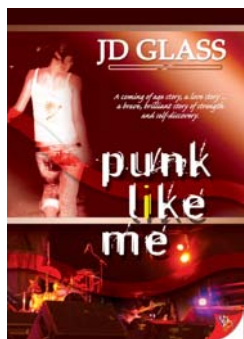


Book Review: June 2006

by Cheri Rosenberg (reviewer at [MBR](#) & [L-Word Literature](#))



Punk Like Me, 2nd ed.

JD Glass

ISBN: 1-933110-40-6

Trade paper, 284 pp, \$15.95

May, 2006

Lesbian Fiction/Romance

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Nina Boyd, a slick twenty-one year old New York City singer/songwriter for a rock band, recounts her experiences of coming to terms with being a lesbian in an intolerant world. JD Glass' *Punk Like Me* is reminiscent of J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*. Both novels can be considered American Bildungsromans, where the main protagonists are nonconformists dealing with their moral development and attitudes in the face of adversity. Like Holden Caulfield, Nina tries to make sense of her life. What makes Nina "punk" by her peer's standards is that she doesn't compromise her values and fall into conformity and mediocrity just to get by. Powerfully written by a gifted author in the first person point of view, *Punk Like Me* is an intimate glimpse inside a cool "dude's" head.

Glass captures the essence of Nina, the product of a Catholic School education, who is smart, honest, kind, and generous to a fault. Even though she tests the nuns' authority at times and comes across as tough or "punk," this street-wise kid is a hero. Her only crimes are that she is gay, she has the wrong parents, and she lives in a society with skewed values. Her parents don't understand or appreciate her. They tell her lying is wrong but when she wants to tell the truth about herself, will they really want her to be truthful?

Self-discovery is not a new concept but Glass makes it fresh, makes it real, and gets to the heart of the matter where there is nothing left but truth. For a young woman who grows up in a difficult environment, Nina's voice is authentic. Glass tells Nina's poignant story and succeeds in convincing us that Nina is speaking, that Nina is telling it her way. This reader wants to comfort Nina as she struggles with being a lesbian in a straight world, to love her unconditionally, and to see her prevail over the injustices in her world.

There are books that make you laugh, books that merely entertain, books that make you think, books that make you cry, and books that send a message, and of course, books that have great sex. Believe me when I tell you that *Punk Like Me* is a book that has all of this and more. True love begins with the love of oneself. In that respect, *Punk Like Me* is truly a romance. Despite the pain and torture Nina may endure, there is much joy, laughter, friendship, and even love in her life, and most importantly, the reader wants to see if she ends up stronger than ever, and hopes to rejoice in her triumph.

In another comparison, *Punk Like Me* may be considered a modern day *Ruby Fruit Jungle*. Like Molly Bolt, Nina has to deal with discrimination but decides not to apologize for being a lesbian. Like Rita Mae Brown, JD Glass has a strong voice that mixes humor with sorrow, pain, and happiness in a realistic setting with genuine characters.

Punk Like Me speaks to lesbians of any age but straights will love Nina too. This important novel should be required reading in high schools across the country, especially religious schools, since teaching tolerance should be part of every curriculum. Although adolescents will love it, this is not a young adult novel, but rather a mature account of an admirable woman who stands up for herself. It is truly inspiring. Order it today; you will be glad you did. I can't wait for Glass' forthcoming sequel, *Punk And Zen*.

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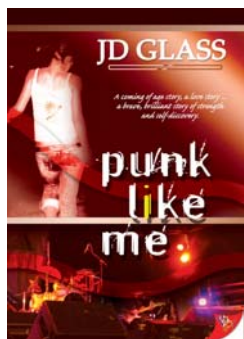
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Nann Dunne
Editor-in-Chief
& *Publisher*

If you only read one book in the next six months, let *Punk Like Me* by JD Glass be that book. It is different. It is engaging. It is life-affirming. Frankly, it is genius.

Punk Like Me cannot be easily dismissed as another coming out story. While on the surface it is about Nina Boyd, a young woman recalling her first experiences at finding love, it really is about much more. Imagine having your first sexual experience and not being able to share it with anyone, even your friends. Imagine falling in love for the first time and not being able to tell anyone, even your parents and siblings. Imagine having all of these feelings as a teenager bottled up inside you and no outlet for you to express them. This is what it means to be a young gay or lesbian in America. But instead of feeling sorry for this young woman, we are uplifted by how Nina battles against all odds to remain true to herself as well as those around her. She is gutsy, smart and boldly honest.

Nina recounts how she doesn't even think of following the easy path and lying to her parents, teachers and friends. Glass illustrates vividly the price that Nina pays for following her heart. With *Punk Like Me* we feel many emotions along with Nina, but the one we feel the most is pride and hope. Because every day there are young gays and lesbians fighting to find themselves and fit into a world that can be cold, cruel and unforgiving. This is our future standing tall and, most of the time, alone, and this is the impact of this story. At a minimum it compels us to listen and to remember. Glass wants us to take notice. Nina's story is a powerful message that reminds us of our responsibilities, and she does this without preaching or shoving it down our throats.

Glass writes in the first person, which creates an effective bond with the reader. Her rhythmic writing style, laced with humor, makes it easy for us to glide through the pages effortlessly, absorbing the full measure of *Punk Like Me*. This is a rare book in that it has a soul; one that is laid bare for all to see. We owe it to ourselves to read this book, but more importantly, we owe it to our future.

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