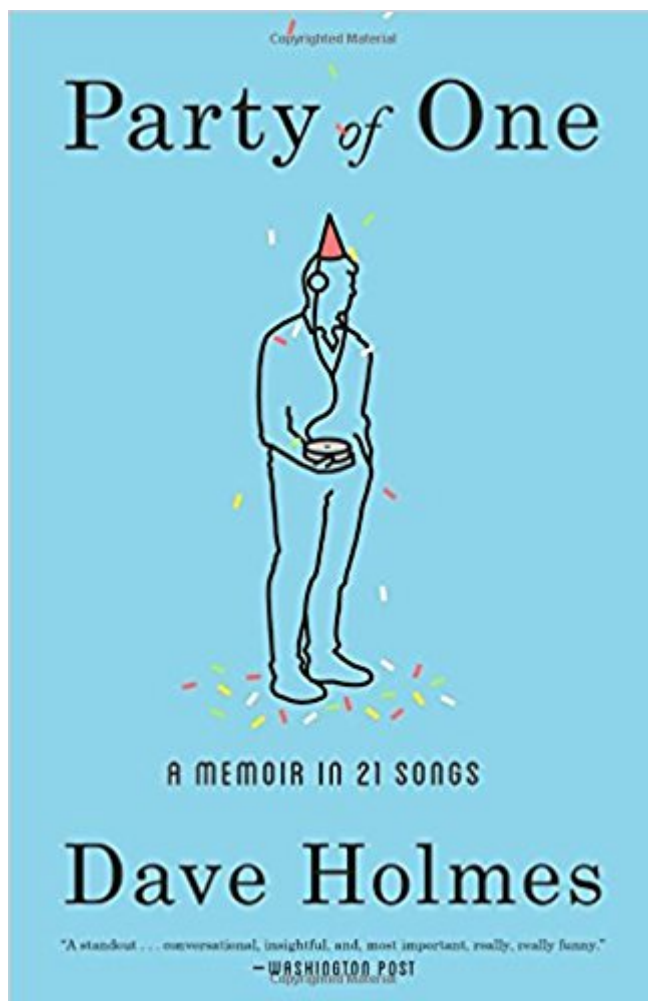


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Party Of One: A Memoir In 21 Songs



Synopsis

From former MTV VJ Dave Holmes, the hilarious memoir of a perpetual outsider fumbling towards self-acceptance, with the music of the '80s, '90s, and today as his soundtrack — Dave Holmes has spent his life on the periphery, nose pressed hopefully against the glass, wanting just one thing: to get inside. Growing up, he was the artsy son in the sporty family. At his all-boys high school and Catholic college, he was the closeted gay kid surrounded by crush-worthy straight guys. And in his twenties, in the middle of a disastrous career in advertising, he accidentally became an MTV VJ overnight when he finished second, naturally, in the Wanna Be a VJ contest, opening the door to fame, fortune, and celebrity — you know, almost. — In *Party of One*, Holmes tells the hilariously painful and painfully hilarious tales — in the vein of Rob Sheffield, Andy Cohen, and Paul Feig — of an outsider desperate to get in, of a misfit constantly changing shape, of a music geek who finally learns to accept himself. Structured around a mix of hits and deep cuts from the last four decades — from Bruce Springsteen's "Hungry Heart" and En Vogue's "Free Your Mind" to LCD Soundsystem's "Losing My Edge" and Bleachers' "I Wanna Get Better" — and punctuated with interludes like "So You've Had Your Heart Broken in the 1990s: A Playlist" and "Notes on (Jesse) Camp," this book is for anyone who's ever felt like a square peg, especially those who have found their place in the world around a band, an album, or a song. It's a laugh-out-loud funny, deeply nostalgic story about never fitting in, never giving up, and letting good music guide the way. — NPR's Best Books of 2016: Staff Picks, Biography & Memoir, For Music Lovers, Funny Stuff, Non-fiction Categories

