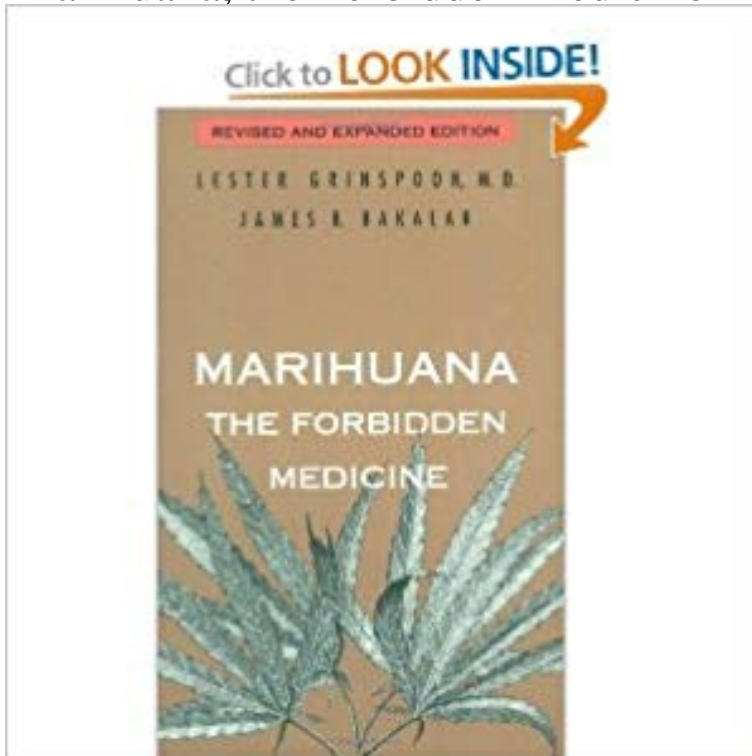


Marihuana, the Forbidden Medicine



For many centuries patients and physicians have found marihuana to be a highly effective medicine. This drug, outlawed for more than 50 years in the United States, provides relief from nausea, pain and muscle spasms, and alleviates symptoms of glaucoma, multiple sclerosis, AIDS, migraine, and other debilitating ailments. Yet the US government grants only 12 patients in the entire country the right to use marihuana medically, and permits even that with great reluctance. In this book, Dr. Lester Grinspoon and James B. Bakalar draw on 20 years of research to describe the medical benefits of marihuana, explain why it has been forbidden, and argue that full legalization is necessary to make it available to all patients who need it. Much of the book consists of accounts written by patients (including one from famed scientist Stephen Jay Gould) that dramatically illustrate not only the relief provided by marihuana but also the unnecessary distress caused by the need to obtain it illegally. Grinspoon and Bakalar recount the long history of medical marihuana use, discuss the real (as opposed to fancied) potential health hazards of the drug, and analyze the social causes of the governments insistence on making outlaws of its medical users. They find that marihuana is a remarkably safe substance and that criminalizing its use is costly, ineffective and unfair. They conclude that legalizing it for medical purposes alone would be unworkable and that it must be given the same status as alcohol-legal, with appropriate limitations, for use by adults for any purpose.

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