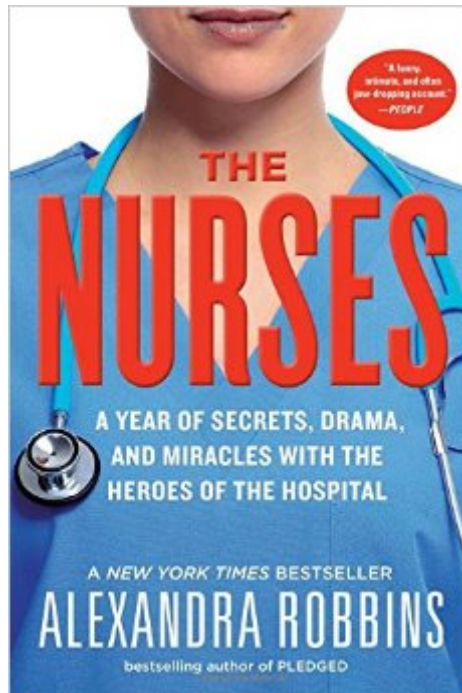


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# The Nurses: A Year Of Secrets, Drama, And Miracles With The Heroes Of The Hospital



## Synopsis

A New York Times bestseller. A funny, intimate, and often jaw-dropping account of life behind the scenes. "PeopleNurses is the compelling story of the year in the life of four nurses, and the drama, unsung heroism, and unique sisterhood of nursing one of the world's most important professions (nurses save lives every day), and one of the world's most dangerous, filled with violence, trauma, and PTSD. In following four nurses, Alexandra Robbins creates sympathetic characters while diving deep into their world of controlled chaos. It's a world of hazing nurses eat their young. Sex not exactly like on TV, but surprising just the same. Drug abuse disproportionately a problem among the best and the brightest, and a constant temptation. And bullying by peers, by patients, by hospital bureaucrats, and especially by doctors, an epidemic described as lurking in the shadowy, dark corners of our profession. The result is a page-turning, shocking look at our health-care system. A

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Although this non-fiction book focuses on four Emergency Room nurses and their personal experiences at various hospitals in an unnamed, large US city, it also includes reflections and anecdotes contributed by many other nurses from all over the world. The meticulous research by the author is evident as statistics and cited material provide a valid snapshot of many issues important to nurses, other healthcare workers, and patients. The voices of the many different types of licensed nurses are heard loud and clear -- LPN, RN, NP, CS, CRNA, DNP with all types of special certifications to add more credentials indicating specialty of practice. Two main points are

clear -- nurses mostly love what they do, and they deserve respect and support. Long gone are the days when a nurse dressed in white and wore a cap, stood when a doctor came for rounds, and routinely did as bid without question. Nurses are sentient, compassionate and well-educated practitioners in their own right, doing what they do best -- providing physical care, giving spiritual and emotional support, as well as meticulously assessing, planning, documenting, and evaluating the patient's response and condition at all times. They don't want to be medical doctors, and feel that being a nurse is not a second tier position but one that should be valued on the same level as part of the health care team. When blatant bias against nurses is revealed herein, it's obvious that, although nursing has come a long way since the early days, there is still a long way to go to change perception and treatment of these professionals. When my family gathers for any occasion, there are among us 4 nurses (one an NP), 2 medical doctors (one a hospitalist and the other a surgeon) and 2 pharmacists.

THE NURSES is a very unsettling book. It actually made me mad to read this book. The authors show the reader what it's like being a nurse in a busy hospital - and sometimes in a hospital with far too few resources to properly care for the patients. Some of the cases do not make for pleasant reading. For example at the hospital which the authors referred to as "city center Medical" the nurses have to be with a woman "who had attempted suicide by turning on a BBQ to grill in her bedroom and inhaling the gas." The author does not sugarcoat things. One of the nurses followed in this book is recovering from a serious substance abuse problem. She still is tempted daily, when she sees drugs lying around. The author also describes situations where nurses are intimidated or abused. For example, at a busy city hospital, the administration was "required to give nurses breaks, yet the constantly short staffed Pines nurses never had time for them." Physicians are sometimes not presented in a very positive light. In one case, where "Sam" is trying to help a critically ill patient, the attending physician is found surfing on the internet, instead of seriously looking at the patient. In fact, the doctor "had not spent five minutes with the patient." The sections that scared me the most in this book were the descriptions of lack of cleanliness at hospitals. The authors cite a surprise inspection at one busy hospital where "They were so disgusted by the lack of cleanliness and the nurse to patient ratio that they nearly shut down the ER on the spot... They found several different strains of bacteria. They gave the hospital 45 days to fix the ER." Aargh!

This is an interesting insider look at nursing. It doesn't seem intellectually rigorous, so I'd take it with a grain of salt, but it is compelling reading. For a reader not in the medical profession, it

did make me aware of many of the issues nurses face. Slightly over half of the book consists of the narratives of four nurses whom the author followed for a year. Robbins is a strong storyteller and so these sections make for compelling reading, recounting the challenges the nurses face in their professional and personal lives. These women were generous in baring their lives for inspection, and their stories ring true even as they sometimes read like fiction, with a fast pace and lots of dialogue. One is recovering from an addiction to painkillers, which are all too easily obtained in the hospital; another is hurt by her exclusion from a clique at work; a third, as a brand-new nurse, struggles with her own social awkwardness as she learns the ropes. They all face work problems, including high patient loads and hospital policies that consistently disfavor nurses, along with personal problems such as infertility or unsupportive marriages. At the same time, they are all dedicated to their jobs and find moments of triumph and connection. These stories are likely not representative of all nurses, however. All four protagonists work in hospital emergency rooms in the same unnamed city; all four are American-born white women under 45 (per the author, the average age of American nurses is 47); three are close friends with each other, and the fourth is a friendly acquaintance.

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