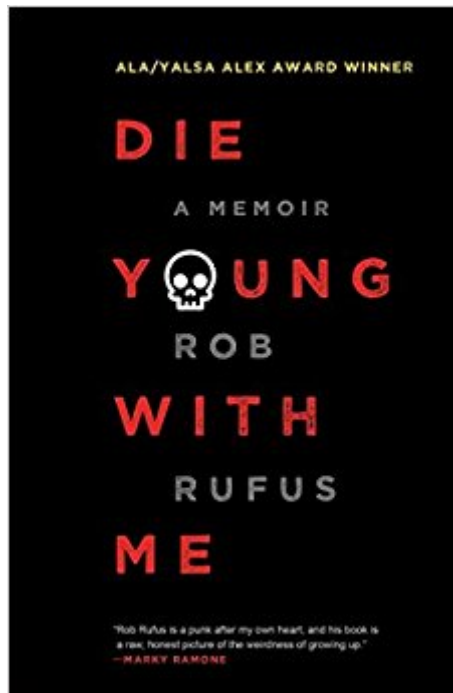




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Die Young With Me: A Memoir



Synopsis

In the tradition of John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* and *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*, this incredibly moving and harrowing true story of a teenager diagnosed with cancer is "a resounding affirmation of how music can lift one's spirits beyond gray skies and bad news" (Kirkus Reviews). Punk is not dead in rural West Virginia. In fact, it blares constantly from the basement of Rob and Nat Rufus, identical twin brothers with spiked hair, black leather jackets, and the most kick-ass record collection in Appalachia. To them, school (and pretty much everything else) sucks. But what can you expect when you're the only punks in town? When the brothers start their own band, their lives begin to change: they meet friends, they attract girls, and they finally get invited to join a national tour and get out of their rat box little town. But their plans are cut short when Rob is diagnosed with a rare form of cancer that has already progressed to Stage Four. Not only are his dreams of punk rock stardom completely shredded, there is a very real threat that this is one battle that can't be won. While Rob suffers through nightmarish treatments and debilitating surgery, Nat continues on their band's road to success alone. But as Rob's life diverges from his brother's, he learns to find strength within himself and through his music. *Die Young with Me* is a "raw, honest picture of the weirdness of growing up" (Marky Ramone) and the story of a brave teen's battle with cancer and the many ways music helped him cope through his recovery.

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Ailments > Cancer

Customer Reviews

“Rob Rufus is a punk after my own heart and his book is a raw, honest picture of the weirdness of growing up.” (Marky Ramone) “A resounding affirmation of how music can lift one’s spirits beyond gray skies and bad news. . . . Rufus’s memoir makes a valuable contribution to the literature of healing and recovery. It’s a good piece of rock writing, too, with one hell of a soundtrack.” (Kirkus Reviews) “This is the true story of the healing power of music.” (Inked Magazine) “After reading this book, and understanding what it took for him to take his seat behind the drumkit again, I’d be a fan even if I’d never heard a song.” (Midlife Mixtape) “Evocative . . . Rufus’s writing describes the medical rabbit hole we all dread falling into in a style so candid you can imagine yourself tumbling in along with him.” (Vice) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Rob Rufus is a musician and writer living in Nashville. His band, Blacklist Royals, has released two full-length albums and played in sixteen countries over the past five years. His new project, The Bad Signs, released their first single in 2015. He is the author of *Die Young with Me*.

