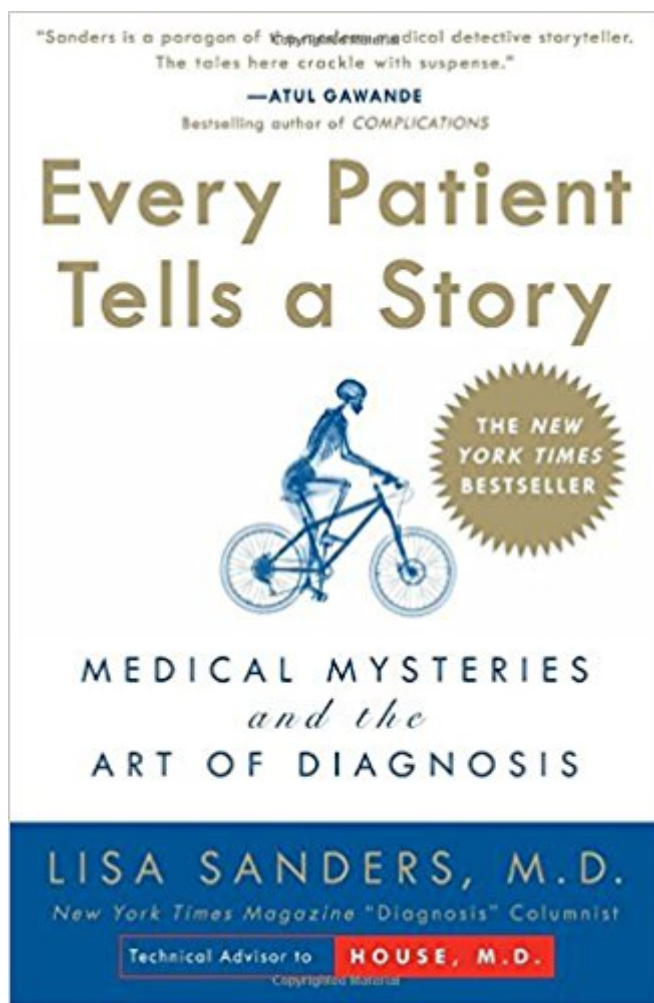


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# Every Patient Tells A Story: Medical Mysteries And The Art Of Diagnosis



## Synopsis

A riveting exploration of the most difficult and important part of what doctors do, by Yale School of Medicine physician Dr. Lisa Sanders, author of the monthly New York Times Magazine column "Diagnosis," the inspiration for the hit Fox TV series House, M.D. "The experience of being ill can be like waking up in a foreign country. Life, as you formerly knew it, is on hold while you travel through this other world as unknown as it is unexpected. When I see patients in the hospital or in my office who are suddenly, surprisingly ill, what they really want to know is, 'What is wrong with me?' They want a road map that will help them manage their new surroundings. The ability to give this unnerving and unfamiliar place a name, to know it on some level restores a measure of control, independent of whether or not that diagnosis comes attached to a cure. Because, even today, a diagnosis is frequently all a good doctor has to offer." A healthy young man suddenly loses his memory making him unable to remember the events of each passing hour. Two patients diagnosed with Lyme disease improve after antibiotic treatment only to have their symptoms mysteriously return. A young woman lies dying in the ICU bleeding, jaundiced, incoherent and none of her doctors know what is killing her. In *Every Patient Tells a Story*, Dr. Lisa Sanders takes us bedside to witness the process of solving these and other diagnostic dilemmas, providing a firsthand account of the expertise and intuition that lead a doctor to make the right diagnosis. Never in human history have doctors had the knowledge, the tools, and the skills that they have today to diagnose illness and disease. And yet mistakes are made, diagnoses missed, symptoms or tests misunderstood. In this high-tech world of modern medicine, Sanders shows us that knowledge, while essential, is not sufficient to unravel the complexities of illness. She presents an unflinching look inside the detective story that marks nearly every illness the diagnosis revealing the combination of uncertainty and intrigue that doctors face when confronting patients who are sick or dying. Through dramatic stories of patients with baffling symptoms, Sanders portrays the absolute necessity and surprising difficulties of getting the patient's story, the challenges of the physical exam, the pitfalls of doctor-to-doctor communication, the vagaries of tests, and the near calamity of diagnostic errors. In *Every Patient Tells a Story*, Dr. Sanders chronicles the real-life drama of doctors solving these difficult medical mysteries that not only illustrate the art and science of diagnosis, but often save the patients' lives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In her first book, internist and New York Times columnist Sanders discusses how doctors deal with diagnostic dilemmas. Unlike Berton Roueché in his books of medical puzzles, Sanders not only collects difficult cases, she reflects on what each means for both patient and struggling physician. A man arrives at the hospital, delirious, his kidneys failing. Batteries of tests are unrevealing, but he quickly recovers after a resident extracts two quarts of urine. An abdominal exam would have detected the patient's obstructed, grossly swollen bladder. The author then ponders the neglect of the physical exam, by today's physicians, enamored with high-tech tests that sometimes reveal less than a simple exam. Another patient, frustrated at her doctor's failure to diagnose her fever and rash, googles her symptoms and finds the correct answer. Sanders uses this case to explain how computers can help in diagnoses (Google is not bad, she says, but better programs exist). Readers who enjoy dramatic stories of doctors fighting disease will get their fill, and they will also encounter thoughtful essays on how doctors think and go about their work, and how they might do it better.

