



# **Walk on Water: The Miracle of Saving Children's Lives**

*Michael Ruhlman*

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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.

## Walk on Water: The Miracle of Saving Children's Lives Details

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# From Reader Review Walk on Water: The Miracle of Saving Children's Lives for online ebook

## Paula says

This amazing doctor was our Granadson's first open-heart surgeon.

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## Jennifer Mccann says

A friend recommended this book to me when we were discussing our children's common pediatric cardiologist. She mentioned that our doctor was mentioned in this book. So it is always interesting to read a book in which a person you know is mentioned.

It is the story of Roger Mee (mostly) and his team at the Cleveland Clinic, and how they are the FOREMOST congenital pediatric heart surgery team in the world. It is at times mired in technical detail and at times heart breaking. It is the technical detail that brings this book down. Seriously, if you want to discuss the anatomy of the heart in detail and all the particular defects, a few drawings might have been really helpful.

It is also angering how easily a child with a heart condition can be treated by inadequate surgeons, and the parents will never know. Many pediatric cardiologists deliberately do not inform the parents of their choices in treatments and doctors. It is a matter of ego, or reimbursement, or insurance, or geography that influences their recommendations.

More terrifying are the young guns who are operating on children, and just learning how to operate on perhaps the most delicate of all neonate organs in the body.

After reading this book, should my daughter ever progress to the point of surgery, at least I know whom to go to.

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## Rob Loflin says

excellent book about a great surgeon and how he came to be. the author specializes in writing books about people who do things well. he's written one about boat builders that i liked and another one about chefs.

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## Nancy says

This book was incredible to me not only because I lived near the Cleveland Clinic and remember many of the events and people presented in these stories, but also because Michael Ruhlman has a wonderful way of approaching and describing the most delicate and the most disturbing scenes that can, and frequently do, occur in hospitals.

This is a year in the life of celebrated pediatric cardiothoracic surgeon, Roger Mee. Ruhlman shadowed Mee in 2000, following him from home to office to OR and on rounds. As a result of his adventures, Ruhlman is able to describe in accurate and sensitive detail the stories surrounding a handful of the baby hearts Roger Mee repaired (with the help of his remarkable team), and the lives that were changed during his career. It is an amazing inside look.

Jonathan Drummond-Webb, another cardiothoracic surgeon, also appears in the pages of this book shortly before he moved to Arkansas Children's hospital in 2001. Drummond-Webb had a story of his own that ended tragically when his extraordinary talent was snuffed out too soon by suicide in December of 2004.

If you can - read this book.

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### **Missy says**

As an adult with congenital heart disease and two children with heart defects, I am pretty much an 'expert' at having heart problems. This book is spot on about how it feels to be a parent of heart babies and patient with heart defects. I like to see both sides of the fence (the medical professional side and the patient side).

Ruhlman delivers both. It provides insight to those who have never had to deal with any health issues with their children (thankfully...i wouldn't wish it on anybody). It also shows some of the success stories. My only wish is that it showed a few more successes in detail (not just numbers and stats) but interviews with the families who have witnessed miracles, as well. There is nothing - nothing - like seeing your child be brought back from death at the hands of skilled doctors and nurses (and in the hands of God). I loved the book, none-the-less, because it was the story of my life and the history of how our surgeons and doctors became who they are and how they now do what they do.

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### **Leslie Kay says**

A terrific, terrifying and, at times, tragic read. Loved every second of this beautiful book, and I might even know how to speak like a surgeon now. HaHa. I'm grateful for the medical people who dedicate themselves to excellence, and I'm grateful for Michael Ruhlman who gave us such a detailed glimpse into the world of pediatric heart care - both from the doctor's, medical staff, and the family's perspective.

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### **Leslie says**

After our experience with Cam I didn't think I'd be able to read this, and it definitely was tough at times. But mostly this book, which follows the intense lives of pediatric cardiac surgeons and their teams, left me feeling astounded at the amazing advancements in the field over just the last decades. And grateful. So very grateful.

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### **Carrie says**

I loved this book- mostly because i knew most of the children;s surgical team when i was working at the Clinic. They really are spectacular people!

