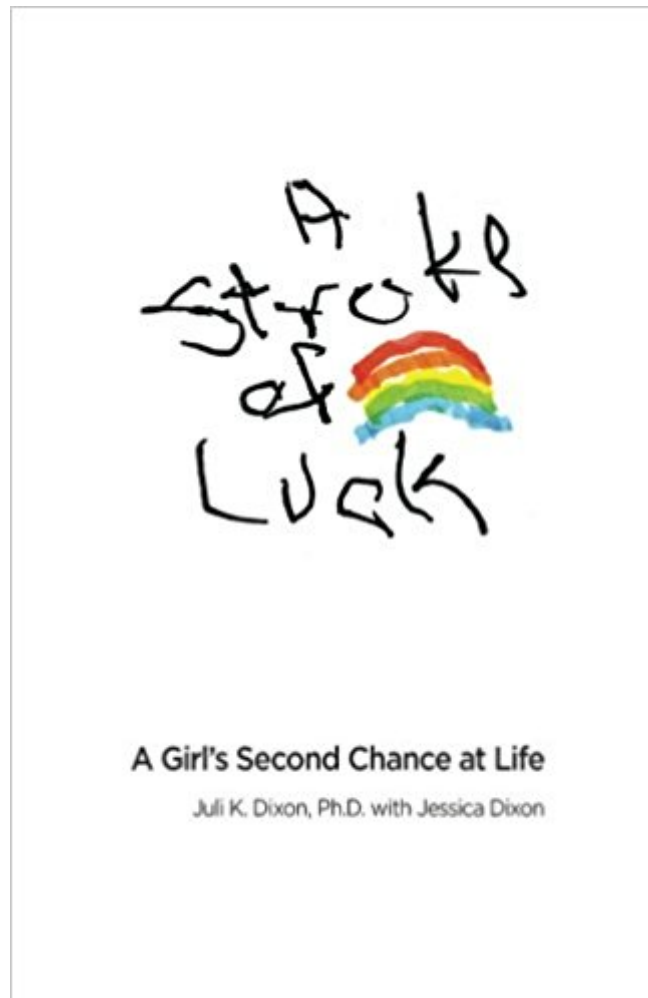




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# **A Stroke Of Luck: A Girl's Second Chance At Life**



## Synopsis

At a critical juncture during brain surgery, Alex Dixon, age 12, had a stroke . . . Alex was a normal, bright, and healthy little girl, when the sudden onset of a mysterious illness began to take over her life. Months of physical therapy and medication failed to provide relief from acute pain and muscle spasms. Doctors across the country were at a loss for answers. A last-ditch attempt at treatment – brain surgery – ended up stopping the spasms but with unexpected, dire consequences. A Stroke of Luck is the remarkable true story of a close-knit family that meets challenge after challenge with resilience, hope, and love.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

JULI K.DIXON, Ph.D. is a professor of mathematics education at the University of Central Florida. A prolific writer and speaker, she has published numerous textbooks and delivered keynote presentations throughout the United States. She lives in Central Florida with her husband Marc and their two daughters. Her younger daughter and co-author JESSICA DIXON began writing this book when she was eleven years old.

I started this book early one morning and did not stop until I was finished. The story is incredible but the writing is exquisite in conveying human emotions and struggle. This book was inspiring, captivating, and extremely enlightening as we think about not only the challenges and how this young lady and her family showed a never give up attitude but also how we must be an active

participant in our personal and families medical care. First and most important, the sheer will of the family that carried them through this crisis was inspiring and revealing of the dynamics that occur in times like these. The raw feelings that were shared by the "little, big sister" as well as the parents truly revealed the impact of a medical crisis upon a family and how, if you do not recognize and deal with the situation, could possibly destroy a family. Alex, Jessica, Juli, Mark and the extraordinary support of their families are an example of knowing that love and determination can carry you through. Secondly, in a time when health care is debated every day, it is also a reminder that we must be actively engaged and to the extent possible, our own advocates. I will be giving this book to many of my friends as I think this is a story well worth reading!!

This book caught my attention because I wrote a novel with the same title several years ago. This is the true story of a family devastated by the strange illness of their young daughter. The stroke was the result of an accident during brain surgery, but it's possible it actually saved her life by killing the part of the brain that was causing her original problems. I admire the tenacity of the mother/author in caring and advocating for her daughter. I couldn't help but feel sorry that they apparently had no power outside themselves to rely on in their time of need. The characters seemed to be grouped into three categories: superheroes (the sick daughter, the tenacious mother, the pediatrician, and the neurosurgeon), heroes (the father who came across as caring but weak, other family members, teachers, and classmates), and villains (most of the rest of the medical community). The journey the family traveled in trying to identify and treat this mysterious condition was intriguing, and their strength and love through the ordeal was encouraging.

What an outstanding book! It's a must-read for those going through medical trauma, nurses and doctors, care givers, siblings of those who have medical needs and teachers. Those going through medical trauma will be inspired to persevere and fight for their health like Alex; I'm in awe of Alex's character, sense of humor and work ethic. What a joy! Doctors and nurses might have a great mentor in Dr. Alden who listened so well, showed great empathy and was determined to help the Dixons. Care givers might have a mentor in Juli and her husband (and their extended family) who fiercely advocated for their daughter and stayed united while loving each other through intense grief and exhaustion. Siblings of those with medical needs or disabilities might be encouraged and feel like they are not alone due to Jessica's candid writing...what a loyal and kind sister! Teachers will be inspired to reach all learners and to be aware of how medical problems might be impacting families in their care. The determination of each person on Team Dixon is remarkable. Nurses and doctors

are human and make mistakes like we all do. The grace, resilience, optimism and intense physical/emotional work this family showed during years - yes, years - of confusion and medical mistakes/setbacks regarding Alex's health is unlike anything I have seen. Excellent book!!!!

If you only read one book this summer - make it this one! This is a story of resilience, strength and love. As a parent, I found myself drawn into this family's story. I cannot imagine enduring the nightmare these people faced. When their 4th grader came home from a piano recital with a high fever and a back ache, the Dixon family never imagined that they were starting a long journey of pain, confusion and heartache. As their daughter Alex struggles with a mysterious illness that baffles some of the best medical minds in the country, her family spares no expense and examines every lead that might answer the question; What is wrong with our daughter and how can we make her better? When the doctors are baffled and try to convince her parents that Alex is "faking" this illness as a ploy for attention, you can feel her mother's anger towards and disappointment in the doctors who have sworn to "do no harm". As Alex's health continues to spiral downward and it becomes clear that time is not on their side, the family and the doctors realize that desperate times call for desperate measures. Alex endures brain surgery and suffers a stroke due to a mistake made in the OR. The doctors break the heartbreaking news that if Alex survives the next 48 hours, it is likely that she will be in a vegetative state This is an unacceptable outcome for Alex and for her family. A fight to bring Alex back begins. This fight is bloody and there are many battles and setbacks, but what happens as a result of this family's determination, love and unwavering support is nothing short of a miracle. I highly recommend this book to anyone looking for an uplifting, riveting story.

A young girl is very ill; her leg is so twisted that the sole of her foot faces upward, and some doctors suggest she is deliberately doing that for attention. She is very ill and in this day and age even her pain cannot be lessened. It is only through an egregious medical error, that could have easily killed her, she begins to improve. Anyone this ill, without the loving support of her large group of family and friends, would never have survived. Good luck to all involved.

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