



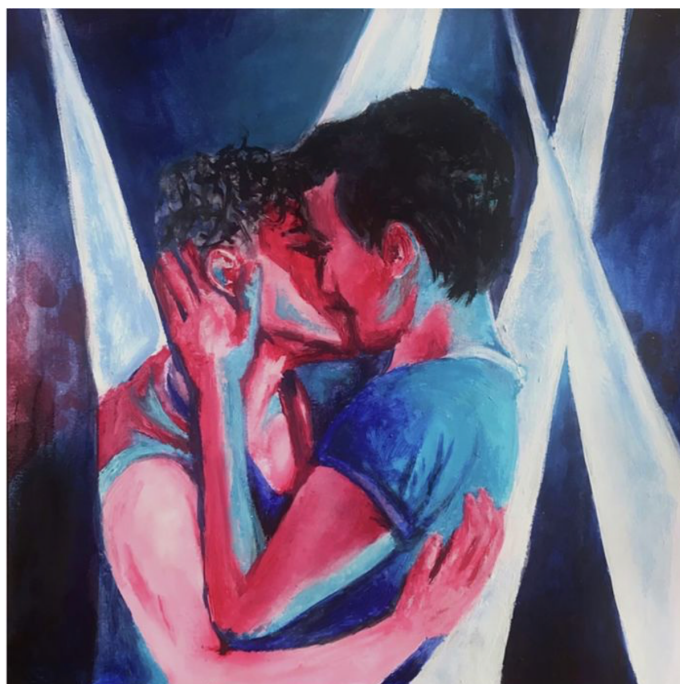
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Living and Loving in the Age of AIDS

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In her review of the powerful memoir written by the co-creator of London's iconic nightclub Heaven, **Natcha Ruamsanitwong** describes a tale of love and struggle in the face of a devastating epidemic.



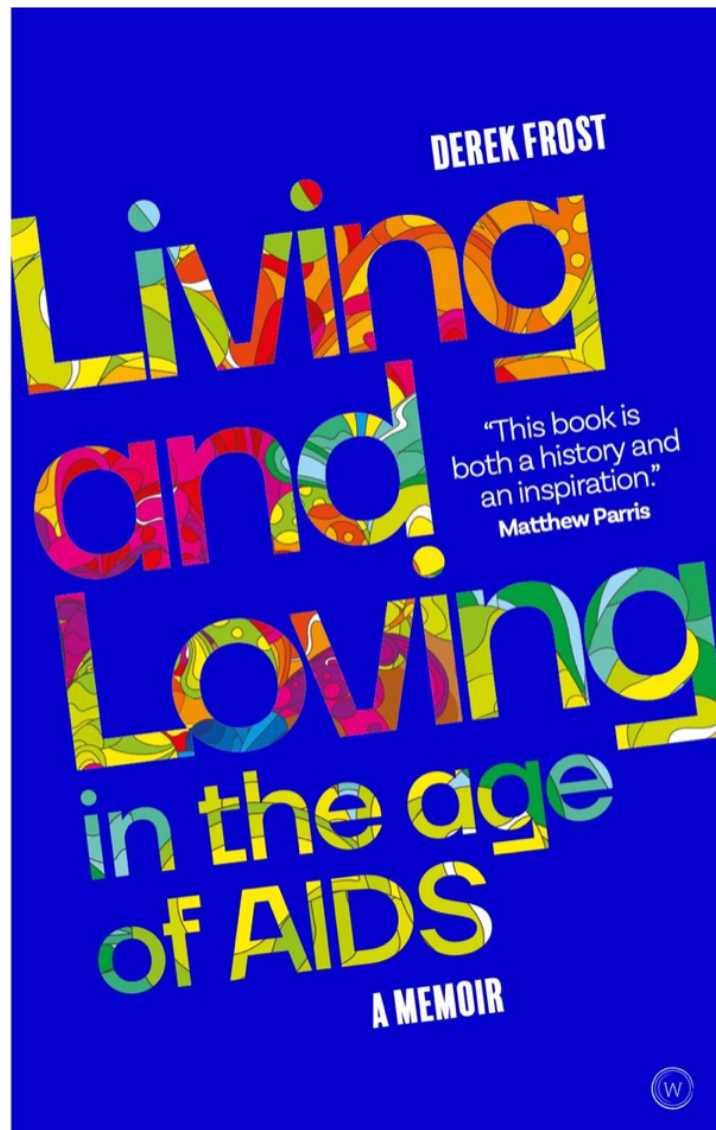
The powerful account of a couple working at the heart of the LGBT scene during the AIDS crisis.
ILLUSTRATION BY MEG REYNOLDS

