



My Life as a Myth

Huston Piner

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Can a cool reputation really deliver on promises of happiness?

Nick's got problems. He's a social outcast who dreams of being popular, he's an easy target for bullies, and he doesn't understand why he's just not attracted to girls. So, after a series of misunderstandings label him a troublemaker on his first day of high school, he's really stoked to have Jesse Gaston and his gang take him in.

Jesse starts a PR campaign around campus to give Nick a new image, and the shy loser soon finds himself transformed into an anti-establishment hero. While Nick would rather explore his growing attraction to Bobby Warren, he's forced to fend off would-be girlfriends and struggles with the demands of acting cool. And things at home are spinning out of control as the Vietnam War's destructive impact threatens to change his life forever.

Nick's story is both humorous and haunting—a journey of ridiculous misadventures, unexpected psychedelic explorations, and tragic turns of fate. Can a world still reeling from the sexual revolution and the illicit pleasures of marijuana and underage drinking accept two boys in love? Can Nick and Bobby's relationship survive a hostile time when acid rock rules, status is everything, and being gay is the last taboo?

Newly revised edition; complete and unabridged.

Seasons of Chadham High explores the evolving experience of gay teenagers in different eras from the counter-cultural sixties, through the me generation seventies and eighties, to the jaded nihilistic nineties, and beyond.

My Life as a Myth Details

Date : Published August 28th 2017 by Sun Fire/Nine Star Press (first published May 21st 2013)

ISBN :

Author : Huston Piner

Format : ebook 202 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Young Adult, Lgbt, Contemporary

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From Reader Review My Life as a Myth for online ebook

Breann says

This one kind of snuck up on me.

At first, I thought all the happenings surrounding Nick were a bit far fetched. He's a freshman and went from being bullied and an outcast to one of the most popular guys in a matter of months. But then I thought of my freshman year in highschool and how much changes in just a short year... so yeah, maybe not so far fetched?

Through a string of coincidences and with the help of his new friends, he finds himself with a reputation of a 'bad boy' who kind of set his own rules. And this, really isn't farther from the truth for Nick. He's not really the person everyone thinks he is. He tries to keep up with the image and hides his true self, all while dealing with heartbreakng circumstances at home.

He does have one constant in his life, who does know the real him and still loves him for it, Bobby. Bobby is there for him like nobody else is and they grow to love each other. This is set in the early 70s, so they were confused about their feelings, but they did know that they had to keep it a secret.

I say it snuck up on me because in the beginning I was 'meh' about it and there were a couple things I found silly. But the further I read, the more I loved Nick and wished, right along with him, that he could be himself without the worry of the consequences. Despite a couple eye-rolling moments, it was very true to the pressure of high school, and needing to fit in and be accepted.

I do think I should warn you... there is no HEA. And not a sequel in sight.

Stephen says

Life as a high school freshman in 1969 was not easy. Not when the staff had you targeted as a troublemaker, your boyhood best friend was growing distant and girl crazy and you just didn't see the appeal. Nick is lucky in that he's sort of adopted into a clique and quickly gets the name "Napalm Nick" and the bad-boy reputation that goes along with.

Sidekick Jesse seems to have a vested interest in expanding the Napalm Nick myth despite Nick's ambivalence. Nick would rather have a lower profile and maybe some privacy so that he could explore these feelings that he's having for Bobby.

This book was not at all what I was expecting but having graduated from high school in 1974 these guys were fascinating to me. They were my contemporaries and I was pretty sure at the time that I was the only gay one.

This is much more a well-written bildungsroman than the somewhat sweet somewhat sappy M/M I was expecting. It was a pleasant surprise.

Unfortunately the ending was a bit abrupt and I felt that it had been cobbled together bringing a unsatisfying sense of tragedy to a tale that had previously balanced precariously on that edge between chaotic adventure

and impending doom.

Being a realist I didn't expect a rainbows and unicorns happy ending but the ambiguous ending we do get was equally unexpected and not a little disappointing.

By all means read it and judge for yourself. The journey is definitely worth your time.

***Note: I was provided with a free copy of this in exchange for an honest review as part of the GoodReads MMRG Don't Buy My Love Program. ***

Marion says

My god! Excellent, still crying but, that book is a must read. I want to thank the author for writing and sharing it.

Nick says

If it wasn't for the high rating of his book (4.7 out of 5) I might never have found and read it. Thank god I did! I enjoy reading but only occasionally does a book make me laugh out loud, really care for its characters or even bring me close to tears. Needless to say .. this great story managed to do all of that.

I could go on for pages and pages about how awesome the book is, but i'll spare you that. Judge by yourself.

