

Patient H M A Story Of Memory Madness And Family Se

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“ Oliver Sacks meets Stephen King ” * in this propulsive, haunting journey into the life of the most studied human research subject of all time, the amnesic known as Patient H.M. For readers of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* comes a story that has much to teach us about our relentless pursuit of knowledge. Winner of the PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award • Los Angeles Times Book Prize Winner NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY The Washington Post • New York Post • NPR • The Economist • New York • Wired • Kirkus Reviews • BookPage In 1953, a twenty-seven-year-old factory worker named Henry Molaison—who suffered from severe epilepsy—received a radical new version of the then-common lobotomy, targeting the most mysterious structures in the brain.

The operation failed to eliminate Henry ’ s seizures, but it did have an unintended effect: Henry was left profoundly amnesic, unable to create long-term memories. Over the next sixty years, Patient H.M., as Henry was known, became the most studied individual in the history of neuroscience, a human guinea pig who would teach us much of what we know about memory today. Patient H.M. is, at times, a deeply personal journey. Dittrich ’ s grandfather was the brilliant, morally complex surgeon who operated on Molaison—and thousands of other patients. The author ’ s investigation into the dark roots of modern memory science ultimately forces him to confront unsettling secrets in his own family history, and to reveal the tragedy that fueled his grandfather ’ s relentless experimentation—experimentation that would revolutionize our understanding of ourselves. Dittrich uses the case of Patient H.M. as a starting point for a kaleidoscopic journey, one that moves from the first recorded brain surgeries in ancient Egypt to the cutting-edge laboratories of MIT. He takes readers inside the old asylums and operating theaters where psychosurgeons, as they called themselves, conducted their human experiments, and behind the scenes of a bitter custody battle over the ownership of the most important brain in the world. Patient H.M. combines the best of biography, memoir, and science journalism to create a haunting, endlessly fascinating story, one that reveals the wondrous and devastating things that can happen when hubris, ambition, and human imperfection collide. “ An exciting, artful blend of family and medical history. ” —The New York Times *Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

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Patient H.M.

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