Content Note: This article contains discussion of the AIDS epidemic, including brief mention of symptoms.

Living and Loving in the Age of AIDS

Living and Loving in the Age of AIDS is at once a love story and a historical account of a devastating epidemic in the 1980s. Central to the memoir is an elegantly written story about a young, passionate couple. The book begins in 1977, when Derek Frost meets and falls in love with Jeremy Norman. ‘Dazzled’ is the word both Derek and Jeremy use in describing their first encounter. It didn’t take long for ‘dazzled’ to become something much deeper.

Within the first ten pages, we learn that Jeremy did not have a happy childhood. Despite growing up ‘very English’, having gone to Harrow and read Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge, Derek describes Jeremy’s childhood as one that was fraught with insecurity, isolation, and confusion about his sexuality. Derek, on the other hand, came from a wildly different background. To borrow his own words, he was ‘exotic’ and different. Yet opposites attract and the two soon find themselves in a happy relationship. As we watch the lovebirds grow even more fond of each other, follow their journey as they come out of the closet, and witness the opening of Jeremy’s nightclub soon celebrated as London’s first ‘Trisexual Discotheque’, we almost forget that this memoir is in part a story written about the age of AIDS.



"Living and Loving in the Age of AIDS is a moving and heartfelt account of two incredible people who are at once fighters, survivors and givers."
DEREK FROST

Sadly, bright days don't last forever. Intruding on the lavish life that Derek and Jeremy had built for themselves were rumours which had begun to emerge in the beginning of the 1980s of a new disease that appeared to be targeting and killing gay men. Little was known about this disease — so little, in fact, that *The New York Times*, in one of their first articles written on the subject, named it the 'Gay Related

Immune Deficiency (GRID)'. It wasn't until 1983 that the disease that had widely come to be known as the 'gay cancer' or the 'gay plague' was properly identified as HIV.

Our heart sinks when we learn that Jeremy had become unwell in 1990. Drastic weight loss, dreaded night sweats, sore throat, pains in the mouth, and the inability to shake off this strange 'kind of flu', surely this couldn't be it?

A trip to the hospital confirms our worst fears - while Derek tested negative for HIV, Jeremy had tested positive. Jeremy was handed a death sentence of three years by his doctors, and thus began a deadly battle of man versus virus. Despite the fact that many of their friends had lost the very same battle, Derek and Jeremy fought on.

As Jeremy began to see hope in his own journey, he turned his eyes towards the lives of other people with whom the battle with HIV still raged on. As AIDS continued to kill, the couple founded the charity 'Aids Ark' in 2002 with the intention of sending help to countries where so many still lacked access to proper medicine and treatment. To this date, Aids Ark has saved more than 1,000 HIV Positive lives. With the support of Jeremy and Derek's lifelong mission and the combined efforts of many, there is an ever-growing confidence that an AIDS-free generation of adolescents will emerge by 2030.

Derek communicates the depth of his fear and feelings of insecurity very powerfully. It is this elegant writing style that becomes the hallmark of the memoir. It is through his openness and tightly-paced writing that readers feel as if

they are part of the journey, as we witness and weep for the emotional tribulations endured in Jeremy's fight for recovery. *Living and Loving in the Age of AIDS* is 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.

*All revenue from the sales of **Living and Loving in the Age of AIDS** will be donated to Aids Ark. To support this brilliant initiative please go to: <https://www.aidsark.org/> for further information.*