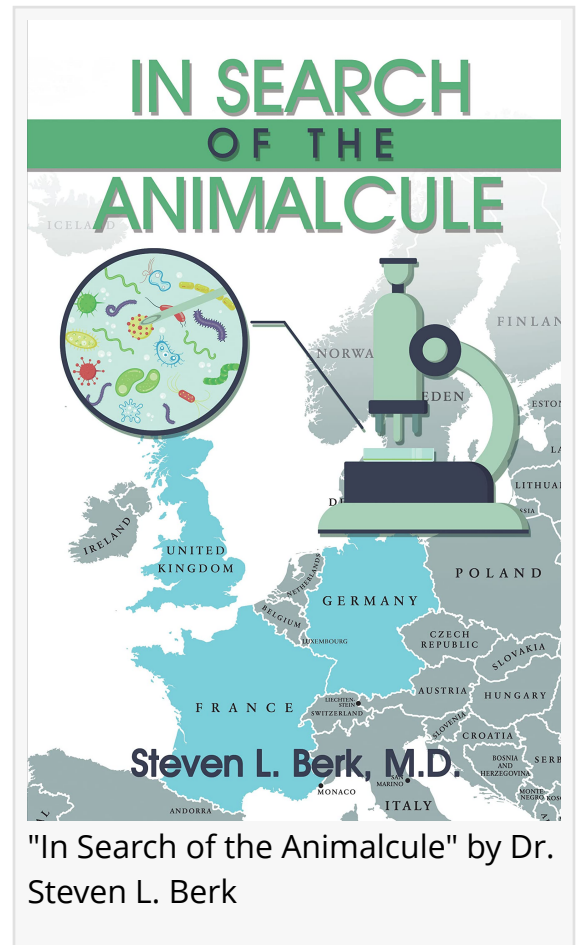


# INFECTIOUS DISEASE PHYSICIAN, CELEBRATED WRITER PENS EXTRAORDINARY WORK OF HISTORICAL FICTION

*Dr. Steven L. Berk's In Search of the Animalcule, a stunning work of historical fiction about the early days of infectious disease, releasing in February*

LUBBOCK, TX, UNITED STATES, February 2, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Infectious disease expert Steven L. Berk, M.D. will celebrate the release of [In Search of the Animalcule](#) this February. Berk, an award-winning writer and Texas medical school dean, is author of *Anatomy of a Kidnapping: A Doctor's Story*, which *People* magazine hailed "a harrowing account of a compassionate doctor's abduction at gunpoint from his own home. Stays with you." Berk follows the familiar writer's advice to "write what one knows" in crafting his debut novel, *In Search of the Animalcule*. A stunning work of historical fiction about the early days of infectious disease, *In Search of the Animalcule* will rekindle attention to the history of the hand washing doctrine, the exhilaration of discovery, and the continuing martyrdom of physicians fighting deadly animalcules(germs), a battle which continues in the COVID era.



About the book: When he is born in 1847 Vienna, protagonist Jacob Pflieger shares just two days with his mother, a female obstetrician who, like thousands of other women around the world, dies of the mysterious childbed fever. Because his birth father wants nothing to do with him, Jacob is placed in an orphanage. As Jacob matures into a precocious twelve-year-old, he is told about the legacy of his mother, the first female physician in Vienna, by her colleague, Ignaz Semmelweis. When he discovers that his father is a winemaker in Lille, France, Jacob is determined to find him and embarks on a quest to locate him. When he arrives in France, Jacob is introduced to Louis Pasteur who is working with his father to determine why the wines of France are spoiling. As he is led on an intense scientific journey, Jacob eventually encounters and works with Joseph Lister and Robert Koch, participating in the great discoveries of the era that uncover the animalcules, the bacteria, that have caused global disease and death. Later Jacob

studies to become a doctor under the mentorship of Sir William Osler at Johns Hopkins.

A remarkable story that captures the real lives and work of the greatest scientists of the time, *In Search of the Animalcule* is a brilliantly rendered tale. Steven L. Berk, M.D. delivers a confident, captivating story of discovery that unfolds against the backdrop of an unprecedented era in medical history. Meticulously researched, brimming with historical detail, and resplendent with a cast of compelling characters who changed the world, *In Search of the Animalcule* is an extraordinary story extraordinarily well told.

*In Search of the Animalcule* has garnered high advance praise:

"We take for granted the germ theory of disease, yet until the mid-1800s, physicians were ignorant of the existence of bacteria, fungi or viruses. In this lovely historical novel, we live and breathe the seminal discoveries of physicians and scientists like Semmelweis, Pasteur, Lister, Osler who changed our lives. *Animalcule* is a wonderful read."

– Abraham Verghese, author of *Cutting for Stone*.

"A highly readable account of the conquest of infectious diseases in the 19th century—using some of the best techniques of historical fiction— including some of the greatest true stories in the history of medicine. The book is relevant for all who love a story well told, for amidst these stories of death and disease are profound stories of love and life."

–Anand B. Karnad, M.D., author of *Intrinsic Factors*

"Drawing on a long career in infectious diseases, Steven Berk has written a small masterpiece of historical fiction pertaining to his specialty. If the aim of historical fiction is to entertain while informing, *In Search of the Animalcule* succeeds royally. Readers ranging from youths considering careers in medicine to the most experienced researchers will find this book hard to put down."

–Charles S. Bryan, M.D., author of *Asylum Doctor*

Steven L. Berk, M.D. is the Executive VP of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and Dean of the School of Medicine. He is a board-certified expert in infectious disease and has written a multitude of peer-reviewed papers, as well as five medical textbooks. Dr. Berk is a member of the American Osler Society. He is the author of *Anatomy of a Kidnapping: A Doctor's Story*, which was awarded the Silver Medal in the Foreword Indies Award (True Crime category.)

*In Search of the Animalcule* (iUniverse) will be available wherever fine books are sold on February 21, 2023 in hardcover (6x9, 228 pp., ISBN: 9781663248015, \$23.99) trade paper (6x9, 228 pp., ISBN : 9781663248008, \$13.99) and eBook (ISBN : 9781663247995, \$3.99) editions. Members of the news media wishing to request additional information about *In Search of the Animalcule* or Steven L. Berk, M.D. are kindly asked to contact Maryglenn M. Warnock by email: [maryglenn@maryglenn.com](mailto:maryglenn@maryglenn.com)

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