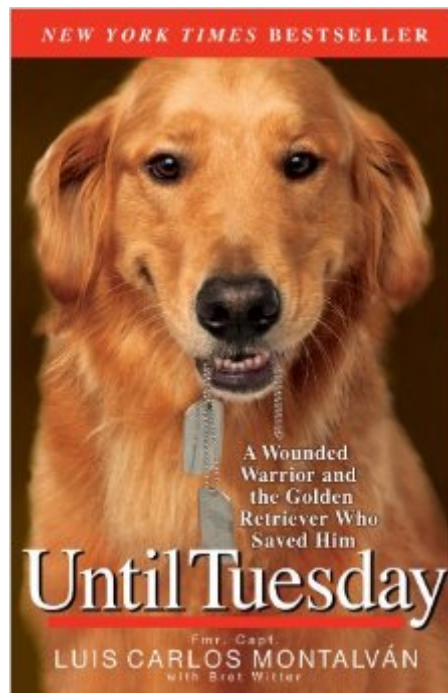


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Until Tuesday: A Wounded Warrior And The Golden Retriever Who Saved Him



Synopsis

A heartwarming dog story like no other: Tuesday, a lovable golden retriever, changes a former soldier's life forever. A highly decorated captain in the U.S. Army, Luis Montalvan never backed down from a challenge during his two tours of duty in Iraq. After returning home from combat, however, his physical wounds and crippling post-traumatic stress disorder began to take their toll. He wondered if he would ever recover. Then Luis met Tuesday, a sensitive golden retriever trained to assist the disabled. Tuesday had lived among prisoners and at a home for troubled boys, and he found it difficult to trust in or connect with a human being--until Luis. Until Tuesday is the story of how two wounded warriors, who had given so much and suffered the consequences, found salvation in each other. It is a story about war and peace, injury and recovery, psychological wounds and spiritual restoration. But more than that, it is a story about the love between a man and dog, and how, together, they healed each other's souls.

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Customer Reviews

Until Tuesday is much more than the feel-good story about service dogs I was expecting. Luis Carlos Montalvan's book provides a brief but uncompromising look at the conduct of America's most recent military incursion into Iraq and the impact it had on soldiers who were placed in impossible positions. It also indicts businesses that discriminate against assistance dogs. None of that should put off dog lovers who want a feel-good story; Montalvan's relationship with Tuesday, his golden retriever, is at the book's heart, and it is deeply moving. The first three chapters

imaginatively recreate Tuesday's training, including a look at Tuesday's life in prison while he participated in the Puppies Behind Bars program, bonding with an inmate and helping the inmate hold onto his humanity in an inhumane environment. Tuesday also put in time at Children's Village, where troubled kids learn about responsibility and success by helping to train service dogs. The next five chapters tell Montalvn's story. It mirrors writing that came out of the Vietnam War in its complaint that the nation's leaders lied to the public, neglected the troops, and did too little to help veterans. Montalvn -- a National Guard officer who had been in uniform for more than a decade -- arrived at Al-Waleed, Iraq, in 2003. While working to keep arms and insurgents from crossing into Iraq from Syria, Montalvn was ambushed and barely escaped assassination. The severity of his injuries (both physical and psychological) wasn't immediately recognized -- in part because he refused the requests of medics who wanted him to go to Baghdad for x-rays. When he returned to Colorado in 2004, the "counseling" he received was brief and ineffective; he feared that requesting more would jeopardize his military career. Unable to adjust to a quiet life and faced with a failed marriage, he signed up for a second tour in Iraq and was assigned as a liaison officer to the Iraqi Special Forces. When the Iraqi Army started "a campaign of tribal and ethnic cleaning against the Sunnis" with the tacit support of the American Army, Montalvn "could no longer understand what [his] men were fighting and dying for." He felt betrayed by leaders who turned their attention to "the media, the message, the public back home -- anything and everything, it seemed, but the soldiers under their command." After he wrote a critical op-ed that was published in The New York Times, he received an honorable discharge and returned home with PTSD: an umbrella diagnosis that encompassed his feelings of anxiety and paranoia, his withdrawal and isolation, his bitter days and sleepless nights. The final sixteen chapters tell the story I was expecting and that dog lovers will recognize: a story of training and bonding, loving and learning. A dog and man with complementary personalities: codependent companions, mutual providers of support. Although Montalvn tells a serious story, he also takes the time to describe Tuesday's playful antics, wonderful passages that made me laugh out loud. Even in those chapters, however, the war lurks. Some politically-minded readers might not appreciate Montalvn's take on the Bush administration ... or, for that matter, his disappointment with the Obama administration. Montalvn is a bright, emotionally honest man who isn't afraid to express a forceful point of view; it didn't bother me but it might anger some, so be warned. Not all of this book has a "feel good" quality. Until Tuesday tells a personal story; it isn't filled with generalized facts about service dogs or PTSD. I can't say I learned anything new from it, but that might be because I once helped someone with a social anxiety disorder who can't leave his home without the calming influence of a service dog. He was experiencing the same discrimination

