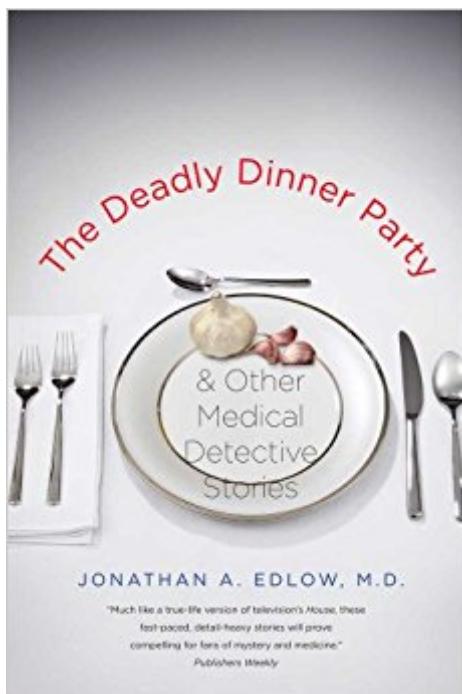


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# The Deadly Dinner Party: And Other Medical Detective Stories



## Synopsis

Picking up where Berton Roueché's *The Medical Detectives* left off, *The Deadly Dinner Party* presents fifteen edge-of-your-seat, real-life medical detective stories written by a practicing physician. Award-winning author Jonathan Edlow, M.D., shows the doctor as detective and the epidemiologist as elite sleuth in stories that are as gripping as the best thrillers. In these stories a notorious stomach bug turns a suburban dinner party into a disaster that almost claims its host; a diminutive woman routinely eats more than her football-playing boyfriend but continually loses weight; a young executive is diagnosed with lung cancer, yet the tumors seem to wax and wane inexplicably. Written for the lay person who wishes to better grasp how doctors decipher the myriad clues and puzzling symptoms they often encounter, each story presents a very different case where doctors must work to find the accurate diagnosis before it is too late. Edlow uses his unique ability to relate complex medical concepts in a writing style that is clear, engaging and easily understandable. The resulting stories both entertain us and teach us much about medicine, its history and the subtle interactions among pathogens, humans, and the environment.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Mimicking the style of his favorite genre, the detective story, author and doctor Edlow (*Bull's Eye: Unraveling the Medical Mystery of Lyme Disease*) retells 15 stories of "shoe-leather epidemiology" that delve into the complex world of diagnostic medicine. In the title story, three cases of botulism are traced, with the work of physicians, local health department officials, and CDC representatives, to a jar of oil-packed garlic. Other chapters cover typhoid fever in restaurant orange juice,

gastrointestinal infestation via fish tank water, and illnesses caused by excess vitamins A and D. Readers, especially those already alarmed over everyday pathogens, will find plenty to worry about, including herbal teas grandfathered out of FDA regulations; sudden changes in diets that may, literally, plug up your pipes; and all-natural, fresh-pressed cider that may harbor dangerous e. coli. Readers will also find that every medical diagnosis is a puzzle to be solved, often by gathering and analyzing data with the help of a team. Much like a true-life version of television's House M.D., these fast-paced, detail-heavy stories will prove compelling for fans of mystery and medicine.

