



Bringing Out the Dead

By Joe Connelly

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Bringing Out the Dead By Joe Connelly

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Perhaps only someone who has worked for almost a decade as a medic in New York City's Hell's Kitchen--as Joe Connelly has--could write a novel as riveting and fiercely authentic as **Bringing Out the Dead**. Like a front-line reporter, Connelly writes from deep within the experience, and the result is a debut novel of extraordinary power and intensity.

In Frank Pierce, a brash EMS medic working the streets of Hell's Kitchen, Connelly gives us a man who is being destroyed by the act of saving people. Addicted to the thrill ("the best drug in the world") and the mission of the job, Frank is nevertheless drowning in five years' worth of grief and guilt--his own and others': "my primary role was less about saving lives than about bearing witness." His wife has left him, he's drinking on the job, and just a month ago he "helped to kill" an eighteen-year-old asthmatic girl. Now she's become the waking nightmare of all his failures: hallucination and projection ("the ghosts that once visited my dreams had followed me out to the street and were now talking back"), and as real to him as his own skin. And in reaction to her death, Frank has desperately resurrected a patient back into a life now little better than death.

In a narrative that moves with the furious energy of an ambulance run, we follow Frank through two days and nights: into the excitement and dread of the calls; the mad humor that keeps the medics afloat; the memories, distant and recent, through which Frank reminds himself why he became a medic and tries, in vain, to convince himself to give it up. And we are with him as he faces his newest ghost: the resurrected patient, whose demands to be released into death might be the most sensible thing Frank has heard in months, if only he would listen.

Bringing Out the Dead is riveting and fiercely authentic -- a stunning debut novel of extraordinary power and intensity.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

For nearly a decade author Joe Connelly rushed from emergency to emergency as a paramedic in the Hell's Kitchen area of New York City. This is the novel he wrote to purge, perhaps redeem, the torment of his experiences in the trenches with the dying and the barely living. Connelly seems to be a born writer, for this first novel makes brilliant use of unflinching realism, dark and brittle humor, a faint whiff of the supernatural, and, above all, the poignancy of a human soul that chooses slow self-destruction rather than shutting itself off to the suffering of others. As Patrick McGrath--another writer of dark literary fiction--writes, "The author's vision is both bleak and compassionate; his control of his explosive material is masterly. This is strong stuff, full of heart, engaging, harrowing, and real." You won't be able to let this one out of your sight until you've finished reading it, and it will linger long after you've put it down. --*Fiona Webster*

From Publishers Weekly

As depicted in this strong and literate debut, burnt-out paramedic Frank Pierce spends dark, death-filled nights behind the wheel of an ambulance in Manhattan's Hell's Kitchen, where he grew up, fighting chaos in his soul as perverse as the mayhem surrounding him. Scarred by a failed marriage and worn down by the hopelessness of his daily rounds of heart attacks, overdoses and crazies seeking attention, Frank has brought his drinking habit onto the job. But he is unable to blot out the memory of Rose, a young asthmatic who died in his care and now appears to him on various street corners. The ghosts of his own past?his unhappy parents and ex-wife, his childhood playmates, now drunks and druggies?and the death of his aspirations appear to him at every turn in the neighborhood.. When Patrick Burke, a cardiac-arrest victim unwillingly on life support, begins to haunt him, too, Frank struggles to find some sanity in a harmful job he seems unable to quit. Connelly brings an air of authenticity to his rendering of this marginal world, and his compassion for its miserable and impoverished denizens is almost palpable. He deftly renders the frantic but deadpan tension and the black humor of a paramedic's job and of the ER personnel in Our Lady of Mercy hospital, called Misery by everyone. If Frank's voice, plangent with exhaustion, despair and grief, and the circumstances of his disintegrating life are unremittingly depressing, one does not doubt the accuracy of the world that Connelly, who himself was a paramedic, creates with such bleak intensity. 50,000 first printing; Random House audio. (Feb.) FYI: Bringing Out the Dead has been optioned by Martin Scorsese. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Campbell Scott offers a weak performance of this lifeless tale of a troubled paramedic haunted by the memories of patients who have died in his care. Connelly administers a heavy dose of nihilism by depicting Frank Pierce as a man trapped in a meaningless routine of saving the lives of New York City's hopeless cases who are destined to destroy themselves. Scott's melancholy tone compounds the listlessness of the story. His colorful characterizations of Pierce's ambulance partners and slick-talking inner-city inhabitants present a taste of life on the streets, but this can't make up for the program's overall weakness.?Mark P. Tierney, Charles Cty. Pub. Schs., Waldorf, MD
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Virginia Warriner:

In this 21st century, people become competitive in most way. By being competitive right now, people have do something to make all of them survives, being in the middle of the actual crowded place and notice through surrounding. One thing that sometimes many people have underestimated the idea for a while is reading. Yeah, by reading a reserve your ability to survive boost then having chance to remain than other is high. For you personally who want to start reading a new book, we give you this particular Bringing Out the Dead book as beginner and daily reading publication. Why, because this book is more than just a book.

Walter Jones:

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Linda Banks:

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Arlene Wilson:

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