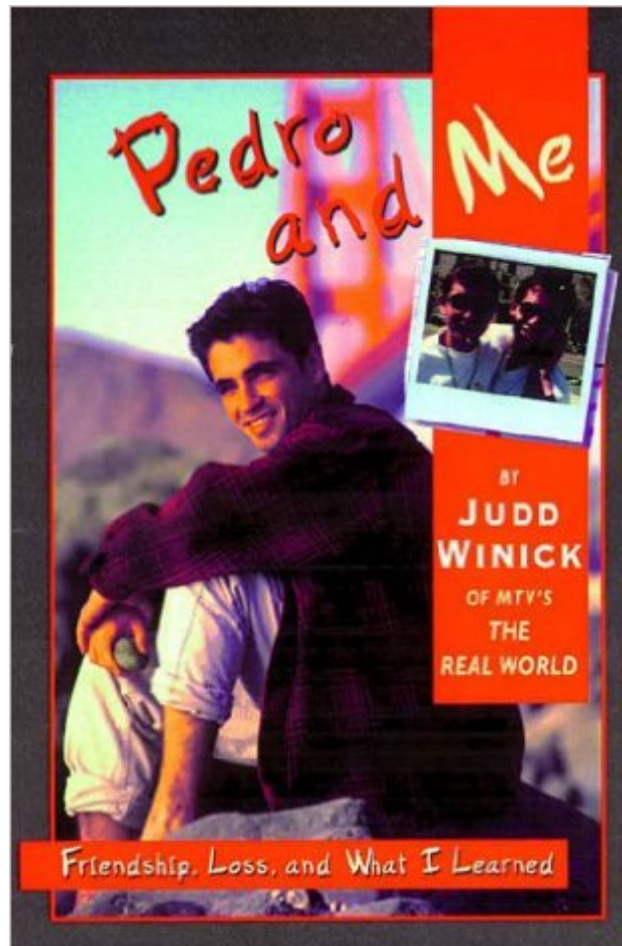


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# Pedro And Me: Friendship, Loss, And What I Learned



## Synopsis

"You are eighteen years old. You get up in front of a thousand people--your classmates, your friends, basically the people who make up your entire existence--and announce, 'I'm HIV positive.'" Told entirely in sequential art, here is the story of the life-changing friendship between the author, a cartoonist from Long Island, and Pedro Zamora, an HIV-positive AIDS activist, which was filmed day by day on MTV's *Real World San Francisco*. As a speaker and educator, a guest on many talk shows (including *Oprah*), and when his tragic death received front-page coverage in the press, Pedro taught a generation that AIDS was not a punishment for moral defects or a mere killer that reduced humans to wraiths. Rather, he showed how those afflicted with the disease could live and love nobly with intelligence, humor and great humanity. Judd Winick's compelling memoir allows each of us to experience the vitally important message Pedro brought us. Inspiring, moving, informative, and instantly accessible, *Pedro and Me* could become one of the books that defines a generation.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a fan of MTV's *The Real World*, I grabbed up *Pedro and Me* as soon as I saw it, and read it cover to cover. It is a very sweet tribute to a friend. For those of you who don't know, Pedro Zamora was one of the cast of MTV's *The Real World 3* in San Francisco. Pedro was an AIDS educator and very open about the fact that he was living with AIDS. He died shortly after the show aired. Judd Winick, the author, was also a cast member. Judd Winick is a cartoonist, so the story is told in a comic book format. Though a bit too sentimental at times, and certainly a tear-jerker, *Pedro and Me*

seems to be a sincere and realistic depiction of Judd Winick and Pedro Zamora's lives, their experiences with instant celebrity, and the ways in which HIV and AIDS affect people's lives. In addition to some behind the scenes information about the filming of *The Real World*, you also get background information about Pedro and Judd's childhoods as well as an update of what has happened since. If you were a fan of *Real World 3, San Francisco*, I wholeheartedly recommend *Pedro and Me*.

Simply put, in writing and drawing *"Pedro and Me"*, Judd Winick has produced one of the best books I've read in the year 2000. Part auto-biography, part comic book, part social issues, Winick manages to blend it all together in this stunning literary tribute to a "hero" of the AIDS generation. The book recounts the days before, during, and after the tumultuous months spent living in the crazy house "*Real World*" house in San Francisco. We learn a little bit about Judd growing up, and how he came to be a "bleeding heart liberal". But here is the first surprise! Coming to learn that he might be living with a gay man with AIDS, Judd is forced to confront not only his own fears about the disease, but his own prejudices about everything. That I believe is the complete brilliance of his story. He shows us his own growth, not in a preachy, "you-need-to-do-this" way, but in an honest "this-is-what-happened-to-me" way. It is through his honest struggles that we as readers are carried through with him. But let's not forget Pedro in this as the engine that powers the story. We see a deeper Pedro not shown in the show, a sicker Pedro, a frail Pedro that is truly struggling on a daily basis with his health. We see a human Pedro, instead of his role on the show, "gay man with AIDS". The respect and love Judd has for Pedro comes across beautifully in the book, and we love both of them all the more. Don't worry, you need not have seen the *Real World San Francisco* shows to be impacted by this book. Judd draws us a portrait of his own *Real World*, with the hopes and the joys and the pain for all of us to share and see. And we leave his book *"Pedro and Me"* truly transformed about how we see and act in our own *Real Worlds*. Thanks, Judd. And thank you Pedro.

I knew of Judd, not through MTV but through his outrageous *Barry Ween* Comic series. He scores high with me as a comic artist and entertainer but I was very unsure as to how he would handle such a challenging subject. I am no longer unsure. This book is beautiful! After reading *Pedro and Me* and feeling the love and loss expressed by Judd, I kick myself for not having watched *Real World*. I feel a tad diminished for having not known the man capable of making both Judd and his now fiancée Pam, dedicate themselves to him and his life. There are few books I have read in my

30+ years that truly moved me to the point that I questioned the way I look at life and interact with others. Pedro and Me is such a book and is a must read for anyone.

In this Summer of Reality TV and opportunities to win \$1 million by screwing over or excluding your island or room-mates, Judd Winik, a cartoonist, and member of the third season of MTV's The Real World, presents us with the true story of living on a reality TV show for six months, where the prize was not \$1 million and a Hollywood contract, but a lifelong lesson in friendship, courage, and love. Written in cartoon, or graphic novel, form, this is one of the few cartoon books that will choke you up. (not even Art Spiegelman's Maus did it as well). Judd takes us behind the scenes of life in the Real World house, and imparts to us what he learned about friendship and striving to be a mensch in one's life. Behind the scenes, Judd tells us about the night sweats, the pneumonia, Pedro's anxieties, and Judd's growing fondness for his housemate (now fiance), Pam. The reader will also learn more about the life and death of Pedro Zamora. The first four chapters cover Pedro's life before his invitation to join the Real World 3 cast. Born on a leap day in a leap year in Cuba, anointed as a Grande Cabeza, Pedro grew up to be a scholar, track team captain, friend, brother and son. Zamora faced the realization that he was HIV Positive when he was only 17. Judd's book graphically conveys how Pedro, a popular student, faced his school and announced that he was living with the virus. With 25% of all new AIDS cases occurring among American teens, the book serves as an additional wake up call to readers and educators about why these issues must be confronted and discussed openly. As with Matthew Shephard, many Americans believe that Pedro Zamora gave more by dying than by living. This is far from the truth, and readers can get confirmation of this by reading this book....

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