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Customer Reviews

One of NPR's Great Reads of 2016 One of Esquire's Best Books of 2016 Goodreads Choice Award nominee
Dave Holmes's hilarious memoir will delight pop culture junkies. What makes *Party of One* such a standout in this overcrowded genre is Holmes's voice, which is conversational, insightful about how the entertainment we consume informs our memories and, most important, really, really funny. It will strike a chord with anyone who has ever felt inhibited or insecure. Which is to say, it will resonate with everyone.
"Washington Post" [A] wonderful writer and comedian... [Holmes] has penned the funniest memoir I've read all year. Reading his book is like catching up with your favorite friend and music nerd.
"Jessica Reedy, NPR" Dave Holmes's *Party of One* is the latest great gay American book.... While [it] is so consistently hilarious that it might deceive you into thinking it's a lighter, less serious read than the aforementioned literature-with-a-capital-L, do not be fooled: *Party of One* is every bit as deserving to be considered in this new wave of essential, unmissable gay writing.
"Gawker" Equal parts funny and heartfelt... an absolute treat.
"Entertainment Weekly" (Must List) "Party of One" is as charming as it is funny, and it's a testament to how pop music has the power to shape our lives.
"Esquire" Holmes has a knack for breezy prose that's insightful and funny "i.e., the kind of writing everyone on the internet aims for, but seldom hits, because the humor is labored or the perspective isn't strong enough. Holmes's voice translates nicely to book form, particularly when reliving awkward and painful moments from his past.
"A.V. Club" Holmes approaches his own story with warmth and a sense of humor... [in this] engaging tale.... He painstakingly makes sure each song rings true... [and] offers up his heart on his sleeve.
"Newsday" Exceptionally funny and memorable. This memoir will fill your summer with nostalgia, music, and laughter.
"Bustle" (13 New Memoirs to Read This Summer) Very funny | A total pleasure.
-Jessica Morgan, *Go Fug Yourself* The greatest strength of Holmes's book is its specificity. He has a very keen ability to slow moments down and examine them to expose a nugget of truth.... There is a warmth and sincerity that carries throughout.... If you've ever felt like that aforementioned bee girl [from Blind Melon's "No Rain" video], this is great book that might also help you feel like you aren't partying alone.
"Lambda Literary" Holmes's prose style is engaging and witty. For fellow addicts of pop culture, there is no better book to pack in your beach bag this summer.
"Bookish" The best memoirs offer more detail on the parts of the subject's life you already know about, and then illuminate some parts you didn't. *Party of One* accomplishes both.
"DCist" A sharp and sharp-witted reflection on what it was like to grow up gay and feeling like you never belong.
"Daily Beast" A hilarious memoir and a great

summer beach book. • "Towleroad • Humorous, yet poignant.... Holmes doesn't shy away from discussing his early struggles with his sexuality as a closeted gay teen, often in a wry, self-effacing way. • "Huffington Post • Holmes is all charm, and his self-deprecating style makes his story relatable and engaging without feeling self-involved. A hilarious and touching coming-of-age story that will strike a particular nerve among Generation Y. • "Kirkus Reviews • "While [Holmes is] inarguably a funny guy, he's also a thoughtful one who has interesting things to say about life away from the camera. And saying them, he's always good company. Welcome to his party. • "Booklist • "In *Party of One*, Dave Holmes goes deep into all the ways loving music warps you for life, from shaping your teen crush on Huey Lewis to putting you on MTV at the peak of the TRL era. But his book is also a tenderly hilarious and moving tale of trying to grow up • "whether that means coming out at your Catholic college, hitting the hot tub with Kid Rock, or getting that sensation that the singer on your radio is the only soul who truly understands you. • "Rob Sheffield, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Love Is a Mix Tape* • "Who better to marry great storytelling with great songs? Dave Holmes's love of music and pop culture is infectious, and his stories are hilarious! • "Andy Cohen, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Most Talkative* • "Party of One speaks a secret language to those of us who grew up at a time when being different was something to be hidden rather than celebrated. Holmes's masterful wit and colorful storytelling never obscures the soulful honesty underneath • "which is exactly the lesson we • "different • "kids learned to live with. Fantastically fun and captivating. • "Josh Kilmer-Purcell, *New York Times* bestselling author of *I Am Not Myself These Days* • "Party of One is a perfect memoir • "hilarious, moving, and full of beauty. Holmes writes at all times with great heart, brains, and courage. • "Darin Strauss, National Book Critics Circle Award • "winning author of *Half a Life* • "I love this book. I felt so many of the things that Holmes describes with grace and candor, from our shared pop culture shorthand to our nearly unbearable love of music. There are also a million jokes packed in here. I went over each paragraph to laugh again and again. • "Margaret Cho, bestselling author of *I'm the One That I Want* • "While the soundtrack to Dave Holmes' young life may have been primarily composed of American and British Top 40, his glorious attention to detail has more in common with Bach. And I mean Johann Sebastian Bach, not the lithe, sexy bigot who sang for Skid Row. This is an exquisite music memoir that easily fulfills its goals of entertaining people young and old and helping them figure out where the hell they fit in. • "Rob Delaney

