



# Lucky That Way: Rediscovering My Father's World

*Pamela Gerhardt*

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While selling a futon at a yard sale in Washington, D.C., 45-year-old college professor Pamela Gerhardt listens to her voice mail and finds that her quirky 79-year-old father, Ernie, has suffered a stroke while vacationing in Las Vegas, more than 2,000 miles away. They have not spoken to each other in seven years. The news sparks a journey - literally and figuratively.

Pam (along with her four siblings) begins to rebuild a once sparkling relationship with Ernie and to help him recover - an uneasy task, especially when the father is an eccentric (albeit entertaining) abstract artist with a penchant for chain-smoking, drinking, and irreverent jokes.

This captivating, sometimes roller-coaster narrative set in Las Vegas, Missouri, South Carolina, and Florida highlights the importance of compassion, devotion, humor, and - ultimately - forgiveness and redemption.

Lucky That Way, a nuanced, richly engaging memoir 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.

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 currently facing similar circumstances with their elderly loved ones. Pamela Gerhardt's heartfelt story highlights love, loss, humor, and sadness.

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