

Still Dazed Through a Grunge Rocker's Eyes

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STILL DAZED Through a Grunge Rocker's Eyes, second novel in the DAZED series, is an American nightmare within the constraints of small town prejudice. Eric Peterson, nineteen-year-old grunge rocker junkie, artiest extraordinaire, could have been another horrible headline. A young man in pain, he's desperate for his mother's approval and struggles through the maze of burgeoning grunge rock fame with his band DAZED but for an unexpected reason. He's a fag. Beyond the reach of love and accepted help, Eric fights both tragedy and death. His story has an unanswered question on each page, "Why can't he stop using?" When Eric's mother Kristelle shuns him and hides away at a fellow plant worker's home, he etches his life's memories to black, including his absent father Hank coming back to make amends, his stepfather whom he loses unexpectedly, his two art scholarships and finishing high school which was his reason for leaving Wink, his angelic savoir on the Portland streets, to come home. Mostly, he left behind the bloodied memory of Wink's and his miscarried son. His struggle to walk wherever he chooses is beyond his own grasp, even after kicking a nasty five-shot-a-day heroin habit cold turkey. He accepts the reality of his own making, like why bother to impress the brain-dead in the town of his birth Lifeless Hole, Oregon? He ends up right back in hospital mental ward lock-up where he reunites with the psych tech who has in the past supplied him with stolen narcotics. Eric runs into a pivotal character, a homeless man Dax, who represents what he will become if he continues with the self-destruction. His best friend in the whole world, twenty-one-year-old Kevin who suffered a football-related injury at the university and places on hold his domestic relationship, stays behind to nurse Eric. Not all moments work well as Eric attempts to push Kevin toward a relationship. Eric's exboyfriend, eighteen year-old first love Brian, who left to Seattle with his father at Eric's cruel insistence, returns with the promise to stay only until Eric's band DAZED plays Seattle New Year's Eve. DAZED members including longtime friend drummer Toots and manager Gerald all attempt to keep Eric clean. As hard as Eric tries, he cannot destroy his monster. Instead he embraces the adage of superior junkie as a rash of gay bashings continues and spread to Portland. A teenager suffers at the hand of who they suspect is doing the beatings, the jock that attacked Eric and Brian after a gig. When the attack turns fatal Eric starts on a different journey. Eric insists on reaching out in a way he never has, with strength, determination and purpose. Eric finds another, Jude, a victim of one of the Portland bashings, who mirrors what he's been, and where he doesn't want to go. Eric is given a second chance at finding the courage to let go of his inner demons. His discovery is as valuable as the talents he squanders. His decision to climb from the empire of dope is ultimately his alone. In his passion, he chooses what no one wants him to and survives.

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