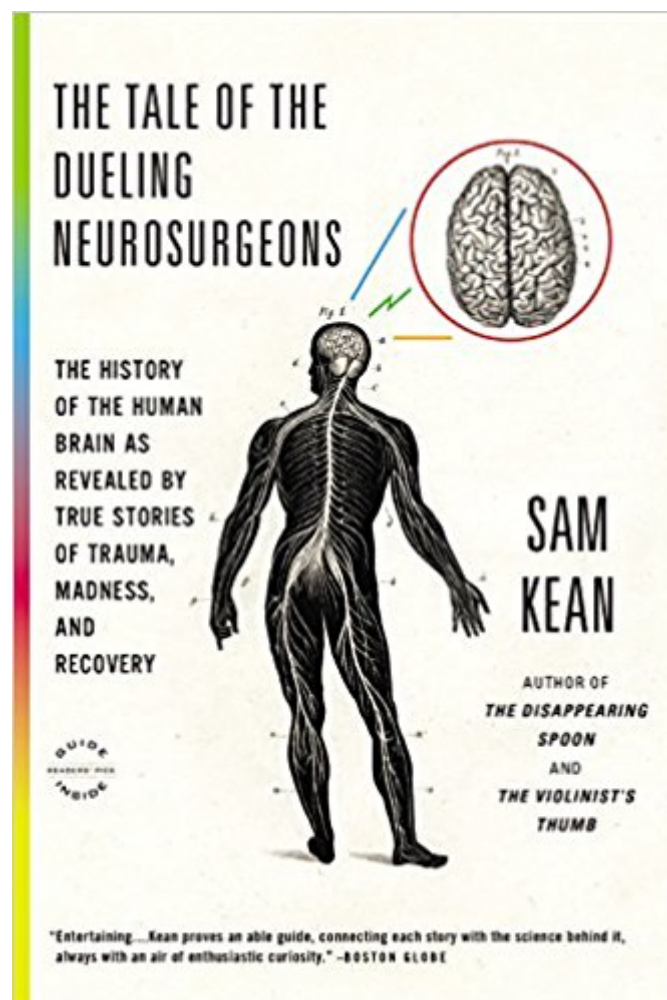


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The Tale Of The Dueling Neurosurgeons: The History Of The Human Brain As Revealed By True Stories Of Trauma, Madness, And Recovery





Synopsis

From the author of the bestsellers *The Disappearing Spoon* and *The Violinist's Thumb*, fascinating tales of the brain and the history of neuroscience. Early studies of the functions of the human brain used a simple method: wait for misfortune to strike—strokes, seizures, infectious diseases, lobotomies, horrendous accidents—and see how the victim coped. In many cases survival was miraculous, and observers could only marvel at the transformations that took place afterward, altering victims' personalities. An injury to one section can leave a person unable to recognize loved ones; some brain trauma can even make you a pathological gambler, pedophile, or liar. But a few scientists realized that these injuries were an opportunity for studying brain function at its extremes. With lucid explanations and incisive wit, Sam Kean explains the brain's secret passageways while recounting forgotten stories of common people whose struggles, resiliency, and deep humanity made modern neuroscience possible.

Customer Reviews

Science writer Kean explores the vagaries and inconsistencies of the human brain via diverting stories that chronicle medical science's fits and starts. To say these are diverting is, however, an oversimplification since their subjects—primarily unfortunate individuals with brain injuries—command sympathy if not empathy. Yet Kean's focus is on their contribution to the field of neuroscience along with, in too many instances, the misguided misinformation of the medical professionals who treated them. Take the case of France's King Henry II. When he lost his right eye plus a bit of his brain to a poorly aimed jousting spear, his physicians' limited knowledge of the brain's physiognomy cost him his life. Then there's President Garfield's assassin, Charles Guiteau, whose undiagnosed bipolar mind was further addled by syphilis and who, naturally . . . thought himself fit for politics. To pick up one of these stories is to lose oneself in them. Where does the brain end and the mind begin? Curious readers will find both brain and mind fully revved up while engaging with this powerfully appealing and thought-provoking work of neuroscience history. --Donna Chavez --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Longlisted for the 2015 PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award
One of 's Best Books of the Year: Science
One of The A.V. Club's Best Books of 2014
A Goodreads Choice Awards Finalist: Nonfiction
"This is Sam Kean's finest work yet, an entertaining and offbeat history of the brain populated with mad scientists, deranged criminals, geniuses, and wretched souls. *The Tale of the Dueling Neurosurgeons* is one of those books that will have you following your friends around,

reading passages out loud, until they snatch the book away from you and read it for themselves. Good luck getting it back."â •Amy Stewart, author of The Drunken Botanist"Put your Netflix queue on hold. Sam Kean's The Tale of the Dueling Neurosurgeons will command your full attention from the first page. It's not just an engaging guide to mysteries of existence; it's compelling story-telling for anyone with a taste for the bizarre and metaphysical."â •William Poundstone, author of Rock Breaks Scissors

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