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New York Times columnist Sanders says that misdiagnoses account for perhaps as much as 17 percent of medical errors. Some errors result in prolonged or ineffective treatment, while others lead to fatal outcomes. They occur, she says, despite the huge technological advances of recent years. Sometimes the tests and diagnostic tools are to blame; indeed, relying too heavily on test or lab results can produce a false sense of security in both patient and doctor. For all the data they collect, machines lack important components for diagnosis. They cannot hear a patient's story,

touch a patient's skin, or look into a patient's eyes. Good diagnosticians are not unlike TV's Dr. House good at puzzles; they employ a large variety of skill sets, including the long-lost art of the thorough physical exam, to solve the mysteries of illness. Besides her own inborn capacity for problem-solving, Sanders' experience as internist, writer, and consultant to House serves her well here, for absorbing anecdotes generously pepper the exposition. --Donna Chavez --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I love the stories and the story-telling. This is not a book to give you insight on the science. Instead it gives you insight on the art of medicine and to see what its like to be a patient other than yourself and other than your own problems. Dr. Lisa Sanders wrote a fine book well worth reading. Note that every style has an audience. For me this style was great. The stories spanned large sections of the book and moves in and out of story and back-story and side-story seamlessly. However, some people may find that difficult to keep up or too much story per page or a bit drawn out. I recommend you read a sample of this book to see if the writing style fits you. If it does, you're in for a treat. Review of hard-copy not kindle nor audio. You'll find your experiences slightly different.

A puzzling and unearthing look into the areas of medicine that physicians need to know about and patients should know about. The writer challenges the status quo in a venture to better the care we as clinicians give our patients. With enlightening case studies and numerous research studies, she uncovers the things we must fix and address as healthcare providers.

Great insightful book. A must read for someone in the medical field working with patients.

I never watch t.v. Except for House, MD. I love the detective work undertaken by House and gang while their patient is hemorrhaging, coding and developing various gross pustules. Unlike Dr. House and his cumurdgeonly character, however, this book gives medicine a soul. It highlights the importance of the patient's story. Not just as a way of recognizing the "patient" as a human being, but also as a critical tool in the diagnostic process. The book has a number of sections that read as well as any good mystery, and the author uses these to highlight the richness and complexity of the people seen by the doctors as well as the medical problems that they present to the physicians in the book. She is forthright about many of the problems facing doctors at this moment in time, especially the tendency to downplay thorough physical examination skills in preference to the high

tech wonders of today's modern medicine. But I came away from the book with a profound respect for the people who - day in and day out - care for those of us who move from the world of normal daily life into the world of illness. I also came away with a healthy respect for not being afraid to seek a second (and third, if necessary) opinion on those occasions where that may be warranted. This is an fascinating book that kept me on the edge of my seat while I learned things about medicine that I never would have thought would have been that interesting. All in all, a really good read!

Great read! As a physician, it was refreshing to hear a colleague describe the art and humanity of medicine while recognizing the benefits of technology. Her love of figuring out medical challenges was inspiring. I couldn't put the book down and a big 5 stars! - Dr. Mike Rocha, cardiologist, director-New Bedford Wellness Initiative, and co-founder Physicians to Prevent Opioid Abuse.

We all love a good mystery, but this book is much more than a compelling mystery yarn. Through deftly told true stories, Lisa Sanders shows how correct medical diagnosis requires a combination of skills and right attitudes. As the book's title implies, careful listening to the patient comes first. A good physical exam is critical, and the worrisome part of the book is how this old-fashioned art is increasingly neglected in medical schools. Luck has a role too -- or maybe it's humility -- as the author gives several cases where happenstance seems to have helped find the correct diagnosis from a medical bystander, but that requires the ability to admit you don't have all the answers and to reach out for help. But perhaps most important: the empathy to persist toward the answer and the quiet time to contemplate the entire patient. As a patient advocate and author (*The Life You Save: Nine Steps to Finding the Best Medical Care?and Avoiding the Worst*, I have seen too many tragedies occur when doctors have not taken the time or interest to apply these varied skills. This book will help young physicians do better and will help patients find the right doctors who will care about them.

I am graduating from medical school this year, and I was looking for a book to reignite my original passion for going into medicine - taking care of people. This book was an excellent blend of fascinating stories, review of basic principles of the practice of medicine, and insightful commentary regarding how medical education and treatment have changed over the years, for good and for bad. I think all doctors should read it, especially those involved in education of students and residents. It's also a terrific read for any person without medical training, as the author is very skilled at

explaining complex problems in easy to understand language. I appreciate her exploration of the uncertainty inherent to the practice of medicine while still holding doctors to a high standard professionally and personally. I loved this book and have been recommending it to family and friends as well as physicians and preceptors at my institution.

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