This year, I vowed to find non-fiction that caught my attention, as it’s a genre I don’t pick up, like, ever. After reading *Being Jazz*, I waited patiently for the next non-fiction book to drop into my lap. Folks, here it is in all its 5 star glory. *Die Young with Me* is basically everything I want in a book and so much more. I am a huge huge fan of alternative music, huge fan of books I can’t put down, and huge fan of books that leave me a little teary at the end. *Die Young with Me* wrapped all those up in a not-so-neat (because cancer sucks) bow. I knew this book was going to be a tearjerker but that it would have somewhat of a happy ending. I mean, Rob lived through cancer in his teenage years; he’s here to tell his story. What got to me is how big of a role music played in that. Through the whole book, I was texting my best friend, who is as big of a music geek as I am, about how relatable his teenage experience is and how kids can find empathy and a little piece of themselves in the book. [Quote from her side of our text convo]: Seriously... We talk about how everyone “likes” music, but it’s not a priority to everyone, that’s what makes the difference between people like us and others. This isn’t just Rob’s story but his transformation through his teenage years and also the transformation his family and friends went through as he became sick and well again - and his journey through music. I love that he included things like the mixtape he made for his girlfriend and how he held nothing back. This is a story of hope but it’s a realistic story with all the nitty-gritty details about both the teenage and cancer experience. We even got a little update on all the people in the book, a written version of VH1’s “Where Are They Now?”. I also appreciate that there aren’t a

lot of books written from the male perspective on teenage love and this one brings an additional voice. If I didn't know this book was non-fiction, I would have thought it was contemporary novel. That says a lot about the writing and how compelling the story is, I think. For those of us who are into the punk/counter culture movement and lived our teen years in the late 90s/00s, you might recognize the Blacklist Royals, Rob's band, as they played a few dates on the 2001 Warped Tour. I squealed a little when Rob spoke of their letter from Kevin Lyman. On top of all the Warped Tour and Punk Isn't Dead playlists on my Spotify account, I added the official Die Young With Me playlist AND followed Blacklist Royals. Really digging their sound and so glad the book exposed them to me.

Well, I tore through this in a day, which should tell you how damn enjoyable it is. I laughed, I cried, I reevaluated my life, I got inspired to keep doing all the things I love, and I cursed The Man. I never had cancer, but I *was* a teenage outcast, and the author totally nails that feeling. It took me back to being in high school in the best way. Please do yourself a favor and read this - at the very least, you'll come away with a new killer playlist!

This memoir is one of the smoothest and most rewarding reads I've had the pleasure of reading in awhile. Rob is able to keep it light while still painting a picture of the pain and suffering he and his family faced during his teenage years of sickness. at times the description and pain within the pages seems to be a tale drafted by hollywood rather than a real life story of a boy from West Virginia facing death. Sidenote, if you can track down a copy of Defiance of Authority "Born in Sin come on in" DO IT, its a great record and shows you where Blacklist Royals came from.

This is an amazing story, well-written and an impressive debut. Often when dealing with hard subject matters, authors will tend to either preach or go off on tangents or - in a case like this - get religious. The only religion here is punk rock, and it's a heartbreaking, realistic (nothing's held back!) read. Highly recommend!

Rob Rufus is much more than meets the eye here. I heard about this book through his ALA nomination. Thought I'd give it a shot. If you thought The Fault in Our Stars was interesting but needing less schmaltz, then Die Young With Me might be up your alley. Definitely worth checking out.

Do yourself a favor and click "add to cart". Die Young With Me made me laugh, cry, and want to blast some Blacklist Royals on 11.. It is magnetically poignant. Gripping and heartbreaking, I could not put it down. It is a raw and open view into the scary abyss that is cancer. If anyone has ever been an outcast in a southern town, this book is also for you. Written with humor and honesty and a ton of edge, perfectly executed. I can't wait to read it again.

Springsteen said it best "We learned more from a three-minute record, baby Than we ever learned in school". Music has the power to help people overcome the biggest obstacles, and Rob Rufus is a living example of that. Using punk rock as a chainsaw to cut through all the BS life throws at him, he is able to find the strength to carve out his own future against all odds. Buy the book, get inspired and grab the world by it's throat!

This is a book that many people can identify with. Whether it's feeling like the outcast teenager at your school, getting an illness that completely changes your life, or having the strength to overcome a huge hurdle, you'll love this book!

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