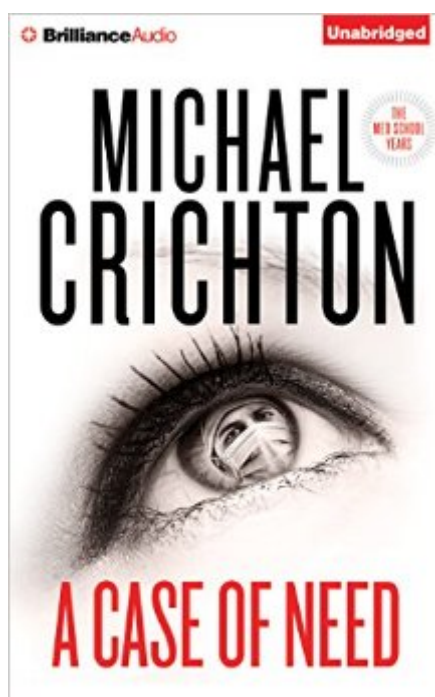


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A Case Of Need: A Novel



Synopsis

Boston 1968 When one doctor is accused of murder, it takes another to set him free. In the tightly knit world of Boston medicine, the Randall family reigns supreme. When heart surgeon J. D. Randall's teenage daughter dies during a botched abortion, the medical community threatens to explode. Was it malpractice? A violation of the Hippocratic Oath? Or was Karen Randall murdered in cold blood? The natural suspect is Arthur Lee, a brilliant surgeon and known abortionist, who has been carrying out the illegal procedure with the help of pathologist John Berry. After Karen dies, Lee is thrown in jail on a murder charge, and only Berry can prove his friend wasn't the one who wielded the scalpel. Behind this gruesome death, Berry will uncover a secret that would shock even the most hardened pathologist. A Case of Need was adapted to the screen as The Carey Treatment, directed by Blake Edwards and starring James Coburn.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book won the 1968 Edgar Award for best mystery novel of the year. An obstetrician has been accused of performing an illegal abortion in Boston in the late 1960's. A pathologist discovers that the girl, who died in the emergency room of a hospital, wasn't even pregnant. He sets out to clear his friend of the charges. Although some of the discussions on abortion may seem dated, this is still a good mystery. Michael Crichton originally published this book under the pseudonym Jeffrey Hudson. Some earlier reviewers have suggested that he did this because of the controversy generated by the topic of abortion. While this undoubtedly was a factor, we also have to recall that this was his first book and Crichton was a medical student in Massachusetts at the time he wrote

much of this book. I'm not sure if his faculty would have been too keen on having a student devote a significant fraction of his time to writing a novel instead of to his studies, had they known. But, I may be wrong. Some other reviewers gave it a low rating because it contained too much jargon. Of course, that is a trademark of this category of books; however, I seem to miss the jargon in this novel. Perhaps I missed it but "A Case of Need" seems to be the least technical of Crichton's books.

I thought this was a good book, which was dated, yet dealt with an important topic yesterday as it is today; abortion. It was well written and easy to read. Actually had trouble putting it down. If you are strictly anti-abortion you may not like this book, if you're able to put that aside you may like it. I did slam nurses though and I didn't like that aspect of the book. Given the times when it was written, nurses were really looked down upon. Unfortunately many of those stereotypical misconceptions from the point of view of the doctor still carry over today 37 years later. Also brought up the unwritten law of medicine, never to turn against your brother MD no matter how incompetent and dangerous they practice. Another code still largely unbroken today.

I found MC's new introduction to his earliest breakthrough novel, A CASE OF NEED, quite interesting. He talks about the controversy the book stirred when it came out, and how his pseudonym -- Jeffery Hudson -- was used so that nobody in the medical world would know who wrote it. He never planned to be a writer -- he was in Harvard Medical School at the time and needed cash (so he turned out paperback spy stories about the cold war) -- but when he won an award for the novel, he had to accept it in person and his so-called secret was out. If you enjoyed JURASSIC PARK, SPHERE, RISING SUN, or any of MC's other truly fabulous novels (I've read 'em all along with thousands of other classical and modern works of literature), you'll love this oldie from the late 60s. It's like reading a film noir -- told in first person perspective, it's about a doctor investigating the murder case of a fellow employee of a local hospital who has been arrested for aborting a young girl's unborn child and, in turn, unintentionally killing the girl later, after she suffered blood loss from the operation. But did he really do it? That's the question that our protagonist tries to solve -- and the outcome of it all is so simple, and yet also so stunning. As the final page turns, you'll wonder how you never solved it beforehand. It has its flaws. Michael Crichton's early work shows signs of minor problems he would solve later -- whether it be plot mistakes or simply story flow. Plus, I doubt whether a doctor would turn himself into Sherlock Holmes quite so well as he makes the character in this book. That all doesn't matter, because you'll absolutely love this novel, especially if you're a fan. If you're new to Crichton, I suggest JURASSIC

PARK, the first novel of his I read (and which totally took me by surprise). But if you're a fan, or you want a good medical thriller from the creator of ER, check this out. It's one of Crichton's better quick-reads.

This is one of the very few books that I have enjoyed that is written in the first person. The story is about a doctor named John Berry. His colleague is arrested for an abortion gone wrong that ended in murder. So Dr. Berry plays detective and tries to get his buddy out of jail. The book takes place during one week and has an ending that I did not expect at all. This was one of Crichton's first books, and the profit off this one sent him through medical school. The book is full of medical terms and has a lot of footnotes that make you constantly have to move up and down pages. Although this isn't Crichton's best, I didn't even use a bookmark because I never put it down.

A Case Of Need : by Michael Crichton 4.5 Stars It has been three decades since the release of this captivating novel written by Michael Crichton. Originally, in 1969, this breathtaking novel was so 'hot', it was originally written under the alias of Jeffrey Hudson. Today, millions of readers acknowledge Crichton's mastery that begun long ago with this novel. Stephen King himself praised the novel as "Fantastic...I loved it!". I thought was a little confusing so that's why I gave it the last half star. Other than that the, plot was exhilarating and kept me going until the very end. I recommend this novel to anyone who is interested in stories about medical thrillers and constant suspense. Crichton most probably wrote under the pen name Jeffrey Hudson because he anticipated a mixed reaction from the public. At the time, as it is today, abortion was a very controversial subject that raised many eyes. In this book both opinions of the matter are represented in different characters. The ethics of Art Lee can be matched with someone who believes for abortion while the strict opinion of the public at the time believed against it.- Carlos Encalada

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