



The Best Seat in the House: How I Woke Up One Tuesday and Was Paralyzed for Life

By Allen Rucker

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Like the day Elvis died or O.J. was acquitted, the Tuesday you wake up paralyzed is not a day you soon forget. For writer Allen Rucker—baby boomer, husband, father of two, aging Hollywood also-ran—life started over that Tuesday when, at the age of fifty-one, he was struck by a rare disorder—transverse myelitis—that left him paralyzed from the waist down. Why him? Was he being punished? Was it his stressful life? His frustrating career? Telling too many Christopher Reeve jokes? Dazed and paralyzed, he was forced to reevaluate everything, from the simplest bodily functions to the mysteries of the universe.

In a style that is at once funny and moving, *The Best Seat in the House* offers an unpretentious and unapologetic account of learning to live with paralysis. Without trivializing his situation, and without sermons or clichés, Rucker invites all readers, whether disabled or not, to identify with him for better or for worse. This remarkably comic and heartfelt book speaks to the fragility of life and to the resilience and adaptability of a single, ordinary human being. Lucky for us, this human being has a sense of humor.

At first, it may not look like the best seat in the house, but read on. You might be surprised.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Rucker (*The Sopranos: A Family History*) has written many TV shows, including the 2005 Peabody Award-winning Vietnam documentary, *Two Days in October*. At 51, he became a victim of transverse myelitis, a rare neurological disorder that left him paralyzed from the waist down. Opening with an entertaining, sarcastic glimpse at the TV industry and his struggles to script amusing "patter for splashy Hollywood ego fests," he interrupts the fun with a chilling account of the two hours in 1996 when he suddenly became paralyzed. Learning to reprogram his life at L.A.'s Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, he felt "fear, guilt, loss, more fear" and had crying jags plus the shame and embarrassment of bowel accidents. Listing a litany of "pride-bruising indignities," such as being gawked at and carried up stairs "like a beanbag chair," he explains how he confronted each new challenge. With many pages devoted to dealing with the "overly kind" able-bodied and their self-conscious attitudes, this potent memoir is also an effective how-to guidebook for anyone who is disabled. Rucker is a gifted observer-humorist, unleashing a straight-arrow honesty and a vibrant, penetrating wit while probing the most intimate aspects of contemporary life and human behavior. (Jan. 9)

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From [Booklist](#)

TV writer Rucker likes to think he's on the cutting edge of what lies in the future for all of us. Truth be told, he is. In our hearts, we all know we will one day lose our independence to the ravages of old age and/or illness. Rucker doesn't make it seem as bad, however, as many anticipate. The limiting problem for him is transverse myelitis, which struck him from out of the blue when he was a mere 51 years old and in excellent health. In an hour and a half on a Tuesday afternoon, the able-bodied runner was thrown back to some of the physical helplessness of infancy by paralysis from the waist down. Ten years later, and with self-deprecating humor, he is able to walk--er, *roll*--through the ups and downs of being wheelchair bound. He has two rules: never whine, and never ask "Why me?" since that leads only to whining. He does lament the lack of positive wheelchair role models in the movies. Meanwhile, he's a good literary role model. *Donna Chavez*
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Review

"Very moving, not scary. [Rucker] is a talented man."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Steve Bennett:

Do you have favorite book? Should you have, what is your favorite's book? E-book is very important thing for us to know everything in the world. Each publication has different aim or perhaps goal; it means that book has different type. Some people really feel enjoy to spend their a chance to read a book. These are reading whatever they get because their hobby will be reading a book. What about the person who don't like looking at a book? Sometime, individual feel need book after they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you should have this *The Best Seat in the House: How I Woke Up One Tuesday and Was Paralyzed for Life*.

David Bergeron:

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David Hoag:

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Roger Richmond:

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