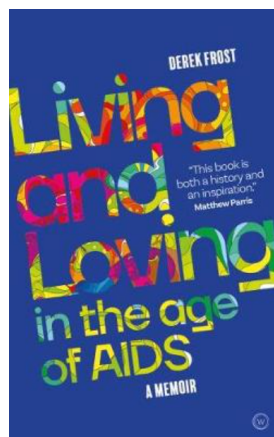




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Living and Loving in the Age of AIDS

by Derek Frost

1 June 2022

A poignantly personal, inspiring memoir from the co-founder of the life-saving Aids Ark charity, and Heaven, London's iconic gay dance club.

Written with compassion and honesty, and suffused in a spirit of generosity and reaching out in the face of the devastating AIDS pandemic, Derek Frost's *Living and Loving in the Age of AIDS* is ablaze with love and hope. With all proceeds being donated to the globally transformative **Aids Ark charity** the author co-founded with his husband, this memoir will change lives in multiple ways.

"We do not choose to fall in love. There is no choice. Love finds us. Through love we find home in each other. That's love. Love gifts you with unbelievable certainty. There can be few greater gifts than to find oneself truly loved". So states Frost near the beginning of his powerful memoir, and love underpins everything that follows. After sharing his experience of growing up gay in the sixties, and coming out to his supportive parents, Frost recounts how he and his lifelong partner, here referred to as J, met and founded the legendary Heaven dance club.

The couple travel together, fall in love, and fall in love with Key West where, in 1981, they *"experience what must be one of the fullest expressions of gay liberation"*. However, it's here in this *"perfect paradise"* that a *"hellish demon insidiously invades our lives"*. A demon in the form of rumours around a "gay cancer" that turns out to be AIDS, and kills many of their friends.

When J is diagnosed as HIV Positive in 1991, he's essentially handed a death sentence: "What we feel is disbelief; a deep heavy sadness; a sense that all colour will drain away; that light will be extinguished and all will become dark". But the couple tackle this shattering news with courage, fight and love, and they found Aids Ark, a charity dedicated to providing people in developing countries with life-saving anti-retroviral treatments.

Charting a global health crisis through a stirringly personal account, *Living and Loving in the Age of AIDS* is consummately compelling.

JOANNE OWEN

Living and Loving in the Age of AIDS Synopsis

There's also a complimentary downloadable E picture book which accompanies the memoir.

Derek, a distinguished designer, and J, a pioneering entrepreneur and creator of Heaven, the iconic gay dance club, met and fell in love more than 40 years ago.

In the early 1980s their friends began to get sick and die - AIDS had arrived in their lives. When they got tested, J received what was then a death sentence: he was HIV Positive. While the onset of AIDS strengthened stigma and fear globally, they confronted their crisis with courage, humour and an indomitable resolve to survive. J's battle lasted six long years.

Turning to spiritual reflection, yoga, nature - and always to love - Derek describes a transformation of the spirit, how compassion and empathy rose phoenix-like from the flames of sickness and death, and how he and J founded the charity Aids Ark, which has helped to save more than 1,000 HIV Positive lives.

This is a story of joy and triumph, of facing universal challenges, of the great rewards that come from giving back. Derek speaks for a generation who lived through a global health crisis that many at the time refused even to acknowledge. His is a powerful story chronicling this extraordinary era.

Derek Frost Press Reviews

This book is both a history and an inspiration.

- Matthew Parris

Incredibly vivid, moving, and compelling.

- Lord Chris Smith

This is a powerful book, at once a love letter, a well-informed history of the AIDS epidemic, and the life-story of a beautiful young man in London, moving happily through the early days of gay liberation into a time of widespread anguish and despair.

- Del Kolve, Professor of English Literature UCLA, CA, USA

Poignant and heart-touching.

- Linda-Gail Bekker, Professor of Medicine, President International AIDS Society 2016-2018, Co-Founder of the Desmond Tutu HIV Centre and Health Foundation, Cape Town, South Africa.

Tells a story of living life to the full and giving back so much. Derek's passion for life comes through on every page.

- Iain Anderson, Executive Chairman of Cicero / Amo & Stonewall Ambassador

A moving and heartfelt account of two incredible people who are at once fighters, survivors and givers. . . .Running alongside the romantic and heart-warming storyline is a vivid recollection and reflection on important facets of the LGBTQIA+ and HIV epidemic experience, a history that is recorded and honestly told, lest we forget.

-Varsity

40 LGBTQIA+ books to read this Pride Month and every month

By **Deborah Maclaren** | 1st June 2022

It's Pride Month (hurrah) and whilst it is wonderful that this month we shine a light on, and celebrate, all things LGBTQIA+, here at LoveReading we celebrate diversity all year round.

Our Diverse Voices section celebrates a wide range of inclusive narratives. It's about empowering people by respecting and appreciating what makes them different, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, and national origin. As a team, we read widely and make sure that we offer intersectional representation in our book recommendations.

This collection of books below features queer characters and shows us that our literary worlds can be as wonderfully diverse as the one we live in.

All of us deserve to see ourselves reflected in the pages of a great book. We've got something for everyone here so dive in and enjoy and let us know which are your faves.

In addition, on our sister website LoveReading4Kids, we have gathered together a collection of books which inspire and celebrate the LGBTQIA+ community, raise awareness and educate society. There we take you on a journey from picture books that reflect LGBTQIA+ family life to YA novels and non-fiction titles that explore sexuality, gender issues and romance. Take a look at the collection.

<https://www.lovereadings.co.uk/blog/40-lgbtqia-books-to-read-this-pride-month-and-every-month-8477>

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