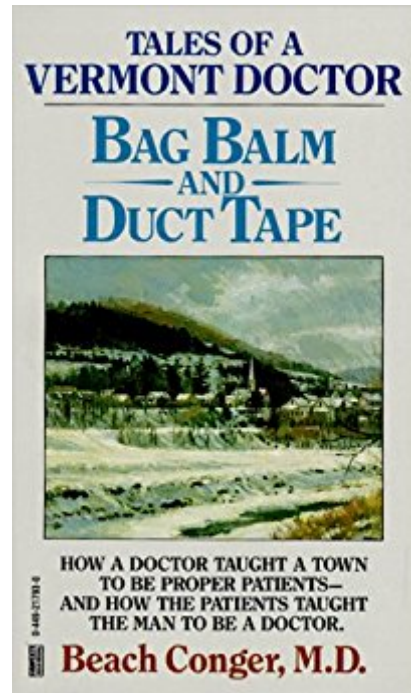




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# Bag Balm And Duct Tape



## Synopsis

When young Dr. Beach Conger accepted a hospital appointment in rural Vermont, it was a mail-order marriage without either party seeing the other. He envisioned living out the rest of his days splitting wood, healing the sick, and being adored as a kindly country doctor. His new patients figured they had their work cut out for them, breaking in this whippersnapper M.D. from Berkeley, California. Beach Conger's tale of his training in the art of country doctoring is a joy. Listen in on the hilarious consultations as he finds a cure for vitaminia, induces laconic Vermonters to talk about "private" problems, and even reconstructs the formula for the "Green Pills" his predecessor invented. He especially brings home that most basic consideration -- the need for every doctor to be supervised by a responsible person, i.e., a nurse. "An engaging blend of rustic wisdom and big-city know-how." -- Publishers Weekly

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In one of the author's asides to "Serious Reader" that dot this irreverent diary of a modern country doctor, we learn that "of all the diseases a physician may contract in the line of duty, by far the most dangerous is seriousness." That danger is remote for Conger, who after a period of "finding" himself in the Berkeley ambiance of the '60s, transplanted himself, his new second wife and their daughter to the little town of Dumster, Vt, where he envisioned a life of relative peace. Instead, as successor to a much-loved and canny old general practitioner, he began a learning process under the guidance of his patients, who taught him to be the doctor they wanted. In an engaging blend of rustic wisdom and big-city know-how, Conger demonstrates the management of his patients and their ailments, real and imagined. His rapport with them is such that he notes with the gently self-mocking humor

that permeates his narrative, "although they know I am a misfit, they don't throw it up at me."

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This was a "fun read". Don't you wish you could be with him and could meet his patients - you feel you already know them.

I also expected a Herriott-like tale of the flatland doctor encountering the crusty characters of Vermont, as he slowly learns about them and their quaint customs and eventually becomes a Vermonter himself. The book violated this expectation, and perhaps in a good way, because those kinds of books often have humor that is too gentle and plot that is nonexistent. Although the book does discuss his patients and the geography and economics of Vermont, through semi-fictional characters, it is more of a commentary on modern medicine and the doctor's place in it. Dr. Beach is severely self-deprecating about himself and the doctor's role in curing people, which appears in (presumably fictional) long, humorous speeches he gives to his patients who come to him with problems. Although the status of his patients as Vermonters does come up, it is rather less the focus of the book than one might expect. The book is a kind of mish-mash of doctoring, observation of human nature, commentary on medicine and its inability to do most things, and a history of one corner of Vermont. It was a pleasant read for me while I was on vacation in Vermont, and I would recommend it to anyone looking for a light, humorous (but not hilarious) read. My only reservation was that some of the monologues he engages in with patients would be in rather poor taste if they had actually taken place in real life (especially the conversation with his terminally ill patient). I don't

suspect him of actually talking to his dying patients that way, but the event was a little disturbing even in fiction. But overall, a pleasant book by a doctor who refuses to take himself seriously.

I live near the town and hospital that Beach writes about. His view is awesome. He is self deprecating which I have not seen in too many doctors and I enjoy feeling like I could know him!

Funny that he should mention James Herriot, which was more or less what I was hoping for. Despite a few interesting parts and parts that rang true (I'm also a doc) my overall impression was one of boredom. The book didn't have much substance or deep meaning. Sort of a vague diary which was not of general interest. (With an apology to the author's mother, whose opinion he keeps dredging up.....)

Not at all what I expected.

This book had me laughing out loud! signed, a former country do

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