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"Readers will . . . find that every medical diagnosis is a puzzle to be solved, often by gathering and analyzing data with the help of a team. Much like a true-life version of television's House M.D., these fast-paced, detail-heavy stories will prove compelling for fans of mystery and medicine."•Publishers Weekly"With Atul Gawande and Jerome Groopman, Edlow is one of a distinguished group of literary Harvard medical professors who write lucidly about complex medical issues. . . . Edlow's stories are told with the easy grace of an accomplished writer who builds on, then hides, the depth of his research."•Hugh Dillon, Sydney Morning Herald"If you watch House for the medical mysteries, this is for you. Edlow tracks a series of unusual diseases or conditions from the initial illness, though the clues, dead ends and inspired deductions that littered the path to effective treatment."•Herald Sun"Anyone with a penchant for the TV show House, or even a general interest in the more puzzling illnesses, will be engaged by the entertaining case studies. Edlow explores the history of disease through individual cases, without too much scientific jargon."•Sunday Mail"Edlow tells these tales of medical detection with wit and elegance. . . . More of such stuff, and Edlow could easily become the dean, the Dr. Watson, as it were, of doctors who solve medical mysteries."•Booklist"Edlow presents cases of mass food poisoning, lung cancer, hyperthyroidism, and more, under fun titles (e.g., "The Case of the Overly Hot Honeymoon") and in an engaging narrative full of twists and turns. It is an entertaining read."•M. M. Gillis, Choice"Offers mystery stories in the tradition of Berton Roueche that are every bit as exciting and illuminating as the originals. Edlow's stories are replete with information about strange medical adventures and treatments that any of us might experience one day."•Philip A. Mackowiak, M.D., University of Maryland School of Medicine"An intriguing collection of medical detective stories, this book both entertains and meets the general need for medical knowledge."•Stephen H. Zinner, M.D., Harvard Medical

School, Mount Auburn Hospital" Drama, intrigue, solid detective work are the fabric on which Edlow weaves a bountiful collection of fascinating stories. It will inform and keep you spellbound. The pulse is exciting, the thrill of discovery palpable. Masterfully written." •Sanjiv Chopra, M.D., Harvard Medical School, author of Dr. Sanjiv Chopra's Liver Book" These interesting medical tales educate as well as entertain." •Sandeep Jauhar, M.D., author of Intern: A Doctor's Initiation

The summary of this book really put too much emphasis on how "thrilling" it would be. While a decent read, the stories do drag on a little and I found myself getting bored a lot. It ended up being less mystery and more medical history than I thought it would be. Edlow seems to talk just for the sake of talking at times. He explains things that I don't really see as relevant or important, leaving me lost and waiting to get to the point. Overall it was well-written, I'll give it that, but it just wasn't as good as I expected. I'd recommend this to folks who are more interested in the particulars of unusual diseases and parasites, or just medical cases in general. Just be ready for a lot of background and not much focus on the cases themselves.

Dr. Edlow is tenaciously honest and accurate in his communication of medical concepts and the limitations of medical knowledge; and he does so in a language everyone can understand. So approachable are Dr. Edlow's stories, that they are able to immerse their readers in a world of disease and investigation as if they were directly involved. He accomplishes this feat by wrapping each story in fascinating historical detail and everyday environments and foods many will have experienced. You may never attend a dinner party, pet your cat, admire Queen Elizabeth's crown jewels, or read Harry Potter in the same way again. As a physician and a lover of well-written literature, I can wholeheartedly recommend this book to the lay person and medical professional alike.

Just when you thought it was safe to drink milk, fresh apple cider, soak in a hot tub at a resort, or even work in your office, this set of medical emergencies which leave doctors scratching their heads. Taken from true cases, with just the identities of the patients changed, these stories read like episodes of House. Following investigators with the Center of Disease Control & Prevention in some cases are called in when multiple similar cases arise which have all the hallmarks of an impending epidemic. Following their steps in trying to identify not only what's actually wrong with the patient that's causing their kidney failure, double vision, months of headaches, bloody bowels, muscle

weakness, impending death and accumulating fluid in the abdomen among other alarming problems but also the cause of the problems are really fascinating. The author also adds information about some historical cases, information about certain bacteria and their effect on the human body, in addition to different medical treatments and procedures. All in all, a very interesting book, even if some of the stories have made me ask our building manager how often their clean out the air vents in the building and rethink buying apple cider from a nearby farm.

