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See the Cane?

Karen Murphy Anderson
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In her poignant, forthright, and informative debut book, *See the Cane: When MS Strikes, Strike Back,* freelance writer Karen Murphy Anderson combines personal experience, poetry, and medical facts to paint a portrait of her life with multiple sclerosis. Anderson successfully strikes back, recounting her journey in plainspoken prose and reducing the medical jargon of the disease to layman's terms, so the average reader understands the nuts and bolts of MS. With equal frankness, the author tells a story of harrowing symptoms initially ignored, until she was finally diagnosed with the disease at age forty. She recalls how the encouragement and assertiveness of family and friends help her cope, exemplifying how an insistent support network can help one get things done. In poetic form, she concisely describes everything from the claustrophobia of an MRI machine to the fatigue and the mental fog that sometimes assaults her as a result of the disease. Although every person's response to MS is different, Anderson's touching lyrical specificity enables readers to see the effects of MS on her body and mind.

This narrative is not a depiction of the ravages of illness; Anderson's fortitude and optimism shine through every word as she describes going with the flow to accommodate how her MS presents itself on any given day. While she shares candid passages of pain and uncertainty, the author's faith in God and sheer force of will do not allow her to give up, providing an inspiring example to readers who face daunting odds. Even as the author relates how the Bible comforts her and inspires some of her poetry, secular and Christian readers alike will be moved by the author's religious reflections and verse. Readers of all faith backgrounds will be interested to learn that Anderson thinks God gave her MS for a reason. By no means, however, does the author's expression of faith overshadow her message for her non-religious audience.

The author's family of origin, husband, and children make brief appearances in the narrative, debunking the myth of people with disabilities as asexual loners devoid of friends and kin. Anderson also busts the stereotype of people with impairments as unproductive depressives, meeting her diagnosis head-on and composing poetry about her symptoms. Her self-representation as a multi-faceted individual of whom multiple sclerosis is merely one aspect provides an example to reaffirm the humanity of all people who happen to have disabilities. *See the Cane?: When MS Strikes, Strike Back*

packs a strong punch for such a slim volume. Without a doubt, this narrative is a must-read for those who work with the chronically ill, the newly diagnosed, or anyone who desires a life-changing journey

JILL ALLEN (April 5, 2011)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.

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