

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***Pollyanna Gay: A Bittersweet Rendering of a Gay Man's Journey from First Love to Heartbreaking Loss***

written by Jer Long

on sale December 5, 2023

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“Where are the gays like me? Where do I fit into the world of sexual chance?”

- from *Pollyanna Gay*

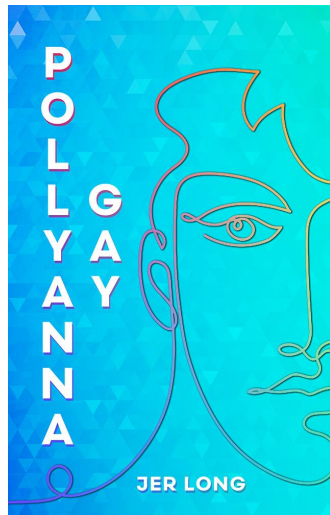
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[Brandylane Publishers, Inc.](#) of Richmond, Virginia, is excited to announce the release of a new work of LGBTQ+ historical fiction, [Pollyanna Gay](#) by Jer Long.

When outwardly confident but inwardly shy August Applegate arrives at theatre camp, he almost instantly falls headfirst into a whirlwind romance with one Pete Pace, an older boy who proves attractive and alluring not just to August, but to everyone he meets. After enduring a fraught childhood in the Blue Ridge Mountains with his unstable firecracker of a mother, August finds Pete and the new ways of life he models almost irresistible for a small-town boy like himself—even if their romance cannot last.

That summer serves as August's introduction to the actualities and fundamentals of gay love, lust, and sex—fundamentals that continue to serve him as he further disentangles himself from the abuses of his childhood and navigates what it means to be a gay man in 1970s America. Treasuring the lessons and care he received from his kind aunts and his deceased Grandma Flora, and grappling with his identity like his literary heroines Jo March and Pollyanna—hard workers and underdogs who faced their challenges head-on despite their unfortunate situations—August perseveres, even in the face of exclusion, discrimination, and murder. As the AIDS crisis sweeps over the nation's capital, bringing with it a wave of loss that will ultimately touch every one of the friends from that whirlwind summer at theatre camp, can August find happiness—and maintain the optimistic, innocent outlook that earned him the nickname “Pollyanna” from Pete all those years ago?

Packed to exploding with artistic references that never overshadow the genuine frankness with which this tale shares the triumphs and heartaches of coming of age and living as a gay man in the 1960s through the 1980s, *Pollyanna Gay* releases on December 5, 2023.



*August Applegate is sixteen years old, and he's known he's gay for eleven of them. But in 1963, life in a small Appalachian hamlet doesn't offer many opportunities to learn what that truly means.*

*That is, not until August spends one magical—if tumultuous—summer at Buck's County Theatre Camp. There, he steps behind the curtains that shield the gay world from view and enters a bewildering universe of heated flings, dramatic breakups, and unspoken rules that leave his head spinning. Or perhaps that's just his bunkmates: Pete, beautiful, charismatic, and secretive; and Farley Fairfield, chaos incarnate, who seems to hate August no matter what he does.*

*Thus begins a journey of many years, as August leaves camp and returns home to his loving, dysfunctional family; completes high school; attends college; survives life (once again) as Farley's roommate; and finally sets out to build a life on his own terms. Navigating the uproar of the 1970s and into the next decade, August witnesses the defiant joy of the gay rights movement and the creeping dread of the AIDS crisis. Yet even amid the waning of old friendships, the withering of old loves, and the unspoken traumas that hold his family in their codependent orbits, the one thing August can't get rid of is his tender, trusting "Pollyanna" heart.*

*But August's stubborn optimism is more than just a chic set of rose-colored glasses. In fact, it might be the only pillar to which his loved ones can cling amid the relentless tides of fate. . . .*

#### **About the Author**

[Jer Long](#) is a devoted worshiper of the written word. Comforted by his grandmother's soothing baritone as she recited verse and fairytales to him, he became obsessed with "story time" as a boy. As a young man, the intriguing dialogue of famous playwrights and the inspiring lyrics of clever songwriters lured him onto the stage as a performer. Backstage captured his artistic imagination as well, and ultimately led him to rewarding experiences as a costume designer, a makeup artist, and a hair stylist. Later in life, having suffered from loss of speech while battling Lyme Disease, he struggled to complete a coherent sentence until he bucked up the courage to enroll in a writing class. Forcing himself to read aloud the words he had written finally lifted the curse. Smitten with the art of language, he now writes daily.

Retired from a lengthy career as a visual director in upscale retail, Jer currently resides in Pennsylvania with his husband Ed and their dog Lucy Honeychurch.

**Interviews available upon request.**

[Brandylane Publishers, Inc.](#) is an independent press located in Richmond, Virginia, that has published books since 1985.

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*Pollyanna Gay* (paperback, 356 pages, \$23.95 / Kindle e-book \$12.99) is available from [Amazon](#), [Barnes & Noble](#), and other fine booksellers.