



**Title:** Ziggy, Stardust and Me

**Author:** James Brandon

**Imprint:** G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers

**Publisher:** Penguin Young Readers

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**Format:** Paperback

**Age Range\*:** 12 Up

**Grade Range:** Gr 8 Up

# BOOK RESUME: ZIGGY, STARDUST AND ME

## BOOK SYNOPSIS

In this tender-hearted debut, set against the tumultuous backdrop of life in 1973, when homosexuality is still considered a mental illness, two boys defy all the odds and fall in love.

The year is 1973. The Watergate hearings are in full swing. The Vietnam War is still raging. And homosexuality is still officially considered a mental illness. In the midst of these trying times is sixteen-year-old Jonathan Collins, a bullied, anxious, asthmatic kid, who aside from an alcoholic father and his sympathetic neighbor and friend Starla, is completely alone. To cope, Jonathan escapes to the safe haven of his imagination, where his hero David Bowie's Ziggy Stardust and dead relatives, including his mother, guide him through the rough terrain of his life. In his alternate reality, Jonathan can be anything: a superhero, an astronaut, Ziggy Stardust, himself, or completely "normal" and not a boy who likes other boys. When he completes his treatments, he *will* be normal—at least he hopes. But before that can happen, Web stumbles into his life. Web is everything Jonathan wishes he could be: fearless, fearsome and, most importantly, not ashamed of being gay.

Jonathan doesn't want to like brooding Web, who has secrets all his own. Jonathan wants nothing more than to be "fixed" once and for all. But he's drawn to Web anyway. Web is the first person in the real world to see Jonathan completely and think he's perfect. Web is a kind of escape Jonathan has never known. For the first time in his life, he may finally feel free enough to love and accept himself as he is.

## REVIEWS AND PRAISE

"This heartfelt book will leave you in a puddle of your emotions." —*BuzzFeed*

"A love letter to both self-acceptance and David Bowie, James Brandon's *Ziggy, Stardust and Me* is both charming and timely." —*Culturess*

"A historical novel set in the early '70s, a time full of turmoil and homophobia, sets the scene for one of the best YA books of the year." —*Paste Magazine*

"A well-crafted coming-of-age story that allows the reader to empathize with and root for a young man who feels lost. . . [as he] fights through the difficulties of growing up in a world that judges difference as wrong, and how he becomes stronger because of it." —*School Library Connection*

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"A love letter to self-acceptance, even when the world is far from accepting . . . this deeply impactful book presents historical attitudes and policies with a chilling accuracy." —*Publishers Weekly*

"This book is honest, blunt, heart-wrenching, and incredibly important. The writing style is very unique . . . [and] possesses the unique power to put the reader in its main character's shoes, to render the reader as vulnerable as Jonathan feels and takes the reader through the horrors he faces." —*The Nerd Daily*

"Gut-wrenching emotion, stream of consciousness, and an intensely evoked soundtrack bring Jonathan's summer to Technicolor life. Historical events like Watergate, the Vietnam War, and Wounded Knee are included seamlessly into the story. Every character from Jonathan himself down to the ice cream man are fully realized. . . Give this one to budding activists, music fans, historical fiction readers, and romantics." —*School Library Journal*

"Brandon has penned a novel that seamlessly melds a coming of age tale with the oppressive beliefs and actions of the time. The characters are real and complex, and their feelings honestly portrayed." —*The Advocate*

"Readers will be immersed in Jonathan's close first-person narration...Debut author Brandon deftly incorporates historical events and realities, including the criminalization of homosexuality, the Vietnam War, Watergate, the occupation of Wounded Knee, and police brutality against Native people...A poignant depiction of a boy's journey to accepting his gay identity despite the odds."  
—*Kirkus Reviews*

"This novel will appeal to introspective readers interested in cultural history, challenging relationships, and hopeful endings." —*VOYA*

"If you're looking for a dose of historical queer romance, James Brandon's debut *Ziggy, Stardust and Me* will hit your sweet spots." —*B&N Teen Blog*

"In this powerfully character-driven story, we meet two teenage boys from very different cultures. Debut author James Brandon brilliantly rises to the dual challenges of weaving a compelling love story into the backdrop of history while navigating the tempestuous waters of cultural interpretation . . . *Ziggy* gives us suspense, heartache, hope, and a deep sense of belonging. . . Will inspire readers of any age." —*Lambda Literary*

"One of the biggest and best YA books of the summer." —*Entertainment Weekly*

"A touching and long overdue story, *Ziggy* is everything adult novels so rarely are: inclusive, imaginative and affirming." —*Boyculture.com*

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#### **AWARDS AND ACCOLADES**

- A Summer Entertainment Weekly Best Book
- A Summer Refinery29 Best Book
- A Summer Seventeen Magazine Best YA Book
- A Book Riot Must-Read Book

#### **MEDIA AND RESOURCES**

- [TeachingBooks.net resources](#)
- [SLJ Interview with Author](#)

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