



## The Summer I Died

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## **The Summer I Died** Ryan C. Thomas

So much screaming. When Roger Huntington comes home from college for the summer and is met by his best friend, Tooth, he knows they're going to have a good time. A summer full of beer, comic books, movies, laughs, and maybe even girls. So much pain. The sun is high and the sky is clear as Roger and Tooth set out to shoot beer cans at Bobcat Mountain. Just two friends catching up on lost time, two friends thinking about their futures, two friends-- So much blood. --suddenly thrust in the middle of a nightmare. Forced to fight for their life against a sadistic killer. A killer with an arsenal of razor sharp blades and a hungry dog by his side. So much death. If they are to survive, they must decide: are heroes born, or are they made? Or is something more powerful happening to them? And more importantly, how do you survive when all roads lead to death!

## **The Summer I Died Details**

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Author : Ryan C. Thomas

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Genre : Horror, Fiction, Thriller, Splatterpunk

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## From Reader Review The Summer I Died for online ebook

### David Church says

This book was brutally epic. What a page turner and the last 20% I was on pins and needles. One of the most disturbing books I have ever read. If a book can disturb or scare me, that is an accomplishment. This book did both. 5 stars!

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### Jason says

5 Stars

Wow, that was intense and really graphic. I love over the top horror movies and torture movies. This apparently was the first time that I actually read a torture book. A book that really is not for the feint of heart or those that disdain graphic violence.

I was so enthralled by the graphic nature of this story that I piqued my wife's interest in picking this one up on her Kindle too. Although she stopped at the 60% mark, my finishing it gave her the boost to push through this incredibly dark and disturbing tale.

This is a book one in a series and I will move on to book two. The tale centers on Roger and his best friend known as Tooth. It is a survival story that centers on your typical horror nut job that lives out in the middle of no-mans land in the woods. Thomas does an amazing job at penning the tension, the horror, and the graphic violence. This is a real page turner if you can stomach the bad things that happen.

The story and plot line move in a linear direction where the outcome is pretty much laid out for you. Knowing where the story is going does not hurt this book or this story; it actually makes it better and stronger. Seeing where things are going ramps up the tension, the suspense, and the revulsion. I loved how this played out...Thomas gives us a very satisfying ending that can also serve as the start of more to come.

I really had fun reading this book and I am surprised at how much I enjoyed the incredibly graphic violence and situations.

Highly recommended for those that think that the "Saw" movies are for kids!!!!

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### Trudi says

Oh my, I have to sit on this one for a bit before I can write a review because I'm a little conflicted. Let me just say this right now -- intense.

**\*\*\*\*WARNING!!! This book may cause violent seizures, recurring nightmares, and ongoing medical bills for psychological counseling. PROCEED AT YOUR OWN RISK\*\*\*\***

It's been a week, and I finally feel able to write a review for this absolutely terrifying, gripping, grotesque book. Just a few words on what impressed me the most about this short debut. I know I'm gonna run out of meaningful adjectives long before this review is finished, so bear with me if I get a little repetitive.

1. The Summer I Died is so very *unrelenting*. Once it starts, it just does not let up. It drags you along for the ride, kicking and screaming, and *does not let go* even though like me, you probably started hollering "Uncle!" way before the ending. It's been a while since a book made me faint, throw up, cry, and grimace all within the span of a few pages. That is awesome writing. Thomas's prose is spare and cuttingly to the point. His descriptions are so effective that this book unfolded like a full color movie on a 50-foot screen. There are a few scenes I will never, ever be able to wash from my memory, even with years of counseling.
2. This book could have so easily degenerated into mindless torture porn, but it's saved from that fate by Roger and Tooth. I just fell in love with these guys, so well-written and believable. Roger, the do-good college bound son and his best friend Tooth, the left behind, good-looking roughneck with father issues. Neither is made of hero material, but when caught up in a living nightmare, each rises to the occasion in his own way. I had a particular soft spot for Tooth – his defiance and gritty determination to escape made me think, if something like this were to ever happen, that's the guy I want at my side. (view spoiler)
3. The other twist in the book that really upped the rating for me is (view spoiler)
4. The ending: (view spoiler)

Overall, this is a book I would recommend carefully because it certainly isn't for everyone. If graphic violence is not your bag – STAY AWAY. If you are the adventurous sort however, and are looking for a tale with heart that's going to traumatize you to your very core then by all means READ THIS BOOK. Just thinking about it again and writing this review has made me bump it up from four to five stars. It really is a diamond in the rough.

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### **Paul Nelson says**

Not for the faint hearted The Summer I Died is certainly the most brutal and ferocious book I've read to date, there are some seriously sickening moments amidst a book filled with torture scenes but you know what, you can't stop reading it's absolutely riveting.

Roger back from college goes out to the mountainous woodland with his friend Tooth to drink some beers and shoot some cans, life is about to take a horrific turn when they go to investigate sounds of a woman screaming. They find a blood drenched young woman trying to escape a maniacal killer with some equally vicious dogs, known only as 'skinny man' and the friends soon find themselves chained up in the basement at the mercy of a seriously deranged and sadistic individual.

