



Lucky That Way: Rediscovering My Father's World

Pamela Gerhardt

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“I decide that from now on we should listen to him. His lip may be deflated and his left side paralyzed, but he knows. And he has made terrible mistakes. But he knows. He knows. We are lucky that way.”

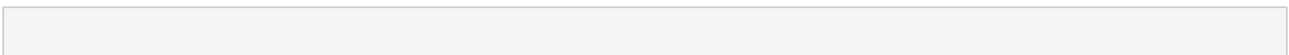
Lucky That Way, a nuanced, richly engaging memoir, chronicles the joys and tribulations of a daughter who rediscovers her father as he nears the end of his life. Ernie Gerhardt, an artist and teacher, is largely estranged from his five children, but when he suffers a debilitating stroke, his daughter Pamela must fly to Las Vegas to tend to him. When she arrives to find Ernie newly and shockingly fragile, she is hit by an unexpected wave of tenderness.

As she watches over him in intensive care, she recalls turning points in her family history—the early death of her mother and her father’s turn to heavy drinking--and reflects on the idiosyncrasies that make an imperfect and unique family, on what it means to become old, on what happens when parents are no longer the caregivers but the cared-for, and on how a family copes with their responsibility to the elderly.

Written in a crisp, engaging style, the story is less about the drudgery of finding the right mix of medicines, at-home caregivers, and rehabilitation centers and more about the emotional ramifications of caring for the sick under the weight of sometimes flawed attachments.

People make mistakes, grow old, get sick, and pass on from this world. *Lucky That Way* examines the irritations and comforts of contemporary family bonds. Gerhardt sifts through the complicated, multi-layered relationships for both wry comedy and high drama and records a string of triumphs and mishaps as Ernie and his five adult children struggle to manage his life and find meaning before their time runs out.

The emerging theme of imperfect humans struggling with life's great mysteries will strike a chord of recognition with the tens of thousands of Baby-Boomers and Gen-Xers who are currently facing similar circumstances with their elderly loved ones. Pamela Gerhardt’s heartfelt story about a family coming to terms with their aging father’s illness and imminent death takes readers on an emotional roller coaster that highlights love, loss, humor, and sadness.



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Ronald Brun:

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Charles Settles:

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