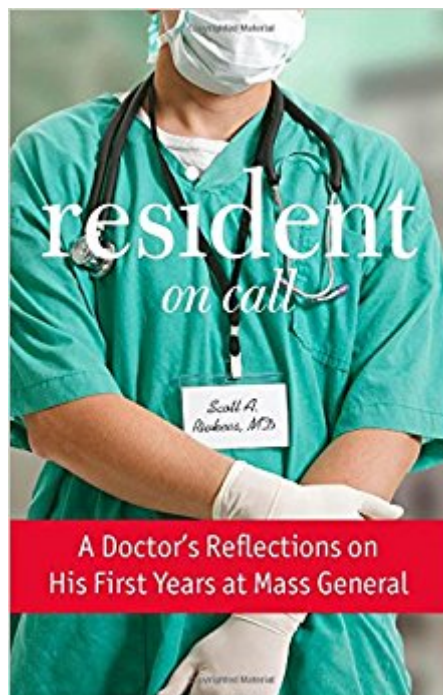




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# Resident On Call: A Doctor's Reflections On His First Years At Mass General



## Synopsis

In turn heartbreaking, irreverent, moving—and at times raucously humorous—one of the nation's leading pediatric researchers recounts his first years as a newly minted, struggling, and insecure doctor at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. A graduate of a state university medical school, Scott Rivkees was competing with elite students from some of the most prestigious schools in the country. Nervous and uncertain, he worked unholy hours with patients ranging from indigent street people to celebrity guests drawn to the reputation and care offered by Mass General. Along the way he learned what medical school textbooks don't teach: how to deal with immense pressure, exhaustion, unruly patients, mysterious conditions, the joy of saving a life, and the wrenching suddenness of losing a patient, more often than not a young child. His resident education did not prevent him from losing his sense of irony and humor as he recounts bleary nights on the town, the allure of young nurses, substandard housing, and the value of pricking an inflated ego.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In these loosely strung-together anecdotes, a seasoned physician looks back on his training as a pediatric resident at Massachusetts General Hospital, affectionately dubbed "Man's Greatest Hospital." His reminiscing charts the arrogance and ambition of youth giving way to feelings of inadequacy and humility, and, much later, the launching of professionalism and even wisdom. Emotional fatigue, sleep-deprivation, and expectations of perfection are unrelenting. Faculty, difficult patients, and the hierarchy of medical apprenticeship are

recalled. Rivkees recounts some tragic cases that he was involved with as a resident: an infant infected with herpes virus that ate holes in her brain tissue, newborn conjoined twins who did not survive the surgery to separate them, and brothers with burns on 95 percent of their bodies. Readers receive a heavy dose of the Boston setting—neighborhood bars, Fenway Park, the Charles River—and descriptions of the author's colleagues, dating experiences, and pranks. The making of a doctor is long, grueling, and engrossing. There are many memoirs of medical training out there, and while Rivkees' is not among the very best, it is frank and certainly of interest. --Tony Miksanek

"Fast-paced memoir." —Wall Street Journal "Amusing medical stories as seen through the eyes of a new doctor." —Kirkus Review "Rivkees . . . documents his time at Mass General with wit, humor, and at times, sadness. Just two months out of medical school, Rivkees encountered his first meningitis case—an eight-week-old girl. It's cases like this that make the book a worthwhile read because we get to see what happens inside one of the country's top hospitals through the eyes of a green freshman." —Boston Magazine "A new humorous and at times serious memoir . . . highlights what residency is truly like, and what the medical school textbooks don't teach, like how to survive long weeks, sleepless nights and whirlwind days at the hospital." —University of Florida Health

New writers attempting the difficult job of relaying the unknown world of hidden emergency rooms and patients. It would be very difficult to convey the amount of emotion in the daily jobs of doctors and nurses, and how much our medical personnel must separate their feelings from their job—otherwise they would not perform efficiently. This book allows us to realize how much they really do care, but must squash down. This book is not a literary champion; the writing struggles, but the attempts to convey the world Mr. Rivkees is in, really encompasses us. A nice book. It is short, and I wish there was more.

Dr. Scott Rivkees did a phenomenal job balancing humor (literally laughed out loud throughout the book) with compassion and excellent storytelling. I found it very hard to put down. If you are looking for a light but very satisfying summer read-- look no further! I can already see a screenplay coming out of this book!

I was surprised at how entertaining this book was. It is a true page turner and is a collection of funny

and serious accounts. This book is great if you want a good read.

This book is a must read for anyone in or considering a career in medicine or related fields. It will help you appreciate how hard doctors work.

I had looked forward to reading this book. It is a huge disappointment. Horrible names, such as The Tear Drop Lounge, used for the room where desperate parents waited to learn the fate of their sick children gave the book an unexpected callousness...and I'm a nurse, and somewhat accustomed to the harshness of hospitals. The total disregard for patient confidentiality is astonishing. It is haunting in its shallowness and I take no pleasure in saying so.

Great book! What a memory he has for past cases! I enjoyed from the first page to the last. Would love to hear more now that he is a doctor!

Funny, informative, and heart breaking. The good doctor does a great job with detailed descriptions. I can see Wags In my own mind and soul.

As a 30+ year RN who spent most of my nursing career in a large teaching hospital I expected something different from what I got from this book. The life of the intern and resident is very challenging. The growth that takes place during this period makes the doctors who take care of us. I expected to read more about the growth process and his feelings along the way. It seemed that instead the book was just a disjointed collection of experiences. But, then maybe this guy's gifts lie in his medical expertise and not his writing skills.

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