The Deadly Dinner Party: and Other Medical Detective Stories by Jonathan A. Edlow, M.D. is a true worthy successor to Berton Roueche. Accept no substitutes! This book is the real deal! In all seriousness, The Deadly Dinner Party is exactly how Berton Roueche would have approached the subjects covered here with the introduction of the patients and their sickness; the doctors who uncovered the medical mystery, the history behind the disease in question; the treatment and aftermath. Pure Roueche at his finest. I feel that I'm giving Dr Edlow short shift, but I guess I'm not. This is the bottom line: If you love Berton Roueche you'll love Jonathan Edlow. It's as simple as that. This is a solid 4.9 stars. Why not five? *Because* only Berton Roueche deserves five for any tales of medical detection.

Great price, good quality and received almost immediately! I would definitely buy from this seller again!

Jonathan Edlow's "The Deadly Dinner Party" is an excellent read that follows in the tradition of "Bull's Eye", his earlier work on uncovering the mystery of Lyme Disease. Each chapter provides a fast paced vignette of a deadly or serious malady that vexed a medical practitioner, his or her backup team and, of course, one or more victims. Nothing is what it seems, and patients suffer, usually seriously and often close to death, with the Grim Reaper acting as timekeeper in the physician's game of wits with unruly and often unknowable secrets of nature. Although modern technology offers information and support for these modern medical sleuths, very often it is the physician's knowledge of prior medical research and clinical history from decades or centuries past that provides the critical clues allowing the right treatment from modern medicine's arsenal. In many cases the solution is not an esoteric drug or procedure, but something as simple as a change of diet, or a change of process by a third-party such as a food vendor. In each case Edlow gives us an in-depth view of the many researchers and clinicians that pursued obscure and dangerous diseases

in times past. To a layman it is fascinating to see how various historic figures pursued their quarry with such energy and diligence, and it is equally fascinating to learn that they documented their work so carefully that it is available to rescue today's medical professionals in modern dilemmas. The author presents current symptoms and prior research in sufficient detail (sometimes approaching the graphics of TV's CSI series) to give the reader a gripping sense of how a patient suffers and what dreadful fate might await him or her. This also provides the reader with great insights not only into clinical practice and medical history, but also into the need for good personal and social hygiene. Dr. Edlow, in his description of patients, treats each with great tenderness and respect. As an aside, he reminds us in each chapter that the patient's name is fictitious, which I found somewhat tedious, but which is no doubt required by publishers in our litigious society. His description of each patient's humanity also gives us insight into the humanity of their medical providers. The reader can sense the anxiety and concern that doctors have when they can't solve a patient's problem. Even though we all convince ourselves that medical professionals learn to leave problems at work and not bring them home, among Edlow's practitioners that's not the case. For those of us who have been patients, we take great solace in believing that our service providers are thinking about us 24 hours a day. And so it is with Edlow's detectives, professionally trained, blessed with high intellect and typically overachievers (the type whom we probably envied or disliked in high school) who give no quarter and have no rest until their patient is restored to health. Behind the hospital administrator, insurance analyst or Medicare bureaucrat and a large impersonal hospital edifice, Edlow subtly tells us there is a doctor, nurse or lab technician that cares about each patient. If they didn't, the medical mystery would go unsolved and the patient would continue to suffer, and die. Not only is "The Deadly Dinner Party" entertainment, but it is a convenient way to learn some interesting things about medicine, hygiene and technology. In short it is highly educational. In fact, it should be considered as an educational tool for high school and college health or social science classes. The cases are realistic, and fun. (I was struck by the realism when I discovered that one of the service providers described in a specific case, which I won't mention so that the mystery is not revealed in advance to the reader, is a service provider that I use to this day. I inquired of one of its employees if the case was factual, and learned that indeed it was.) For senior high school and college students Edlow's treatment of these mysteries would provide inspiration for some students to choose a career in medicine, but for all it would provide great insights into modern advances in biology, genetic science and medicine, and the need for conscientious practice of personal, social and industrial hygiene. "The Deadly Dinner Party" is entertaining and stimulating for all, and a great educational tool.

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