DAVE HOLMES is a writer, comedian, and television personality who has hosted shows for MTV,

CBS, Bravo, Comedy Central, E!, FX, and Ovation. Recently named one of NPR's 10 Favorite Pop Culture Personalities, he is a editor-at-large for Esquire.com, an on-air personality on SiriusXM's The Spectrum, and a performer at the iO West and Upright Citizens Brigade theaters. He lives in Los Angeles. From the Hardcover edition.

First a disclaimer...I'm way, way past the demographics Dave is trying to reach with "Party Of One". And yet, I liked it...really liked it. It's smart and funny and self-deprecating and raw and clings brightly to its subtitle: a memoir in 21 songs. I've always been grateful to Dave for helping me found a teen crisis prevention service in St. Louis (KUTO....Kids Under Twenty-One). Reading of his own struggle to find himself in his teen years (and beyond), all the while he was giving his time and energy to help others, expands my gratitude and respect by leaps and bounds. No small thing. I'd give it 6 stars if I'd ever heard of any of the songs or bands!

I read a lot of memoirs. Some are structured chronologically, with a lot of and-then, and-then. Others are simply anecdotes, little short stories of absurd or tragic moments. In Party of One, Holmes cleverly arranges periods of his life around the songs that would be playing on the soundtrack. It sounds like a conceit, but it works, mostly because music has been an organizing force of his somewhat disorganized life. The resulting book is funny, and sad, and incredibly relatable. Holmes and I are roughly the same age, but he has a much sharper memory of all the little surface details from the 1980s and 90s, and a true sympathy for the closeted St. Louis kid who was terrified of coming out.

I loved Party of One by Dave Holmes. So much of what he experienced growing up a gay kid in the 80's resonated with me. Dave's stories are filled with cultural references from the 80's and 90's but are also touching and thoughtful. He has given voice to that younger, lonelier version of yourself that most of us have put away but have never really forgotten. I started the book expecting a light, fun read but what I found was an often profound and enlightened examination of what it means to grow up knowing that you're different... AND it was laugh out loud funny! Just my kinda book!

It was really great to find out so much more about a friendly face I remembered so well from my teen years of watching MTV. I am so glad to hear that he landed on his feet and is doing well. It was almost like catching up with an old friend. I'm glad you're living so well, Dave!

I pre-ordered this book so it would arrive at my house the day it was released. Having read Dave Holmes' writings online over the last few years, I was excited to spend an afternoon or evening reading his memoir. I was not disappointed. His recollection of youth and adulthood reminded me of similar experiences in my own life and his pop culture references, particularly song and artist mentions, gave me reasons to stop reading periodically to look up an old favorite. His perspective on life and how to live it came across warm and sincere while consistently making me laugh and chuckle and pause to read selections aloud to my husband. I hope he writes a second half to this book in another 40 years.

This book was absolutely fantastic!! It was beautifully written, incredibly thought-provoking, and wonderfully hilarious. Dave Holmes' life is anything but standard, but it is also relatable in a very genuine way. He writes of what it is like to feel like an outsider looking in, and it's a feeling that most people can relate to in one way or another, so it is a story that shows life will get better and is inspiring. Plus, the music references are wonderfully done and very funny. It is a good look at pop-culture while also teaching the readers that it's ok not to be identical to every other person around you. I cannot recommend the book more!

I was always a fan of his on MTV and I follow his posts on Instagram. I've been looking forward to this book for a while. I learned a lot about his life I never knew and identified with quite a few parts of it as well. I would recommend this book to all my friends for so many reasons... his coming out story, the nostalgia for the classic MTV days and the happenings of the time and I love the music references and the interludes between the chapters.. they cracked me up! It's a really sweet book and I walked away a bigger fan of his than before. Well done Dave!

I haven't watched MTV since 1986 and bought the book having no idea who Dave Holmes was - but I'm always up for some pop culture nostalgia. This was much much more than I expected. Half the time I didn't even know the song referenced, but his stories of growing up gay in a less-accepting era and figuring out his life are entertaining and funny and poignant and insightful and funny again, all on their own. I was sorry when the book ended. I loved hanging out with this guy.

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