



First, Do No Harm

Lawrence W. Gold

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If you believe that television, movies or medical fiction, accurately portray what it's like to be an acute care physician or a critically ill patient in a hospital today, think again. Doctor Joseph Polk is an intelligent, charismatic, and a powerful member of the medical staff at Brier Hospital in the San Francisco Bay Area, and he's killing his patients. No gun, knife, poison or drug injected into their intravenous tubing, common plot lines in medical thrillers, and he doesn't plan to kill them. They die anyway because this once brilliant physician, a functional psychopath for most of his career, has decompensated.

Nurses and front-line physicians see Polk's indifference, incompetence, and stubborn cruelty, but the medical staff and the hospital administration are willfully blind. Patients suffer, and worse.

Jack Byrnes, finally completing his training in Intensive Care Medicine, joins the staff at Brier Hospital. Well prepared to care for patients, Jack is woefully unprepared when he runs smack into Joe Polk, the medical staff and the hospital's administration.

The strength of "First, Do No Harm" lies in the authenticity of the medical setting and the struggles of patients and physicians. Joe Polk is a very different kind of villain.

First, Do No Harm Details

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Esmeralda says

I enjoy medical shows so I liked this book.

"The doctor is often more to be feared than the disease" French proverb.

Jack Byrnes is a specialist in intensive care who is new to Brier Hospital, a private community hospital. He has been specially trained to deal with the sickest patients. Unfortunately some of these patients have arrived in this unit because of physician negligence.

Dr. Joe Polk is popular with HMOs because of his ability to see the most patients in the shortest amount of time. His patients love him and he even has his own radio show. But many of his patients are winding up in ICU. He is condescending to nurses, ignores their recommendations and is impossible to reach when there is an emergency.

Jack Byrnes and Warren Davidson, the chief of medicine want to stop Dr. Polk before he harms more patients. But they are facing a tough fight with the hospital bureaucracy.

Donna Sheldon says

Scared me to death. Maybe because I've encountered my share of Dr. Joe Polks in my long life. My father recommended this book to me. He was a former hospital administrator and had struggled for years, trying to oust bad doctors from his hospital. First, my sister read it. She's a nurse practitioner and kept nodding her head all the way through this. Then I read it, with a different perspective. This is a reminder, folks, that it's okay to fire your doctor, and many people don't, when they should.

Word has it that Dr. Gold has another Brier Hospital story coming out any day now. For sure, I'll be picking that one up.

Lynda Kelly says

Not for me in this state. Full of mistakes and I wasn't prepared to persevere. He seems to want to use big words and flowery sentences without getting the basics right as well which is irritating. I'd seen enough by page 13 !!

Page 1 we have this-"Steve loved Laura's warm genuine smile gave her an earthly quality"makes no sense at all. Then the word crackin' used in place of crackin' and lightening not lighting.

The flowery stuff like 'entrapped by their own personas' and 'after the coarse buzz' to describe a call button....annoying in the extreme. Got to this sentence on page 13 and gave up-"I finally achieving the knowledge and experience to justify the responsibility I wielded on a daily basis" employed the big words while getting the tense wrong....just not right. Needs a proper proofreading exercise done.

I had a lot of this series downloaded as free ones but paid for this first one so was less than impressed !

Michelle A. Nash says

First , Do No Harm

A young doctor goes up against an established and well known physician after patients begin dying and/or developing complications in his care. Dr. Gold does an admirable job of making the mystery of medicine comprehensible for all readers.

Lynda says

Book would have ranked 5 stars but for errors. Probably editing error -- a word left over so a sentence ends up with two "will" ... and a letter "...from *t Raby*." A segment with missing word or words "...*John McPherson attracted and repelled Janet me*."

This is not an easy book to read. The following is on the cover of the book:

If you believe that television, movies, or medical fiction, accurately portray what it's like to be an acute care physician or a critically ill patient in a hospital today, think again.

Written by a doctor as the voice of a doctor in the book (he's a good guy), be prepared to be scared. I couldn't read another book like this for a little bit. Has a good doctor gone bad? Or had he already been bad but got away with it? Even when the hospital finds out he has truly harmed -- no, he has done more than just harm -- patients, will they protect their own or do something about it? A riveting book.

Theresa says

Medical mystery

I am glad I read book 2 before I read book 1. The story line was good but a lot of the negotiations and meetings were to long and drawn out. That is the reason for my lower rating.

Elaine says

It's difficult to believe that a person could be guilty of the type of behavior Dr. Joe Polk is guilty of and yet remain aloof and without remorse. His patients suffer at his hands while he maintains nonchalance and an innocent attitude.

Though probably not a page-turner, *First Do No Harm* moves along at more than a casual pace as we follow the medical conditions of some seriously ill patients from their first symptoms and phone calls to Dr. Polk, to their hospital care and beyond. The reader gets a sense of the frustrations of the nursing staff in dealing with Dr. Polk as he demeans them and is slow in returning phone calls. He's downright rude and obnoxious. At

times, even to his patients.

Some romance.

David Donaghe says

This was a good read if you like medical reads and hospital stories.

A. Hunt says

I enjoyed this book off and on, because it gave me a bit of insight into the doctor 's world, but sometimes it got a bit too technical. It was listed as horror, but it was more like a slow thriller. I'm sorta bummed that I bought the other books now.

Douglas Castagna says

Plagued with editorial issues, this story, which seemed like it would be a fast and interesting read drags on almost interminably. I put it down several times and kept trying to come back to it, even reading other books in between, but it was all for naught. I was not able to finish this even getting two thirds through. It was a chore.

Jina Howell-Forbes says

Great Series, great book. This is the first book in the Brier Hospital Series. I read one of the later books in the series without knowing it was part of a series, so I must admit that I know that the writing gets even better and the stories get more complex as the series progresses. That said, this is a really good book. It is a medical procedural novel, with a lot of details about specific diseases and treatments. If those thing are not of interest, then the story will probably not be worthwhile. But there actually is much more to the story than the medical stuff, because it is also a murder mystery. Although for me, the murder mystery was the least interesting aspect. In addition to the medical issues, I really appreciated the attention to the details of the relationships among the staff. The book has a little bit of everything, and the best part is, I know the subsequent books in the series it get even better.

Bob says

A private hospital is plagued with the poor performance of one of its long Doctors. He makes poor or miss diagnosis, he berates nurses how try to bring problems with his patients, he is often unavailable when called about his patients conditions and is generally disliked. Dr. Jack Byrne is a fairly new member of the hospital staff and is acting as a general internist and consultant and he is the focus that the story returns too as it chronicles the history of various patients of the disliked Dr. that he has had to step in and try to reverse fife

threatening conditions brought on by Drs. poor treatment. The story follows the several cases as the hospital board works to try to get rid of the bad egg, but it's not an easy task as the reader will find out. I had to get used to the way it jumped from case descriptions to Jack's personal life and thoughts but aside from some editing work needed, it was a decent read.

Linda says

Read this one first in the Briar Hospital Series as dedicated professionals root out a bad actor in their ranks. Great reading!

Teresa Gagean says

Excellent

One of the best books I have read in a long time! I can't wait to read more! As a nurse I emphasized with the nurses and doctors in this book! Excellent!

Deborah Fertakis says

The writer was good, story moved quickly. Editing was surprisingly poor. Enough to be distracting.