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### **Jayne says**

I decided to read this book because next year my husband will be starting his pediatric congenital surgery fellowship. This book gave me a well rounded idea of what his life, our family's life and those lives affected with these conditions are/will be like. The world of congenital heart defects is a very encompassing/consuming place. It is filled with joy and heartache not only for the families that are dealing with a loved one with these issues but also for those that spend their lives fixing and finding new and better ways to care for them.

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### **Samantha says**

An excellent book, though I found it to be sad at most points. Rather, I mean that to say that I am glad both of my children were born without heart defects.

Ruhlman presents a brief history of heart surgery, and a good picture of those that make congenital heart surgery their work. He does an excellent job of showing those members both as human, as the miracle-workers that they are seen to be by outsiders. I liked his voice within the book, like that of a friend, who got to tag along and was shown a great deal of what goes on behind the scenes. The parents of all of these children were painted very well, also, I thought, shown stark within the reality of their situation. Mostly, I liked that everyone in the book, even the patients, had a face.

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### **Michelle says**

Fascinating look into the world of pediatric cardiac surgery. Some parts were way too technical for me (over my head), but I loved learning about these remarkable physicians, nurses, and other members of the healthcare team who have this vocation. The glimpse into the pain and worry of the families was at turns heartbreaking and joyous. Worth reading.

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### **Melissa Winder says**

Being a Pediatric Cardiac ICU nurse practitioner, I was curious but hesitant to read this book. Then I started it and couldn't put it down. I think this is the most accurate accounting of life is like working in the world of congenital heart disease - the ups and downs, the personalities, the harshness and humor, even the vocabulary is spot-on. Although it's written by an author who was completely unfamiliar with the field, he really did his research. There were only minor inaccuracies, and the stories were very compelling. It again reminded me

why I love my job so very much. I was a little put off with the chapter on referrals to heart surgeons. I can see why this may be viewed as a concern, but I thought it went a little far to make an issue more dramatic than it is.

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### **Deb says**

Michael Ruhlman is a local celebrity and a fairly nice guy. I see him at our community pool all summer and his kid is in my daughter's Montessori classroom.

In addition to all that ephemera, I appreciate the premise of his work. My partner first started reading his books about world class chefs and what it takes to work in a top kitchen, an area of interest to her. I was not so interested in reading about cooking but this book, about pediatric cardiac surgery, grabbed my attention since I used to do pediatric anesthesia and knew some of the players in the book.

He illustrates a world completely alien to most of us, and blessedly so. It's not an easy or fun read, but it is fascinating.

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### **Julie says**

MY DREAM JOB!!! Pediatric cardiothoracic surgeon - awesome!! Great book for anyone who wants motivation to be great at whatever they do!

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### **Beth says**

Having a child with a serious heart defect (hlhs--mentioned in the book) and 3 open heart surgeries ( I read this between #2 & #3), it gave me more understanding and appreciation for the surgeons and hospital staff. True to life from a parent of a child who has spent weeks in the hospital on a roller coaster. A bit intense--not a book to read soon before a scheduled surgery.

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### **Marie (UK) says**

This was essentially a decent book just a bit repetitive. I feel like the author got ogled down in the statistics and the ethical dilemma whether any child should be sent to a doctor whose s were result less than the best.

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### **Rebecca Ashcraft says**

This book gave a wonderful overview of the origination of pediatric and adult cardiac surgery programs. I had no idea most of the huge strides had occurred during my lifetime...

I recommend this book to anyone related to a cardiac surgeon (hi, Kara and Abi!), anyone in medical school

(hi, Cordel!), and anyone who wants to read the most beautiful description of how a heart forms in utero (hi, everybody in the word!).

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**Meg says**

I should've expected that a book about babies born with heart defects would be like trying to read a buzzfeed WE BET YOU CAN'T MAKE IT THROUGH THIS WITHOUT CRYING list but I am very naive sometimes.

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**Trish says**

This is the first congenital pediatric heart book I ever read. I ended up doing my final nursing paper on CHD in children.

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**Mary says**

The author, a journalist, spends a year with pediatric cardio surgeons. I've given this book to every young person I know who wants to be a doctor.

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