



How I Became a Human Being: A Disabled Man's Quest for Independence (Wisconsin Studies in Autobiography)

Mark O'Brien

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In September 1955 six-year-old Mark O'Brien moved his arms and legs for the last time. He came out of a coma to find himself enclosed from the neck down in an iron lung, the machine in which he would live for much of the rest of his life.

For the first time in paperback, *How I Became a Human Being* is O'Brien's account of his struggles to lead an independent life despite a lifelong disability. In 1955 he contracted polio and became permanently paralyzed from the neck down. O'Brien describes growing up without the use of his limbs, his adolescence struggling with physical rehabilitation and suffering the bureaucracy of hospitals and institutions, and his adult life as an independent student and writer. Despite his physical limitations, O'Brien crafts a narrative that is as rich and vivid as the life he led.

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