What else is there to say? Huston, write another book! Like now. You made me hungry, now feed me :P

Izengabe says

No ha despertado mi interés en lo más mínimo, me ha supuesto un esfuerzo terminarlo. El autor relata una serie de acontecimientos uno detrás de otro, y la cosa se queda en eso, entré, salí, subí, bajé, me fumé un porro, dije, me dijo, llegué, me fui, me fumé otro porro... No he conseguido entrar en el libro ni en la historia de amor (que es algo secundario, no se trata de un romance) y tampoco he llegado a sentir nada por Nick, el protagonista y narrador.

Y ese final me habría hecho enfadar muchísimo si no llega a ser porque, sinceramente, llegados a ese punto me daba todo igual... (view spoiler)

Una pena porque le tenía muchas ganas a este YA.

Lou says

Free exchange for an honest review under the DBML Program

This story was well written and the topic was dealt with beautifully.

I never thought I'd hear myself saying that a book about a fourteen-year-old was a great read!

To begin with I felt the story moved a little slow, but as it picked up speed, it was a fun ride. I really enjoyed the humour and laughed at some of the cringe-worthy phrases from the era in which the book was set (69-70s). However, the story has far more depth than what is initially served. It culminates with a kind of back-handed ending (don't know what that means? You'll have to read the story to find out!).

The plot took some surprising turns, and the author wove the varying sub-plots in seamlessly. There were two spots where, for me, the pacing was a little slow (once at the beginning as I've already mentioned, and one later on).

I would highly recommend this book for anyone interested in an interesting and satisfying read!

Suzi says

Very poignant book. Having gone to high school the same years as the character made this more meaningful. I am straight and fitting in was the goal for all of us. Now I understand a bit how difficult it would be for a gay young man. Great book.

Heddie says

My Life as a Myth by Huston Piner is a heart-warming and heart-breaking story about Nick, who keeps a journal about his life as a high schooler. He starts off by making enemies with teachers but manages to gain the respect of a certain crowd of rebels and stoners. His life for him is complicated by his confusing feelings about boys, especially his attraction to Bobby. I laughed at his awkwardness and his shock at his sudden coolness and popularity. This story took a much darker, somber turn that I wasn't expecting from this story. The depth of his feelings were interesting to read about and I didn't want the story to end. The next story looks great, too, and I was so happy to discover a new author. A copy was provided in exchange for an honest review.

Jamie Deacon says

So often young people feel compelled to be someone they're not. Putting aside their individuality, they wear the latest designer gear, listen to the "in" bands of the moment, and hide their deepest desires and insecurities, all in the quest to be popular, to fit in. For the protagonist in this entertaining and immensely moving debut by Huston Piner, the choice is taken out of his hands when a classmate decides to turn his knack for attracting trouble to his advantage and make him a star.

It starts to go wrong for fourteen-year-old Nick Horton on his very first day of high school. Awkward around people, he has few friends and generally prefers to hover beneath the radar. Before he so much as steps onto the school bus, however, a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time brings him to the attention of the principal and earns him a reputation as a trouble-maker. This unexpected notoriety also alerts fellow freshman Jesse Gaston. Jesse welcomes Nick into his circle of friends, whereupon he sets about creating a whole new persona for him. Thus "Napalm Nick" is born, flouter of authority and a law unto himself.

And suddenly everyone knows his name. Students are nodding to him in the school corridors, and girls clamor to be his date. Only Bobby Warren, the most sweet-natured of Jesse's gang, seems interested in getting to know the real Nick. As the pretence gathers momentum and Nick's world, both at home and at school, spirals beyond his control, Bobby is the one person with whom he can be truly himself. He longs to be free of the sham his life has become, to simply be an ordinary boy falling in love for the first time. Yet, when the charade finally comes crashing down, even Nick is unprepared for the backlash.

Veering from the hilariously funny to moments so poignant they brought me to tears, this is the story of one teenager's struggle to find himself and come to terms with being gay in the fiercely homophobic society of the '60s and '70s. Nick is such a genuinely decent kid, poles apart from the devil-may-care rebel Jesse builds him up to be, that he stole my heart from the outset. He and Bobby may be only fourteen, but the author handles their developing romance with tenderness and sensitivity, and I found it incredibly powerful.

If you're seeking a highly original young adult read that will have you laughing and crying in equal measure, I can certainly recommend this book.

NOTE: This book was provided by Prizm Books for the purpose of a review on Rainbow Book Reviews and Boys on the Brink

Aditi says

The famous American musician, Kurt Cobain, of the rock-band, Nirvana had once quoted:

"I started to be really proud of the fact I was gay even though I wasn't".

