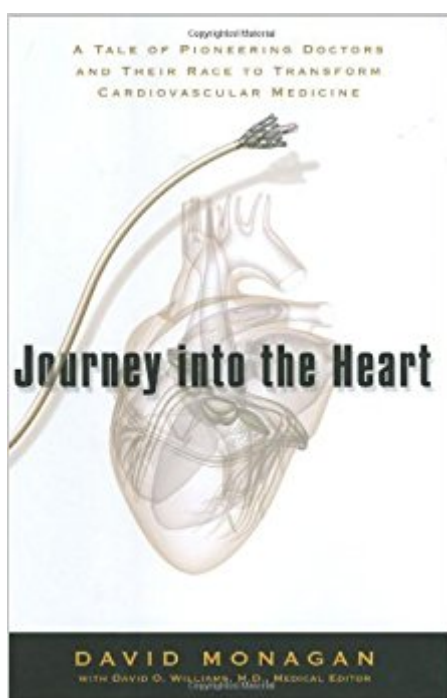


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Journey Into The Heart: A Tale Of Pioneering Doctors And Their Race To Transform Cardiovascular Medicine



Synopsis

The thrilling story of the brilliant and audacious pioneers who revolutionized cardiovascular medicine. The history of heart surgery is a fascinating saga. In the dark ages of medicine, physicians commonly prescribed blood letting as a treatment for ridding the vascular system of diabolical elements and bizarre medicaments like brain extracts, and until quite recently, the basic treatment for a heart attack was to lie down and bear it. Within the last century, physicians have evolved from fearing to even touch a living human heart to rebuilding and even transplanting hearts with beguiling, if sometimes dangerous wizardry. Not long ago, cardiac surgery was celebrated as akin to miracle working, yet a new therapeutic age has since taken hold. Today heart attacks can often be stopped in their midst, and astonishing non-invasive surgical techniques regularly eliminate any need for a knife, while clearing vital arteries in just minutes. Journey Into the Heart traces this epic quest involving a cast of thousands who struggled to solve medical complexities that long boggled the most brilliant minds on earth. David Monagan tells their story as never before, for the first time paying tribute to the daring tactics and outsized personalities of scarcely appreciated pioneers from Oregon to East Germany. The risks some took were hard to fathom: when a promising therapy seemed far too dangerous to perform on a patient, charismatic doctors experimented on themselves. Meanwhile, a multi-billion dollar business involving angioplasty and countless related knifeless procedures charged into life, often overshadowing the noble quest for innovation with a race for profit. The great figures behind these advances have been little chronicled, but their lives encompassed all the triumph and anguish of the last century. Andreas Gruentzig, an East German "child of the rubble," took center stage in revolutionizing cardiovascular care, developing the first tiny balloon-tipped probes in his Zurich apartment. Despite harsh skepticism, Gruentzig demonstrated that his gadgets could transform the lives of millions. His findings catapulted him to worldwide fame, and he was nominated for the Nobel Prize. After being lured to Emory University, Gruentzig's career escalated to dizzying heights, and then concluded tragically with an Icarus-like ending. Journey Into the Heart is a compelling biography and a multi-faceted tale of medical discovery and business intrigue, all centered on the seat of human life. The twentieth century journey to understand the human heart was a saga on par with the race to the moon.

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Customer Reviews

This engrossing if overwritten account pays tribute to the unconventional heroes of the past century who have greatly enhanced human life expectancy. Monagan, a medical journalist, and Williams, head of interventional cardiology at Brown/Rhode Island Hospital, dedicate the bulk of their well-researched story to Andreas Gruentzig, an East German refugee who landed at Atlanta's Emory University in 1980 and whose balloon angioplasty breakthroughs have meant knifeless surgery for millions of patients. Another doctor who earlier changed the face of cardiovascular medicine was Nobel laureate and repentant former Nazi Werner Forssmann, an impetuous German who had performed death-defying experiments on himself in the 1920s, including threading a catheter into his heart "the first time the feat was ever performed on a human subject. An early specialist in pediatric cardiology in the Cleveland Clinic in the 1950s, Mason Sones pioneered fluoroscopic pinpoint mappings of the hidden recesses of the coronary arteries, paving the way for coronary bypass surgery. People suffering from "and surviving" cardiovascular disease may be curious to read about the advances that have saved their lives. (Feb. 1) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

If veteran science writer Monagan is out to prove that all medical drama doesn't take place in emergency rooms or hospital stairwells, he has done it. As he recounts the accomplishments of the twentieth century's innovators in cardiovascular medicine, he profiles a handful of players who stand out as personally and professionally remarkable, none more so than charismatic East German refugee Andreas Gruentzig, whose vision and improbable kitchen-table experiments attracted colleagues' ridicule, but whose invention, cardiovascular angioplasty, left him laughing all the way to

the bank. His may have been and still may be the most dramatic breakthrough of his day, inspiring as it did a multibillion-dollar medical-device industry and eliminating the risk of open-heart surgery for many, but he stood on the shoulders of others, either predecessors or contemporaries grasping for and achieving the same outcome, triumph over heart disease. Today, thanks to Gruentzig and the likes of Werner Forssmann, Mason Sones, and Charles Dotter, millions are not only cheating death but enjoying longer, better lives. Donna Chavez
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Very interesting look at the history of the start of interventional cardiology. The beginning jumps around a bit, then the story settles in and is a great read. It seemed very balanced about all the various players although the primary focus of the book is Andreas Gruentzig.

Great book! Very well written. Tells the history of heart medicine and delves into each doctor or inventor's personal story behind their discoveries so that it's more of an interesting narrative, rather than just a historical account. If you are interested in the cardiovascular system or medicine at all, I would highly recommend this book.

Great book, I wish there was a followup.

This book was recommended to me from a fellow heart attack survivor, and the history of cardiac care was so interesting! I'd recommend this for anyone who has heart problems, and for those who know someone who does... I guess that might be lots and lots of people!

Nicely written tale. I liked the initial review of the history of medicine followed by the profiles of the pre-Gruentzig pioneers of the mid to late 1900's. Since I live in Atlanta and have some familiarity with Emory, I found it to be especially interesting.

Very informative and well written.

This book was a surprise for my husband and he absolutely loved it. Thank you for an amazing book and at a great price!

Very interesting book and easy to read. Perfect for everyone who wants to know about the history of

cardiac surgery

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