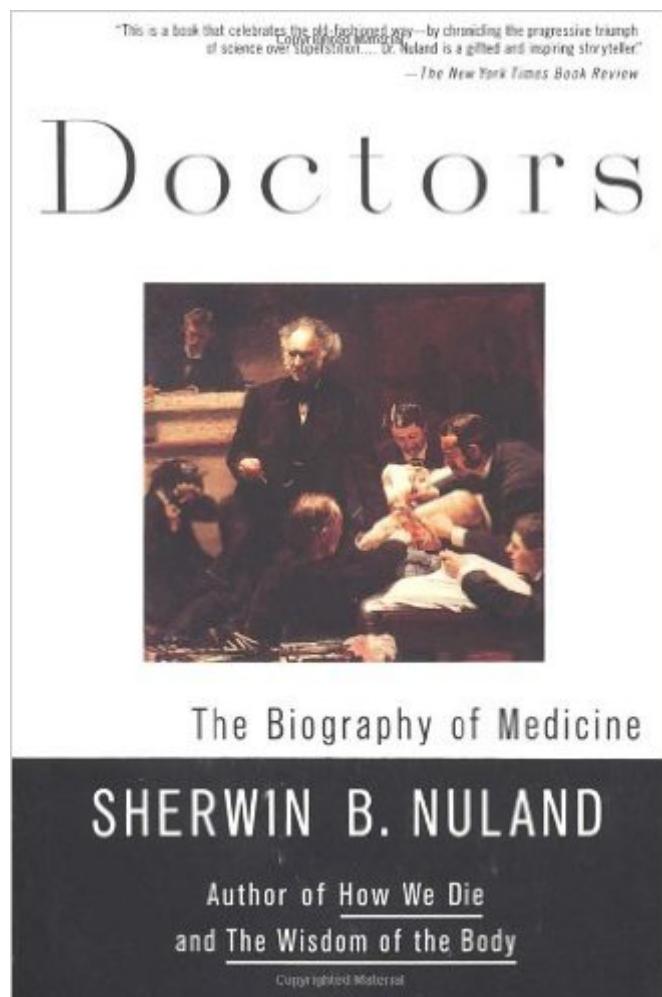


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# Doctors: The Biography Of Medicine



## Synopsis

How does medical science advance? Popular historians would have us believe that a few heroic individuals, possessing superhuman talents, lead an unselfish quest to better the human condition. But as renowned Yale surgeon and medical historian Sherwin B. Nuland shows in this brilliant collection of linked life portraits, the theory bears little resemblance to the truth. Through the centuries, the men and women who have shaped the world of medicine have been not only very human people but also very much the products of their own times and places. Presenting compelling studies of great medical innovators and pioneers, *Doctors* gives us the extraordinary story of the development of modern medicine -- told through the lives of the physician-scientists whose deeds and determination paved the way. Ranging from the legendary Father of Medicine, Hippocrates, to Andreas Vesalius, whose Renaissance masterwork on anatomy offered invaluable new insight into the human body, to Helen Taussig, founder of pediatric cardiology and co-inventor of the original "blue baby" operation, here is a volume filled with the spirit of ideas and the thrill of discovery. Says *The New York Times*, "Doctors can be warmly recommended. Dr. Nuland succeeds in bringing his subjects vividly to life, and he leaves you with a much better understanding of what they achieved."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Nuland's works are like pop-up books for adults. First, he gives you the big picture, an overview. Then, he focuses in on his subject and then -- POP! -- your reward, in the form of tasty tidbits of consistently obscure and delightful information. This book, *Doctors*, is no exception. Throughout the

book, you're learning without even realizing it, and at the same time, gaining historical and philosophical insight into the progress of medicine through the ages. From ancient Greece to the modern halls of medicine, Nuland will take you along through a Disneyland of exploration. From his writing, it's easy to tell that even after a prestigious career, he's still as excited by medicine -- and as awed by its great practitioners -- as he was on his very first day of pre-med. Nuland's prose IS a challenge; he usually assumes some prior knowledge on the part of readers, and a university and science background are helpful. If you've got that, though, then hop aboard for the ride of your life. I guarantee you, you'll never look at an emergency room the same way again.

I have used this as the assigned text in courses in the history of medicine, both for undergraduate and for medical students. The book is an unabashed example of the iatrocentric school of medical history -- one long series of great doctors, but that certainly captures the imagination of the wannabe doctor. This is simply the best introductory book on this subject, both for the serious student, and for the interested person with or without a medical background. Paul G. Dymant MD, Tulane University, New Orleans

In this book Nuland takes the reader on an odyssey of western medical history spanning antiquity to modern medicine. It takes brief snapshots of a few of the physicians who have molded medicine into what it is today. He vividly brings to life colorful people like Vesalius who refused to accept the status quo of his time, but instead rejected popular theories because they did not agree with experimental results. This is an inspirational must read for those who are either in the field of medicine or enjoy medical history.

I teach the history of medicine and anatomy at a U.S. medical school and I spend a lot of time reviewing the available books so that I can sharpen up my lectures. I'm not going to claim that medical history is the most electrifying topic for first-year medical students, but when it is presented properly it can be very engaging. This is exactly what Dr. Nuland has done with this book. Doctors is a well-organized and readable text and Dr. Nuland has done a great deal of research but more importantly, he has obviously practiced how to deliver the stories in a way that is suspenseful and satisfying. He starts chronologically and moves from Hippocrates, through Andreas Vesalius, William Harvey, Rudolph Virchow, Helen Taussig, describing the individuals responsible for the good, the bad, and the ugly sides of the history of medical practice as we see it today. His narrative relates strictly to the history of Western medicine and the influences that have shaped it. He does

not go into any details regarding Eastern medicine or other medical practices since this is not directly related to the main theme of the book. The only topic I wish he had spent more time covering was the Islamic physicians of the middle ages. Western medicine (along with all the sciences) were maintained at a high level in the Muslim societies of the middle ages before passing into the newly-founded European Universities. By following the history of medicine through the persons (and extreme personalities) that influenced it, Dr. Nuland is able to educate and entertain. I have listened repeatedly to the lectures that he has produced with the Teaching Company and it is nice to know that he writes as well as he speaks. I have reviewed other books on the topic but so far this is my undisputed favorite.

I am only 15, and not very smart, but even I thought this book was quite informative. It has always been my dream to be a doctor, and this book helped me better understand the history of it. I had no clue that medicine had such a diverse background. I recommend this book to anyone who has such an interest, and who is not afraid to read a book that I must admit is a tad boring on some notes, but is overall good stuff!

This is a very well written book especially if the sciences, history or medicine is not your strong suite. Mr. Nuland took a potentially boring subject (what history subject isn't?) and has made it very interesting to read. I like math, but in school and college, I never did well with subjects that related to history and especially with science. I don't even read that much. However, I could not put this book down. I liked it so much, I have read it 3 times. It is a very enriching book. Thanks Mr. Nuland for restoring my confidence in being able to comprehend subjects that deal with medicine and history! My wish list is for Mr. Nuland to put this out on audio cassette. Thomas Jue

This was required reading for a course taken about the History of Medical Science. It is well written, though sometimes too loquacious. It is written by a surgeon, and it emphasizes the story of surgeons and neglects some of the most important medical doctors.

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