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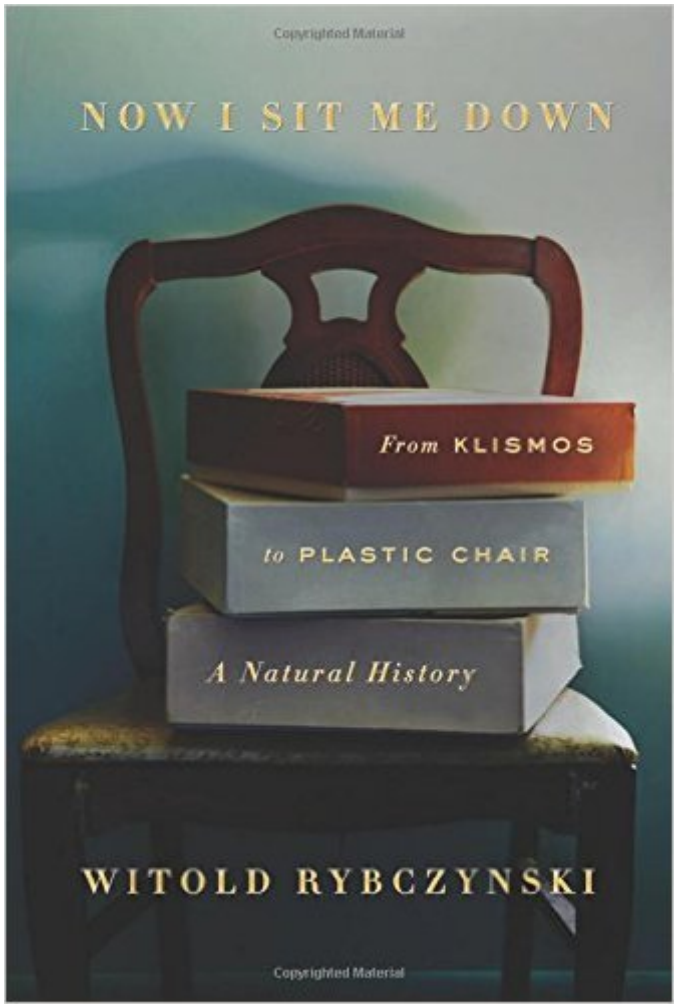
Now I Sit Me Down: From Klismos To Plastic Chair: A Natural History



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Synopsis

Have you ever wondered where rocking chairs came from, or why cheap plastic chairs are suddenly everywhere?In Now I Sit Me Down, the distinguished architect and writer Witold Rybczynski chronicles the history of the chair from the folding stools of pharaonic Egypt to the ubiquitous stackable monobloc chairs of today. He tells the stories of the inventor of the bentwood chair, Michael Thonet, and of the creators of the first molded-plywood chair, Charles and Ray Eames. He reveals the history of chairs to be a social history--of different ways of sitting, of changing manners and attitudes, and of varying tastes. The history of chairs is the history of who we are. We learn how the ancient Chinese switched from sitting on the floor to sitting in a chair, and how the iconic chair of Middle America--the Barcalounger--traces its roots back to the Bauhaus. Rybczynski weaves a rich tapestry that draws on art and design history, personal experience, and historical accounts. And he pairs these stories with his own delightful hand-drawn illustrations: colonial rockers and English cabrioles, languorous chaise longues, and no-nonsense ergonomic task chairs--they’re all here.The famous Danish furniture designer Hans Wegner once remarked, "A chair is only finished when someone sits in it." As Rybczynski tells it, the way we choose to sit and what we choose to sit on speak volumes about our values, our tastes, and the things we hold dear.

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