



## Reaching Down the Rabbit Hole: A Renowned Neurologist Explains the Mystery and Drama of Brain Disease

By Dr. Allan H. Ropper, Brian David Burrell

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"Tell the doctor where it hurts." It sounds simple enough, unless the problem affects the very organ that produces awareness and generates speech. What is it like to try to heal the body when the mind is under attack? In this book, Dr. Allan Ropper and Brian Burrell take the reader behind the scenes at Harvard Medical School's neurology unit to show how a seasoned diagnostician faces down bizarre, life-altering afflictions. Like Alice in Wonderland, Dr. Ropper inhabits a world where absurdities abound:

- A figure skater whose body has become a ticking time-bomb
- A salesman who drives around and around a traffic rotary, unable to get off
- A college quarterback who can't stop calling the same play
- A child molester who, after falling on the ice, is left with a brain that is very much dead inside a body that is very much alive
- A mother of two young girls, diagnosed with ALS, who has to decide whether a life locked inside her own head is worth living

How does one begin to treat such cases, to counsel people whose lives may be changed forever? How does one train the next generation of clinicians to deal with the moral and medical aspects of brain disease? Dr. Ropper and his colleague answer these questions by taking the reader into a rarified world where lives and minds hang in the balance.

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*By Dr. Allan H. Ropper, Brian David Burrell*

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“A must-read . . . Ropper and Burrell write with great verve and panache and each chapter reads like a detective story. . . . The narrative is peppered with insights into the scientific method, emphasizing that it's not the cold, rational, Sherlock Holmes-like deductive process it's often portrayed to be. This is medical writing at its best; in the tradition of Rouche, Lewis Thomas, and Oliver Sacks.” ?VS Ramachandran, New York Times bestselling author of *The Tell-Tale Brain* and *Phantoms in the Brain* (with Oliver Sacks), and Director of the Center for Brain and Cognition, UCSD

“Dr. Ropper comes through as the very model of a modern neurologist, an elegant combination of Fast Medicine and Slow Medicine, expert in the panoply of diagnostic techniques developed since Hippocrates: from clinical neurologic exam to MRI to neuropathology lab. What he models for us is the essence of good doctoring?attention, carefulness, and Oslerian dedication; he throws in, for good measure, his own irony and humor. *Listening to the Brain* is well written and intriguing, deep but light; it reveals the complexity, the demands, the satisfactions and the regrets of what it means to be a true physician.” ?Victoria Sweet, bestselling author of *God's Hotel*

“[A] bustling ballad from the front lines of medicine. . . . Walking the halls and emergency room of a major teaching hospital-[Ropper] is Oliver Sacks on horseback. This is a fascinating, sometimes brutal reality show of how disease presents, how diagnoses are made, and treatments rendered. Always at the forefront is dedication to doing what is best for the patient. . . . This book should be read by those with an interest in the brain, patients and families who struggle with life-threatening illness, and by all of us as potential sufferers who will appreciate the efforts made for them. It is a gem.” ?*Joseph B. Martin, M.D., Dean Emeritus, Harvard Medical School*

“A fantastic contribution to helping us understand the ways in which our brains can go wrong. This peek inside the sick brain, by a foremost neurologist, helps readers truly appreciate how calamities like brain tumors, stroke, Parkinson's, seizures and other diseases affect us. His stories are sometimes painful, sometimes heartwarming, but invariably tremendously illuminating.” ?Elizabeth Loftus, author of *The Myth of Repressed Memory*

#### About the Author

**Dr. Allan H. Ropper** is a Professor at Harvard Medical School and the Raymond D. Adams Master Clinician at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. He is credited with founding the field of neurological intensive care and counts Michael J. Fox among his patients.

**Brian David Burrell** is the author of *Postcards from the Brain Museum*. He has appeared on the *Today Show*, *Booknotes*, and NPR's *Morning Edition*. He divides his time between writing and statistical research with neuroscientific applications.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

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That book was represented so why is the world has grown up. The language styles that writer value to explain it is easy to understand. The particular writer made some analysis when he makes this book. That is why this book ideal all of you.

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