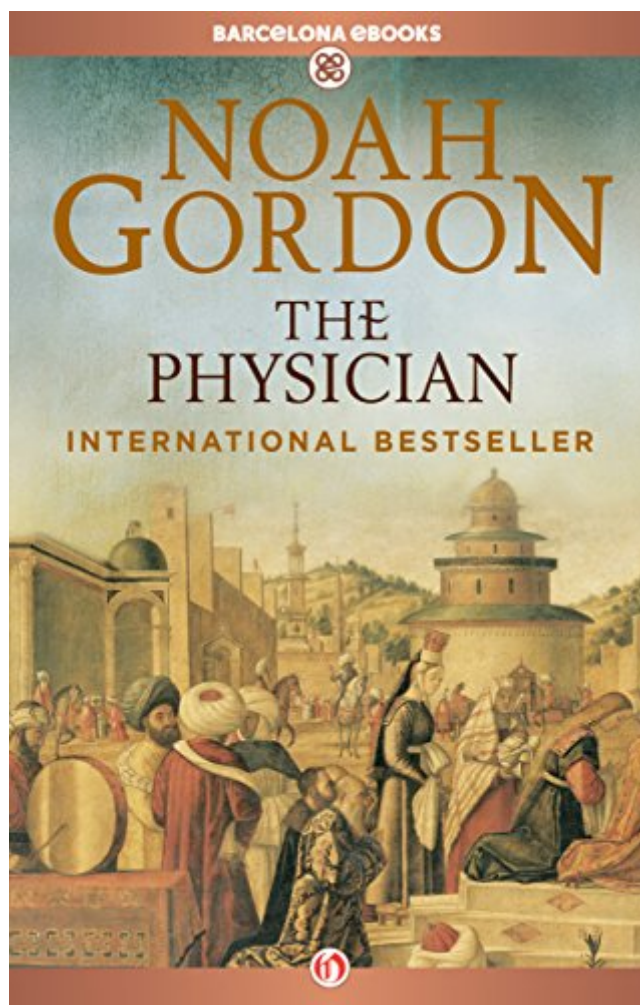


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The Physician (The Cole Trilogy Book 1)



Synopsis

Now a major motion picture: Noah Gordon's beloved masterwork "read by millions in thirty-five countries" In eleventh-century London, a child holds the hand of his dying mother and is terrified, aware something is taking her. Orphaned and given to an itinerant barber-surgeon, Rob Cole becomes a fast-talking swindler, peddling a worthless medicine. But as he matures, his strange gift "an acute sensitivity to impending death" never leaves him, and he yearns to become a healer. Arab madrassas are the only authentic medical schools, and he makes his perilous way to Persia. Christians are barred from Muslim schools, but claiming he is a Jew, he studies under the world's most renowned physician, Avicenna. How the woman who is his great love struggles against her only rival "medicine" makes a riveting modern classic. The Physician is the first book in Noah Gordon's Dr. Robert Cole trilogy, which continues with Shaman and concludes with Matters of Choice.

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Customer Reviews

This engrossing book traces the life of 11th century Englishman, Robert Cole. Cole begins as a normal child, is quickly orphaned, and is then apprenticed to a barber-surgeon. As he travels

throughout England with his master, the reader is introduced to all aspects of English peasant life. Family life, morality, religion, sexuality, medicine, xenophobia and history are all presented in an interesting, subtle, and easily read writing style. When Cole grows up and decides to be a physician, he comes in contact with Jewish doctors who explain to him that the best universities are in Moslem-ruled Persia, where no Christian may go. Determined to learn, Cole overcomes this obstacle by pretending to be a Jew. As he travels and studies in Persia, the same questions of lifestyle are addressed, only this time within the Jewish and Moslem communities. This is a great read for anyone who likes adventurous stories about growing up, or who is interested in sociology, religion, medicine, or history.

I simply had to add my own "thumbs up" to the many other readers who thoroughly enjoyed this book. I confess to having been a bit daunted at the outset by the sheer size of the volume, but it started off quickly and kept up the pace throughout. Granted, some of the episodes strain credulity, but the writing is so captivating that I had no problem suspending disbelief in order to ride the waves of excitement and action. This is truly a tale of the fantastical Persia of old - who cares if every historical detail is not precise. It is the tone and flavor of the characters, the travels and the early medical lore that kept me reading long past eyestrain. I was particularly interested in the juxtaposition of three major religions - Christianity, Judaism and Islam - and the parallels between each one's belief system (each with its own codification of "divine laws"), their mutual intolerance, and their strict adherence to their own doctrines with resultant rejection and vilification of all others. I appreciated Rob's comment that it is not the "word of God" to which he objects, but the human interpretation of that word in the mouths and minds of men which leads to the persecution, suspicion and hatred he witnesses and experiences. That, to my mind, is a very current and topical message - true in the 1000's as well as in the 2000's. A great message without pedantry. I learned a lot, laughed a lot, cried some, but couldn't put this one down.

I read this book 13 years ago and it still ranks with me as one of the best books I have ever read. You will feel as if you are in the locals as this book travels across continents. I found myself reading this book when ever I could find time. This would make a great motion picture. Enjoy!! You will not be disappointed.

READ THIS BOOK - YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED!As an American living in Germany, I learned of this unbelievable American author about 5 years ago. It was at this time that his book THE

PHYSICIAN was recommended to me as the best book these people had ever read. I heard this so many times in various different cities from people of different ages and backgrounds. Of course they had all read it in German and were all shocked that I had never heard of Noah Gordon. Over the course of the next year I searched for the book each time I was in the US and when I finally received my copy I devoured it. My mother joined me in Germany and I recommended it - she finished all 1200 or so pages in a week and loved it too! Since it's been so long since I read THE PHYSICIAN I hesitate to comment directly on the book (also because I'm a lousy writer and would never do it justice) but I will say I have since read every other Noah Gordon book I could get. I was never disappointed - THE SHAMAN was just as magical as THE PHYSICIAN. I'm writing now because the Germans have just given me the tip that Mr. Gordon has yet another winner, I think it's called THE LAST JEW?, in any case I'll be ordering the hardback immediately. My library wouldn't be complete without it.

Kudos to Mr. Gordon. He takes the reader back and shows us all the Y1K problems faced as urban sprawl meant something different than SUV's and the erosion of the ozone layer. Gordon paints a vivid picture of life in England at the turn of the last millenium. He than transports us to the mytic cities of the Near East and shows us medicine in its infancy. As a physician, I was spellbound by a history too often not taught. The lessons in religious tolerance and intolerance thrown in along the way were a bonus. A solid read for any history buff. Something all physicians can learn from. High marks for volume I of the Rob J trilogy.

I read this book when I was in high school and was captivated by the characters, the setting, and the drive of Rob, the main character, to heal and to help and to learn. I was amazed at how much he was able to travel and learn despite the difficulties inherent in his times. I rather suspect that the breadth of his journeys was unrealistic, but I was too caught up in the book to notice. I can't tell you how many times I've reread this book, but it is a large number. Some of the feelings elicited by this book stayed with me as I went through medical school and residency. This book has helped me define the kind of doctor I want to be, and what I love about medicine. If you like medicine, adventure, or historical fiction, give this book a try. You won't be disappointed.

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