

Lying on the Couch: A Novel

By Irvin D. Yalom

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From the bestselling author of *Love's Executioner* and *When Nietzsche Wept* comes a provocative exploration of the unusual relationships three therapists form with their patients. Seymour is a therapist of the old school who blurs the boundary of sexual propriety with one of his clients. Marshal, who is haunted by his own obsessive-compulsive behaviors, is troubled by the role money plays in his dealings with his patients. Finally, there is Ernest Lash. Driven by his sincere desire to help and his faith in psychoanalysis, he invents a radically new approach to therapy -- a totally open and honest relationship with a patient that threatens to have devastating results.

Exposing the many lies that are told on and off the psychoanalyst's couch, *Lying on the Couch* gives readers a tantalizing, almost illicit, glimpse at what their therapists might really be thinking during their sessions. Fascinating, engrossing and relentlessly intelligent, it ultimately moves readers with a denouement of surprising humanity and redemptive faith.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

There is plenty of lying going on in psychotherapy offices to be found in Irvin D. Yalom's novel *Lying on the Couch*, and the lying is of every type defined in your average modern dictionary. Among those doing the lying are Carolyn, who hopes to ruin the career of psychotherapist Ernest Lash because she believes his advice led her husband to seek a divorce. Then there is the gambler whose plan is to lure another psychotherapist into malpractice so he can sue and pay off his debts. In Yalom's world, the relationship between therapist and patient is a tricky one indeed, and it's sometimes hard to tell who needs advice and counseling more--the patient lying on the couch or therapist sitting nearby.

From Publishers Weekly

A willingness to confess to his various mistakes in the course of treating patients made Dr. Yalom's 1989 nonfiction bestseller, *Love's Executioner & Other Tales of Psychotherapy*, endearing, but one hopes that this satire of the Bay Area psychiatric industry is not another mea culpa in disguise. The two psychiatrists at the center of Yalom's second novel (after *When Nietzsche Wept*) find themselves entangled in situations for which their clinical training could not have prepared them. Dr. Ernest Lash, who is, in fact, extremely earnest and given to wearing earth shoes and stained ties, decides to experiment with a new, more intimate therapeutic approach, unwittingly playing into the hands of Carol Leftman, a patient determined to ruin his professional reputation because he had encouraged her husband to leave her. Meanwhile, Ernest's former supervisor, the ambitious, self-important Dr. Marshal Streider, is fleeced by a charismatic con man masquerading as a patient. For help, Marshal turns to a lawyer--the very same Carol Leftman who's dogging Ernest. For both Marshal and Ernest, then, the absolute honesty they demand during the therapeutic hour is at odds with the professional ethic of confidentiality that binds both lawyers and shrinks. Yalom is exploring the jungles of what Ernest calls "wildcat therapy," in which therapists are unable to maintain the Olympian mantle of clinical disinterest in encounters with their patients. Whether this is good medicine or not, Yalom doesn't quite say. As absorbing as it is, the novel presents the moral or professional blunders of the analysts as the acceptable price of doing business. \$50,000 ad/promo; author tour; Rights: William Morris Agency. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

It's laudable when a person successful in one field tries a hand at another, but based on his sophomore second novel (following *When Nietzsche Wept*, Basic, 1992), Yalom shouldn't give up his psychiatry practice to write fiction. Yalom limns the lives of a group of whining psychoanalysts as they variously cope with accusations of sexual misconduct, fall victim to con men, deal with issues of counter-transference, and come under suspicion by their colleagues for false interpretations of Freudian theory. Dr. Ernest Lash, the novel's hero, abandons his psychoanalytic training and develops a new type of therapy in which he attempts to establish an honest and authentic relationship with his patient, offering advice and support rather than limiting his discourse to interpretations of the patient's dreams and feelings. Therapy veterans and those readers who enjoyed Yalom's nonfiction (e.g., *Love's Executioner & Other Tales of Psychotherapy*, LJ 8/89) may start this novel, but its disjointed style and cardboard characters will fast discourage them from finishing it. Not recommended. Nancy Pearl, Washington Ctr. for the Book, Seattle
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Todd Grossi:

Here thing why this particular Lying on the Couch: A Novel are different and trusted to be yours. First of all reading a book is good nonetheless it depends in the content than it which is the content is as scrumptious as food or not. Lying on the Couch: A Novel giving you information deeper and in different ways, you can find any reserve out there but there is no publication that similar with Lying on the Couch: A Novel. It gives you thrill studying journey, its open up your eyes about the thing which happened in the world which is might be can be happened around you. You can bring everywhere like in area, café, or even in your approach home by train. Should you be having difficulties in bringing the paper book maybe the form of Lying on the Couch: A Novel in e-book can be your substitute.

Douglas Gibson:

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