Well no doubt that Cobain was talking about the gay rights. Huston Piner, an American author, has clearly followed Cobain's remarkable words to pen down a novel called *My Life as a Myth* about the gay community in our society. The best part about the book being that it is set during the 1970s, when you can almost imagine, that homosexuality was considered as almost as a sin or maybe some kind of mental illness. And remarkably, Piner has captured all those hatred, anger and indifference against them. This is also about how a teenage boy identifies his sexual orientation, fears to become an outcast in the society, and the regular high-school tantrums.

Nick is a high-school freshman who is scared that on the very first day of his school, people might think of him as an outcast. But instead by accident, he falls in the middle of some trouble among the teachers and the principal and soon he is labeled as a rebel among his peers. He even befriends the bad guys and the trouble-maker gangs of a guy named Jesse. Thus his image as a rebel makes him popular as Napalm Nick among his peers and soon he is swooned over by so many girls. But unfortunately, he is not attracted to those girls; instead he is slowly falling for his gang-mate named Bobby. Whereas Bobby is very much bent to know the identity of the real Nick, not Napalm Nick. Whereas Nick is dying to get out of this bad-boy image, before he realizes this, everything comes falling apart in his life. Then there is his family where Nick is the youngest among 2 brothers and names of his brothers are not allowed in his household. Buy one fine Christmas day, his brother; Raymond comes home with a secret which might cost a lot for Nick's family.

The plot is excellent and brilliantly written. Huston Piner has included all types of vivid images from happy to sad and with each moment in Nick's life, one second you'll find yourself, Rolfining to the other second in tears. The author has captured the 60s style lifestyle and moments in his book perfectly. The book is quite

sensitive and emotions are quite raw enough to make you fall in love with Nick and feel you in pain with Nick's struggle among his peers and in his family. The characters are well-developed and very marvelously crafted out, especially Nick and Bobby. Nick, the innocent and naive one, whereas Bobby, being the sensitive and the understanding guy. Also there is the bad-guy, Jesse who is quite intense and passionate to turn Nick into a bad-boy image. The author has also brought up the high-school and teenage issues like taking drugs, smoking pot, bullying etc. Since it was the 60s era, and people's horizon have not widened that much, has made Nick's life more complicated and how much trouble he had to face with his sexuality. The authors carefully chosen words and dialogues have made the book more interesting, giving an edge to it.

All-in-all, it is a very good book about young teenagers and the issues faced by them while growing up.

A huge thanks to the author, Huston Piner, for giving me an opportunity to read and review his book.

Joyfully Jay says

A Joyfully Jay review.

4.75 stars

The most fascinating and thrilling aspect of this man's novel, *My Life As A Myth*, is if you removed the minor historical references about the 1970's, this story could take place today quite easily. He writes characters that have a universal appeal and I think just about every teenager today could see glimpses of themselves in this amazing group of high school students. I say amazing not because they are all written as these wonderful, unbelievable teens, but because they are so realistically crafted and down to earth. Woven throughout this book are moments of genuine pain, depression, first love, guilt, caring, and all the typical teen angst from wanting to be considered as popular to the very real anguish of being an outcast. While there is key mention of how society viewed homosexuality in that time era and how it plays an important role in the way main character, Nick, views himself and his newfound feelings for best friend Bobby, it could easily translate as to how many still feel today. Nick felt the crushing weight of being thought of as "evil, mentally sick, and deviant." It added to his already considerable depression and self-doubt. My heart wept for this boy and how his life spiraled out of control, often through no fault of his own.

At times this novel was joyous in the discovery of a first love and that magical feeling of complete acceptance by another person and in other times this it just ripped your heart out of your chest with its incredible pathos, tragic overtones, and circumstances. But even in those dark passages, the author tries to weave in hope and solace. My only problem with this novel was, in fact, the epilogue. It was both abrupt and, while it tried to imply there might yet be a glimmer of hope, seemed rather bleak and final. Since this is a re-release of iner's *My Life As A Myth*, it has been indicated that there may indeed be at least one sequel in the offing—that idea gives me real hope that somehow this rather sad ending will turn itself around. However, until then I encourage you to read this stunning novel with the full knowledge that there is not a true happy ever after moment at the end. Rather there is a small window of hope that indicates that all is not lost despite the finality of the circumstances both Bobby and Nick find themselves in. I particularly recommend this novel to parents or guardians of teens who are questioning or exploring their sexuality—it is a potent wake up call to the fact that the high school years are treacherous and the absolute best time to try and keep the lines of communication and unconditional love flowing in your home.

[Read Sammy's review in its entirety here.](#)

Shandra says

Everyone is a Myth in the Making

Huston Piner captures the essence of the late '60s with *My Life as a Myth*. I really fell into the rhythm of life in the era while reading the journal of Nicholas "Napalm Nick" Horton. There were moments when I was worried "The War" would come for his family again only to realize he was too young to worry about the draft; it was a testament to the author's skill I kept forgetting Nick was so young while never losing the sense of innocence in reading about his life adventures. I always get uncomfortable reading in that era because my own family was ravaged by Vietnam, but Piner managed to capture to good parts of that time in telling Nick's story.

