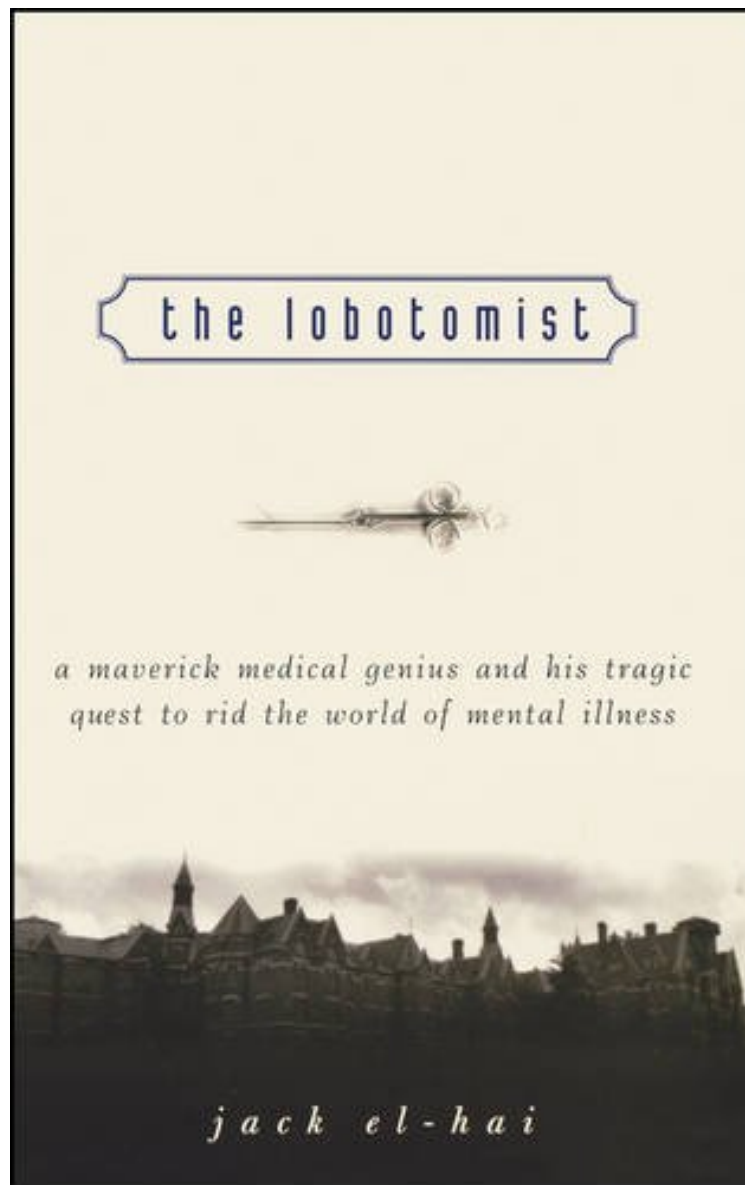


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The Lobotomist: A Maverick Medical Genius and His Tragic Quest to Rid the World of Mental Illness

Jack El-Hai

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Lobotomist: A Maverick Medical Genius and His Tragic Quest to Rid the World of Mental Illness:

The Lobotomist explores one of the darkest chapters of American medicine: the desperate attempt to treat the hundreds of thousands of psychiatric patients in need of help during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Into this crisis stepped Walter Freeman, M.D., who saw a solution in lobotomy, a brain operation intended to reduce the severity of psychotic symptoms. Drawing on Freeman's documents and interviews with Freeman's family, Jack El-Hai takes a penetrating look at the life and work of this complex scientific genius. The Lobotomist explores one of the darkest chapters of American medicine: the desperate attempt to treat the hundreds of thousands of psychiatric patients in need of help during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Into this crisis stepped Walter Freeman, M.D., who saw a solution in lobotomy, a brain operation intended to reduce the severity of psychotic symptoms. Although many patients did not benefit from the thousands of lobotomies Freeman performed, others believed their lobotomies changed them for the better. Drawing on a rich collection of documents Freeman left behind and interviews with Freeman's family, Jack El-Hai takes a penetrating look into the life of this complex scientific genius and traces the physician's fascinating life and work.