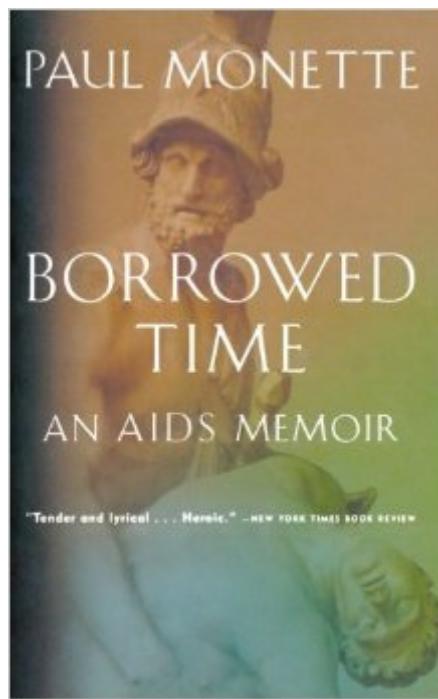


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Borrowed Time: An AIDS Memoir



Synopsis

This "tender and lyrical" memoir (New York Times Book Review) remains one of the most compelling documents of the AIDS era—"searing, shattering, ultimately hope inspiring account of a great love story" (San Francisco Examiner). A National Book Critics Circle Award finalist and the winner of the PEN Center West literary award.

Book Information

Paperback: 352 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (65 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #415,525 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #37 inÂ Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Specific Groups > LGBT > Gay #75 inÂ Books > Medical Books > Medicine > Internal Medicine > Pathology > Diseases > AIDS & HIV #862 inÂ Books > Gay & Lesbian > Nonfiction

Age Range: 6 and up

Grade Level: 1 and up

Customer Reviews

I can add nothing original to the wave of praises about this book from the other reviewers. I really appreciated the honesty of his narration, even down to the minute and unpleasant thoughts of what could have happened (or who gave the virus to whom). Though his opinions on his lover may be biased, both of them you felt intensely likeable. It's very hard not to--both of them are obviously intelligent and talented, led interesting lives and have friends just as colourful. As gutwrenching as the AIDS shadowed over Roger's deterioration, the book read like a love story to me. Not just the love between Roger and Paul, which doesn't remind me of them being gay in particular, but two people with a long term relationship who struggle to be together till death do them apart, as cliche as it may sound. As a Chinese gay man living in Hong Kong, I find the notion of my parents/relatives knowing about my identity, let alone my lover or even 'worse', a sickness, impossible. Yet, the book also showed poignantly the unconditional love and care any parents are willing to give to their children, no matter how grown up or far apart they have become. Paul Monette has certainly spoken

for a lot of HIV+ people in his era, people who never had a chance to speak for themselves. Most people would not have time or the nerve to write about something as horrible as their own illnesses.

I don't live under a rock but even still, being a gay male in the 90s, I can honestly say I don't know anyone with AIDS. Consequently, I have never had to endure the loss of losing someone I love to the disease without a cure. Yet I still found myself drawn to Paul's story about his struggle with the deterioration of his partner, Roger. After reading *Becoming a Man*, I progressed to this part of Paul's autobiography, expecting it to be much like the other part of the story. However, it wasn't. Not at all. The book introduced the tragedy of what occurs when good people experience horrid things. I couldn't believe Roger was actually dying throughout the book. He and Paul seemed so happy together; they had finally proven to the world that they, a gay couple, could survive in American society. Then the disease hit. What a loss, even with the AZT treatment, even with the constant barrage of doctor's appointments. I suppose this book made me aware that life, like I had heard so many times before, is not fair. If it were Roger would not have died and Paul would not have followed him seven years later.

Paul Monette in this book describes in harrowing detail the final months in the life of his lover Roger, and how Roger's deterioration affected both men and their relationship. The depth of feeling Monette conveys is remarkable; he writes with a candor and a beauty that bring tears to your eyes. We share Monette's sense of pain and loss. If you've ever known anyone with a terminal illness, this book is devastating, and even if you haven't, there's no way you can remain unmoved. People sometimes ask how it felt to be a gay man in the 1980s while the spread of AIDS was running unchecked. This powerful book gives the best answer I can imagine.

I listened to Paul Monette read from his memoir on a recorded book; and the experience was unforgettable, profound, wholly human, and perhaps the best meditation on love I've ever read. Without going into the details of the 1980's AIDS "scene," which this book also authentically and accurately portrays, this "love story" depicts and explored and revealed so tenderly and so poetically that it should be placed on all the bookstores in the relationship section of the major chains--and recommended for straight and gay couples. And while the booksellers are at it, they should remainder all the John Gray, Dr. Phil and every other "author" who address relationships in a vapid, moronic, demeaning way. This book may be the best argument for "gay marriage," although I hesitate in recommending this in fear that such a beautiful relationship as portrayed in this work

could be subsumed under such a shaky institution. It would also be a d_mn good book for heterosexual, especially "conservative Christian" couples, men and women to read together: Not necessarily to change minds about the law, but at least to change misconceived perceptions about their fellow humans. And a note to women, if you would like your guy to be a better "listener" and a better "lover," read this book--not those goofball "women's magazines." This book might also make some right-wing ideologues re-think some of their kneejerk definitions of "values" and realize that perhaps it is their values that need some looking into, or as peanuts said, "We have met the enemy and it is us."

I grew up in the 80's, when AIDS was just setting in the country. We knew little about it then and it was pretty much a death sentence to any poor soul who contracted it. Borrowed time is a love story to Paul Monette;s longtime companion. It follows the path of the disease, from first finding out to the final stages, and eventually, death. Monette, who also died of AIDS in 1995, recounts the fear, anger, denial and all the stages of grief throughout the two years his companion battled the disease. Never before have I read anything so heartfelt and true. His heart is literally an open book in Borrowed Time. Anger at the government for ignoring what was quickly becoming a pandemic issue and the ignorant members of the public that felt AIDS was God's judgement on homosexuals. I dare you to read this book and not be transformed.

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