that Montalvn describes: restaurant managers, worried about violating health codes, mistakenly (and illegally) claim that a dog isn't really a service dog unless its owner is blind. I also live next door to a service dog that assists a woman in a wheelchair. Based on those experiences, and having a golden retriever of my own, I believed every word of Luis Carlos Montalvn's account of how his relationship with Tuesday made it possible for him to reclaim his life -- despite the discrimination he encountered. Tuesday reminded me so much of my own golden (particularly the description of Tuesday breaking training to dive into a swimming pool to steal the other dogs' toys) that I have no choice but to recommend this book. Fortunately, the book merits that recommendation; the story it tells may not be packed with fresh information, but it is memorable and moving and richly rewarding. I would give Until Tuesday 4 1/2 stars if that option were available.

I was sitting on a plane, chatting with the woman next to me about my service dog at my feet, when the woman across the aisle pulled out the book she was reading and showed it to me. On the cover was a face that I looked into every day (except my Golden is on the lighter side). She explained that she had just gotten through the first few pages but recommended it. I walked to the B&N the next day and bought the book. Luis & Tuesday's story was heartbreaking to read, but not in the way that makes you pity him, but makes you have a tremendous amount of respect for him. And gratitude. Tremendous gratitude for the sacrifices he has made for this country. Home of the Brave, right? Land of the free? It made me feel so ashamed of the way we have treated our veterans, putting them through endless amounts of red tape and process to get the care they need. Its horribly inefficient. And Luis' is brave for his side of the story in Iraq. For not placating and politically positioning like so many of our politicians do. I have always felt like I was never getting the "full story" regarding the War and why were in it. There were too many conflicting explanations. I also appreciate the way his story shed light on the discrimination people with disabilities still feel....even in the year of 2011, where "PC" is the norm. Its amazing how many store owners have no qualms about shouting at me from across the store that "No Dogs Allowed" despite the bright colored vests my Golden wears or the obviousness of his advanced training. I appreciate that he views his dog the same way that I view mine. My best friend. My partner. I hope to meet Luis one day, maybe buy him lunch and hopefully be permitted to wrap my arms around Tuesday and give his coat a ruffle.

I got this initially as an audiobook and am now buying it as a "real book" because I want to be able to pick it up, thumb through it, look at photos and have it in my hands & my home. "Until Tuesday" is a beautifully written (and wonderfully read by the author - it's been a pleasure to listen to) account of

a soldier's experience during his deployment in, and the aftermath of, the war in Iraq. Montalvan neither indulges in nor shies away from the irresponsibility of those who engineered this war. He is smart, dedicated & patriotic and tells it like it is; I wish every American would read this. In addition to being well-written and politically astute, it's filled with truth, beauty and hope. It's definitely my favorite book of 2011 - really, my favorite book in recent memory. I like it so much that I'm delaying finishing it - I really don't want it to end, don't want to lose Tuesday & Luis as my companions...

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