

# Forces

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Volume 2023

Article 93

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4-10-2023

## Who Sits in That Empty Chair

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### Recommended Citation

Duncan, Amanda (2023) "Who Sits in That Empty Chair," *Forces*: Vol. 2023, Article 93.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/forces/vol2023/iss1/93>

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relief. I once again began doing my own research. This time I came across a group of people with the same condition. Their website was a wealth of information, all compiled by people like me who had been forced to become their own advocates.

I attended a support group meeting and was by far the youngest person there and the only person visibly spasming, as everyone else seemed to be much farther in their treatment journey. They were all brutally honest and extremely open about their personal medical history. They had to be. If we didn't help each other, no one would. It was refreshing. I learned more at that meeting than at any appointment I had ever been to. They knew all the best and worst providers in the country. They very bluntly told me that I needed to leave my current neurologist and go see an expert down in Houston. I made an appointment the next day.

I'm incredibly young for my diagnosis, so they were very worried about how my condition might affect my well-being. They gave me all the advice they had and got my contact information so they could personally help me. I felt like I had been newly adopted by several loving and supportive grandparents. With a comforting and cheerful smile, one of my new grandmothers sent me off with their favorite saying, "Keep your eyes open!"

**For the first time in a long time,  
I was hopeful. I was excited.**

Afterward, it was like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders, and I couldn't stop smiling. For the first time in a long time, I was hopeful. I was excited.

**Step Nine: Keep your eyes open.**

**Step Ten: See step one.**

## **Who Sits in That Empty Chair**

Amanda Duncan

