



Rapid Response: True Stories of My Life as a Paramedic

Lysa Walder

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A teenage boy lies on the pavement, bleeding to death from a stab wound; a distraught mom watches, in mute shock, as her daughter suffers a terrifying fatal asthma attack; a young girl is gang raped and her stricken boyfriend takes an overdose; a disturbed young man flings himself in front of a speeding train at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve. Few people can imagine living in a world where such situations are part of everyday life. Yet for London Ambulance Paramedic Lysa Walder, these and thousands of other emergency calls are part of a day's work—scenes of tragedy, loss, and horror—but also stories of triumph and humor, and all the results of an urgent 999 call to the biggest and busiest free ambulance service in the world. Here, she tells the inside story behind the screaming sirens and flashing blue lights of the emergency services and reveals what it's really like to work in a job that frequently brings paramedic teams face-to-face with death—and destiny.

Rapid Response: True Stories of My Life as a Paramedic Details

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From Reader Review Rapid Response: True Stories of My Life as a Paramedic for online ebook

Christine Blachford says

This is another of a growing list of “occupational memoirs” that I’ve been enjoying over the last few years. Tales from people in interesting jobs – most notably the ambulance service, and hospitals. This time it’s Lysa, who trained as a nurse but craved the excitement of the unknown and retrained as a paramedic.

The stories are nice, Lysa has a way of making them about more than just the actual events – each memory has a point, and it’s not a moan about the NHS or the way human beings can be, they’re almost more philosophical than that. It’s hard to describe, but it’s well written and I enjoyed it. Quite short, but easy to digest and the stories are gathered into nice collections such as “relationships” and “it shouldn’t happen to a paramedic.” Some of the stories really shouldn’t!

Charise says

This was a series of anecdotes about various emergency calls as experienced by Lysa, an EMT in London.

The book was a fascinating glimpse of humanity as its best and worst. The stories were touching, infuriating, and heartbreaking. A very quick read that offers an interesting perspective.

Louise Jones says

umm this book is handy to read whilst waiting for a bus not saying it was awful but got a bit samey saying that i quite enjoyed some aspects of it like I have always liked me but perhaps a little medical dramas and gave a bit of an insight in to the medical world and their wording but sometimes a bit to knowledge is a dangerous things !!! just a bit to sweet for me !!!

Beth says

Such an amazing and detailed book about the world of paramedics. Whether you’re interested in the front line action or your training to be a paramedic yourself, this book has some fantastic stories that you won’t forget.

Jo says

Walder is a paramedic in London and this book tells a few stories about the cases she's dealt with. It's not literature and does exactly what it says on the tin.

Julia says

This has been a book that has been laying around my house for a bit. Refreshingly enough it is a book that is about one emergency responder within the U.K., some of the calls she has done over the years, and her opinions or thoughts that stem from those same experiences.

The reader is given a chance to see what it takes to respond to emergencies and, if they aren't a part of the U.K., to see the comparisons of the medical response teams and other closely related groups. As a result it is both a memoir and a cultural snapshot to interested readers.

Due to the nature of the book most of the chapters do contain a bit of a graphic account that is not for the squeamish. Since she chose so many of these graphic accounts and so many of these patients died was a bit of a letdown to me. As a result of her including so many ways that calls go wrong for those who need their services I feel that the book was a bit of a letdown.

At the same time Lysa keeps her professional manner in her writing. As a writing focused on response to people in danger there is very little surrender to emotional under- or overtone. Although she does get a bit tongue-in-cheek in some areas or a bit sad it doesn't shine as brightly as other emotional reads.

Otherwise the book was a great read and one that has opened my eyes on so many levels. Again it isn't for the squeamish and with some of its lewd nature it would also be a much better read for adult readers.

Kristin says

This is the first book I've read by a paramedic from Great Britain, though I have two others on my 'to read' list. The only major difference, besides the different words they use like lift for elevator, fag for cigarette, etc. is that Walder seems to be in a position where she responds to the scene in a car with basic first aid equipment and an ambulance responds separately. I've not read about medics serving in a similar role here in the States. The closest parallel I could think of is the fire chief who responds to fires in his own car separate from the trucks, but Walder is hands-on with the patients, whereas the fire chief serves in more of a supervisory role at fires.

It's also one of the few I've read by a female paramedic, which brings a different perspective to it, though I'm sure the guys get hit on by drunk women just as often as Walder does by the drunk guys. The book focuses completely on the calls she goes on and doesn't have much discussion about the other medics she works with or what goes on during their downtime, but there is no doubt in my mind that she is an equal to the guys in every respect. I do wonder how she drew the short straw to have to climb through the bramble patch to reach the 'body' while the cops and other medics stood on a bridge above directing her in one story. Bad luck I suppose.

The book does not tread lightly, as the first segment was a series of the more tragic calls Walder has taken. The other segments are more loosely grouped but all contain stories on a theme. There aren't a whole lot of 'happy' stories here, but chances are, when you call 999 (or 911), it's not because you're in a celebratory mood. So, I am sure most of the memories Walder has are of the seriously ill and injured, and if she can get

them to the hospital alive and with a chance, it's a good outcome.

In the end, it doesn't matter whether the rescues are happening in the USA or England, the story is the same, and I greatly enjoyed reading that story..

Melissa says

Lysa's stories are stories that should range in emotions but her writing style was a bit flat.

Fitri Khairuddin says

very very interesting stories. made me realize how lucky i am to still be alive

Salty Turtle says

Fascinating stories, achingly sad and an amazing human being. The writing could be a little sharper but the tales more than make up for it.

Empathy says

I really enjoyed these stories, and it is very interesting to learn about the EMS in other areas. It's also nice to read a book from the female perspective, which doesn't seem to happen as often.

Jen Wake says

A fantastic book, read in a day. Alternately funny and heart breaking, this book gives a real insight into the life of a paramedic
