



The Rain May Pass

Alan Shayne

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The Rain May Pass is the evocative coming-of-age memoir of a young man in the 1940s.

Alan Shayne's memoir *The Rain May Pass* is about coming of age, and falling in love with a man twice his age, during World War II.

The book begins when Shayne was fifteen and follows him into his eighteenth year. It's about his discovery of both love and his calling in life, and how he pursued both with verve, though in secrecy and against the wishes of others. In straightforward and detailed prose, Shayne evokes the tremulous feelings of new love and the terror and exhilaration of becoming one's true self, though his relationship with his parents is not defined enough to support his later declared, desperate desire to leave home.

Instead, Shayne, nee Schein, begins his story with an account of being sent to summer with his grandmother on Cape Cod, where he helped out in her gift shop. As his grandmother appalled and frustrated him, he sought the freedom of the beach and the possibility of something happening. And it did.

Still, the book's beginning is slow and directionless; it only comes into focus when Roger enters the story. Roger was a thirty-year-old architect when he met Shayne; they had an affair. With Roger's support, Shayne came to see a future for himself as an actor.

One of the compelling aspects of the memoir is its historical backdrop. For most of the time related in the memoir, Shayne went by Schein—a surname that made him question people's responses to him and to some of his friends. Though Shayne was not called to war, others around him were, and it impacted his relationships and opportunities; insights into wartime America come through his accounts. Details about cars, Martha's Vineyard, New York City, Broadway, and fancy meals that still included fruit cups bring the forties to life.

The book also shows what Shayne's life was like because he was a young, gay man. He went to lengths to hide his relationship with Roger from military censors and nosy neighbors. But within the book, Shayne's feelings about being gay are tied into his relationship, rather than being addressed in broad terms, independent of his lover. At fifteen, he was groomed by Roger to love culture; they listened to classical music, and they haunted museums. In a painful but powerful moment, their age gap comes to a head: Roger brings Shayne home and demands that the boy sing for his mother. Startled and embarrassed, Shayne faltered; he also came to understand something ugly about his older lover, and his place in their relationship.

The Rain May Pass is the evocative, haunting coming-of-age memoir of a young man in the 1940s.

CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (March 24, 2021)

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