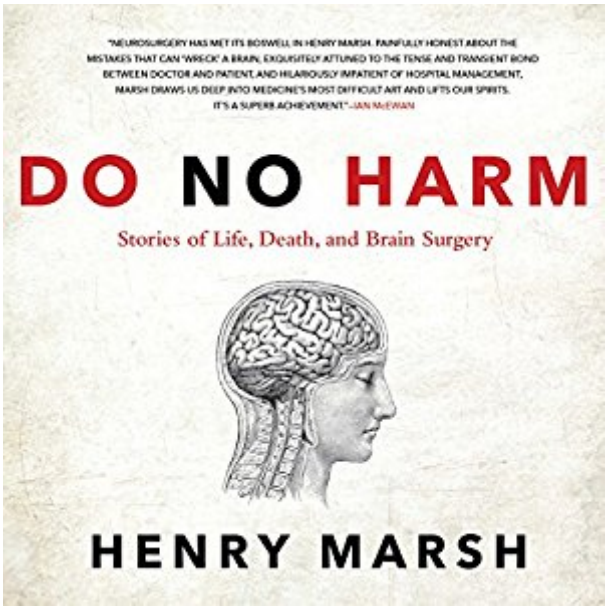
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Do No Harm: Stories Of Life, Death, And Brain Surgery



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Synopsis

With compassion and candor, leading neurosurgeon Henry Marsh reveals the fierce joy of operating, the profoundly moving triumphs, the harrowing disasters, the haunting regrets, and the moments of black humor that characterize a brain surgeon’s life. If you believe that brain surgery is a precise and exquisite craft practiced by calm and detached surgeons, this gripping, brutally honest account will make you think again.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition
Listening Length: 9 hoursÃ Â andÃ Â 33 minutes
Program Type: Audiobook
Version: Unabridged
Publisher: HighBridge, a Division of Recorded Books
Audible.com Release Date: May 26, 2015
Whispersync for Voice: Ready
Language: English
ASIN: B00WH0HJ6E
Best Sellers Rank: #1 inÃ Â Books > Medical Books > Medicine > Surgery > Neurosurgery #1 inÃ Â Books > Medical Books > Medicine > Surgery > Thoracic & Vascular #4 inÃ Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Medical

Customer Reviews

This book is well written, gripping, and fascinating. Sometimes it is sad or gruesome. It is accurate in the descriptions of medical details, surgical procedures, and the life of brain surgeons. If you like to think of your physician as a demi-god you should not read this book. If you can handle the truth, read on.As an anesthesiologist, I read with a mix of amusement and rueful resignation. Dr. Marsh is a true representative of his species, the neurosurgeon. They are by turns kind, irritating, cocky, courageous, arrogant, brilliant, obsessive, awe-inspiring, and lonely. They usually graduated at the top of their medical school class. Their residency did not end until they were well into their 30ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s. Many hospitals have lots of pediatricians, intensivists, internists, and hospitalists, but they only have one neurosurgeon. Even in a field of doctors, a collection of brainy nerds, they stand alone.Their arrogance is undeniable. Henry Marsh relates how he was stuck in a line of shoppers at the grocery store and thinks with irritation that none of them could do what he just did today, so why does he have to wait behind them? Like fighter pilots or Special Forces,

society is not comfortable with such people, but when we need them, we need them desperately. And we always need them.There is a moment before every invasive medical procedure when you could pause and contemplate the enormous consequences of failure. If you spend too much time doing that, you will end up paralyzed, and the patient will suffer. If you spend too much time thinking about the appalling human carnage that will result from surgery gone wrong, you will never take up the knife. No matter how skillful, knowledgeable, and careful you are, there will be carnage. No one knows this better than the neurosurgeon. To cut into a human brain takes enormous hubris. Every procedure includes the risk of death, but there are worse things than death. Most doctors will see worse-than-death only rarely during their career, but the neurosurgeon sees it often. It is the nature of their specialty. It is beyond extreme. For example, I induce a death-like coma in my patients daily, then rescue them from it. Yet I could not abide such a life of enormous risk.Dr. Marsh is a writer of depth and skill. He probably does everything well, if he does it at all. If you think that neurosurgery is fascinating, you should read this book.

Want to break through the blood/brain barrier? Grab a copy of "Do No Harm: Stories of Life, Death and Brain Surgery,"Written by the crustiest, crankiest, most brilliant British surgeon imaginable, Dr. Henry Marsh. He takes you inside the human brain both physically and intellectually, through a 40-year series of insanely complex and riveting microsurgeries (usually Marsh battling from his Star Wars-style deck to circumvent some overwhelmingly horrible cancer, infection, stroke or hemorrhage). The language is simple and utterly revealing; the parade of souls who parade through his theater (his own mother among them) heartbreaking; the complexities of human consciousness (and the loss of it) laid bare. This goddam book is so compelling I was forced to dump my two month-long obsession with Jo NesboÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Harry Hole thrillers to plunge in.

I picked up this book on the basis of a brief review by a blogger I follow. This sort of read isn't my normal fare, but the subject was interesting, and as I got into the book, the narrative was quite engaging. Like anyone in their fifties, most of us have a fair bit of experience as a consumer of medical services, and I started the book with a certain level of smug understanding of what I might expect of a physicians narrative of his work. After finishing the book, I would like to believe that I learned quite a bit of the human element of practicing in this particular specialty of medicine. The word profound comes to mind when I try to express my personal reaction to the book, but in a way this sounds a bit dramatic. Without knowing who might be reading this review, it is hard to pass along a recommendation, but I will do so anyway. I very much enjoyed Mr Marsh's writing style, the

way the subject was presented, and found the topic and narrative both very engaging and at times, intense to the point I had to put the book down and come back to it the next day. If you have the stomach for the subject, this is one book you would not willingly miss reading. I found myself spending time after having read it, learning about Mr Marsh, about his work, and viewing some of his interviews available on Youtube. Seems very much like a fellow I would like to have known personally.

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