Nick comes across as both too innocent, too young, and all together too old at the same time. He drinks, smokes marijuana, becomes a cigarette smoker along the way, and has sex in there too though it seems as if the sex is often an afterthought to the rest of the happenings of his life. He's the epitome of the guy who is in the wrong place at the wrong time. I hurt for him more than I imagined I would as I lived his journey through his journal. I also fell in love with Bobby right alongside him.

Bobby seems to be this guy who knows himself. He's self-confident in a quiet, unassuming way which makes him seem cool without trying to be. I loved how he was fine with being gay in spite of the attitude of the era; I loved the way he gave himself fully to loving Nick since Heaven knows Nick needed someone to love him without seeing his "bad reputation" before seeing him. I loved how he shared his family. I loved how kind he was even when jealousy was biting at him since Nick was too friendly for his own good. I loved how he reacted to receiving Nick's journal to read Nick's POV about their love story.

My Life as a Myth speaks to the fact everyone simply tries to survive high school. Sometimes a reputation is what it takes to make it through those four years and sometimes? It's not the reputation one would have chosen for themselves. Nick landed in the wrong place at the wrong time all too many times and that's how he wound up being the resident Bad Boy of Chadham High. His life is a real one. There isn't a happy ending to it or really a definite ending at all because this is the story of a life and real lives don't always have a definite start, middle, and end. I feel privileged for having been given a free copy of this book for review through the Don't Buy My Love program on the MMRG group on Goodreads. I sincerely look forward to reading more of Chadham High from Huston Piner in the future.

Kelly Swaim says

I got this book through the Goodreads Giveaway program. When I started this book, I quickly realized that as a straight, millennial woman, I am not the target audience for this book. However, I still found this tragic romance to be well-written, engaging, and thought-provoking. Piner does an excellent job capturing the drastic emotions of the teenage mind and the crippling way isolation and depression can impact a young life. I enjoyed reading the book but thought that it was only okay until the final couple of chapters, which gripped me until long after I had finished the book. I would recommend the book to anyone interested in LGBTQIA history, counterculture, or life as a queer teenager.

Jeff Erno says

My Life as a Myth is the debut novel of author Huston Piner. The story is a realistic period piece, the diary of a gay high school freshman in 1969. Each chapter is a journal entry, and it chronicles the entire 9th grade year of the main character, Nick Horton.

Approaching his first day of high school, Nick fears being targeted as an outcast. He's never been overly popular, athletic, or academically superior. He's just an ordinary kid, the youngest boy in his family. His two older brothers are gone, one of them killed in Vietnam, and the other a Hippie living communally out on the West Coast somewhere.

He suffers through a horrific first day of school, gets in trouble with a teacher and the principal, and accidentally establishes a reputation for himself as a rebel. For most of the school year, he simply rides the wave, allowing his own reputation to precede him. He becomes accepted by a group of guys and is regarded as being pretty cool. The other students at school look up to him and nickname him Napalm Nick.

One of the boys in Nick's group is Bobby Warren. I absolutely love the way this character is portrayed. He's a softer, more effeminate guy, and Nick thinks he's absolutely beautiful. They fall in love, and Nick must sort out what these feelings mean.

The interesting thing about this story is the setting. This was back when homosexuality was still considered a mental illness and a crime. Personally, these type of stories are often hard for me to read. They just break my heart.

But I did love this book. It made me laugh and cry, and I've got to warn you, there are some scenes that really tug on the heartstrings. Nick goes through some tragedy.

The ending is tough, too. I don't want to give it away, but it's not the typical fairy-tale happily ever after. I like to consider it a hopeful ending, and I'll leave it at that.

Overall a wonderful YA read which I highly recommend.

Kazza says

My YA LGBTQ Book of the Year, 2013

<http://greedybugbookreviews.com/greed...>

This is a fantastic piece of writing. By a truly talented author.

It is a book that is full of emotion, meaning, wisdom, and characters who move you. While it is fiction, I can assure you as someone who grew up in the era, it is eerily pitch perfect of its depiction of the time.

My Life as a Myth may be set in 1969-1970 but the message is just as relevant today. Everything is

sensitively handled. But I'll warn you, it not always an easy read. I laughed, and while parts are very funny, there was always a sense of unease because of the topic - two fourteen year old gay boys finding each other. Finding each other when being gay was not accepted by society. When the DSM-II classified it as a mental disorder.

I hope people get behind this book and buy it...read it. I guarantee you it will be one of the best LBGT YA reads you will encounter.

Full review at **Greedy Bug Book Reviews** - <http://greedybugbookreviews.com/my-li...>
