

“I delivered twenty babies in the summer of 1977. I was hardly more than a baby myself, just turned twenty-four and starting my third year of medical school.” So began Mark Sloan’s three-decades-long exploration of the wonders and oddities of human childbirth. Pediatrician, husband, and father, the author has attended nearly three thousand births since that long-ago summer, encountering everything from routine deliveries to tense labor-room dramas. In *Birth Day*, Sloan draws on his personal and professional experience to weave the strands of memoir, history, science, and culture into a fascinating—and often funny—tapestry of this fundamental human passage. Some of *Birth Day*’s many topics include: • The first five minutes of life—scuba divers, astronauts, and the amazing adaptations that transform a fetus into an air-breathing, out-in-the-world baby. • Cesarean section—a look at its origins, its future, and how it came to be the most frequently performed operation in American hospitals. • The five senses at birth—does light enter the womb? How loud is it in there? What is a newborn baby searching for with those first anxious glances?

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