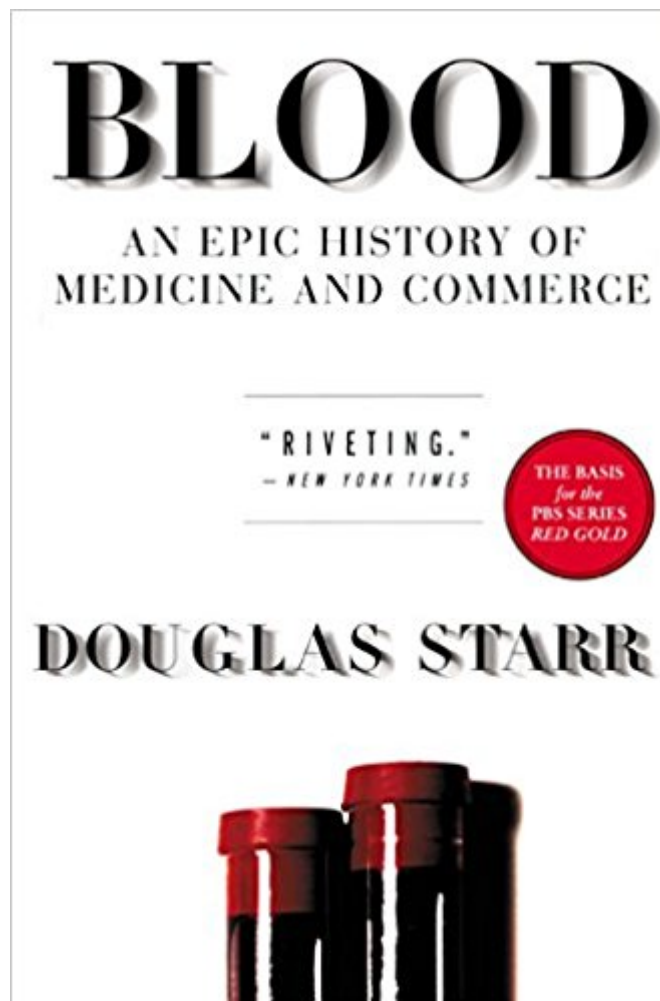




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Blood: An Epic History Of Medicine And Commerce



Synopsis

Powerfully involving narrative and incisive detail, clarity and inherent drama: Blood offers in abundance the qualities that define the best popular science writing. Here is the sweeping story of a substance that has been feared, revered, mythologized, and used in magic and medicine from earliest times--a substance that has become the center of a huge, secretive, and often dangerous worldwide commerce. Winner of the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, Blood was described by judges as "a gripping page-turner, a significant contribution to the history of medicine and technology and a cautionary tale. Meticulously reported and exhaustively documented."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've worked in the blood industry for almost 30 years, in the front trenches (hospital blood banks/transfusion services) and in the rear support areas (community blood centers, research institutions, and pharmaceutical/medical device manufacturers) in technical, sales, marketing and production management positions. For me, Starr's admirable volume works best during the first half, when the historical evolution of blood and blood product therapy from the 17th century up to the end of World War II is described. After that, it becomes repetitive of the excellent work previously authored by Randy Shilts, "And the Band Played On". The hepatitis and AIDS crises of the late 20th century have certainly revealed the various international and national elements of the blood industry to be conservative, cantankerous, shortsighted, jingoistic, sometimes lacking in social conscience, occasionally unethical, often self-serving to the point of greed, and with leaders of monumental

egos. Sounds like any other human group endeavor to me. What else is new? Maybe an industry that provides wire clothes hangers might be more idealistic, but I doubt it. The bulk of the later chapters is "bad news". But then, to the author, who is a former newspaper reporter, the only news worth telling would naturally be bad news. In any case, Starr has clearly done a mountain of research. I would highly recommend this book to anyone outside of the blood industry who wishes to understand the broad mechanics of collecting, preserving and distributing blood and blood products. I would also recommend it to a person such as myself, immersed in the day-to-day technology of getting blood to the patient, who has never been exposed to the history of the art.

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