This is a vivid and powerful story, distinctively driven by friendship, yes the violence is extreme and disturbing, just when you think there's no more possible, you turn the page and start again but you can't stop reading. Highly recommended, the tension is overwhelming at times and The Summer I Died is apparently being scripted for filming.

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### **Bark says**

Roger is home from college on break and plans to kick back with his best bud Tooth, drink some beer, shoot some cans and smoke a little dope. They head out to an unnamed backwoods town in New Hampshire to shoot without being disturbed and end up captives of a madman Roger calls “Skinny Man” and his bloodthirsty dog. Being a NH native myself, and being far too close to a town where a real life horrendous slaughter recently occurred, this setting scared the pee-pee out of me. I could see that run down house in the middle of nowhere (where no one will hear you scream) far too clearly. I will never again venture out into the woods without two big dogs by my side. Why did no one mention this mayhem happens in NH?!

This book is hardcore, very much torture-porn and not for the squeamish. It’s bleak, dark and squishy but the worst thing about it is the fact that the characters are written exceptionally well for a book of this sort. They start out as two toss-away goofy guys. Roger is the brighter bulb of the two while Tooth is mostly a laze-about heading nowhere fast but as the story progresses they become so real that you nearly feel their physical and emotional pain and experience their desperation to survive, to fight and to get the hell out of the mess they’ve found themselves in. It’s a tense, stomach churning read filled to the brim with cruelty and unimaginable horror. If you’re up for it, I’d say give it a read. It was impossible to put down, well written and though I won’t ever read it again I will check out whatever this guy decides to write in the future.

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### **Adam Light says**

The summer I died is one HELL of a ferocious, gut-twisting, psycho-thriller. At first, Mr. Thomas lulls you into complacency with a hearty tale of two young lads wilting away a summer day, messing with Roger's sister and basically enjoying life, and living for the day.

Roger and Tooth are best friends on a day trip out to the woods to target practice with Tooth's gun, just having a good old time, and then things go south really, really fast. I don't want to give any details about the rest of this brutal tale of human savagery, but I will say I was nailed in place while I read it. I was so unprepared for what happened, just not ready, and though there are descriptions of depravity that defy understanding, I had to continue reading. Read it and you will see what I mean. Just make sure you don't eat first.

Mr. Thomas has crafted an epic story that leave you breathless.

Highly recommended for anyone who likes their horror relentless and raw. This book is very visual. As I was reading I could envision it on the big screen, and then I found out it is being made into a film. I'll be there!

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### **Carla ?Did I Say That? says**

#### **5 \*I Want My Mommy\* Stars!**

Two words...

This book was one of the most gruesome..intense..dark..demented..disturbing..brutal..stories I've read in

awhile!! This is truly..I mean it people..truly not for the faint of hearts!!In other words if this is your first horror book..All I can say is..

Mr.Thomas managed to pull off one helluva Hat-Trick...He combined a well told **Plot**...filled with unspeakable **Horror** and topped off with some well placed **Humor**...It gets no better than that!!!

**The Summer I Died..**tells the story of Roger Huntington and his best friend Tooth and the day they decide to head out to a secluded Mountain to do some target practice using beer cans..As they are leaving..they both here a woman screaming..and from there its just one horrifying scenario after another!!!

while reading this one...

yes even laughter!!!

**Bravo Mr. Thomas..you have truly amazed me with this one!!**

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### **Zoeytron says**

For every life, there is a purpose. It may not be clear to you, it could hinge on something as simple as a roll of the dice. Know what you are wading into here before you start reading - it is a story of raw, graphic, inexorable torture. Gore is ramped up to maximum overdrive. The depravity of the "Skinny Man" will steal your very breath away and leave you heaving. One reviewer used the word 'unrelenting' to describe the tone of the book, and that is it to a tee. This is for readers with thick skins and strong stomachs.

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### **Kaya says**

I definitely didn't know what I was in for. Excellent book if you're a fan of the genre, but if your level of tolerance is as low as mine, considering graphic violence, then you better pass. 3/4 are pure horror and pain, that's the whole plot.

Roger and Tooth mess around with Roger's sister and enjoy life for the summer. Roger is back from college. They go out to the woods and drink beer, while playing with shooting cans. Everything gets fucked up when they go to investigate sounds of a woman screaming. They think about leaving and calling the police, but instead they sneak up to an isolated house just in time to see a panicked woman running out the front door,

chased by a man with an axe. There are some vicious dogs, indulging our psychopath Skinny Man. Roger and Tooth find themselves chained up in the basement with a bleak future. Gore, torture, rape - everything is here. Skinny Man is the most disturbing villain I have ever read about. Not that I've read a lot books simmilar to this one, though. It bugged me that the author never explained the reason behind Skinny Man's madness. He went about his torture and killing in such a brutal and cold manner and he was actually having fun.

This is a survival story but with typical premise. Older man, a sociopath lives in the middle of nowhere, alone, with no reception. The author does an extraordinary job at building the tension, fear and describing graphic violence. From the start, you pretty much know what is going to happen, but still you're anxious to know how everything will turn out. The violence is so extreme, sick and disturbing, I couldn't read more than a few chapters a day. Basically, this is a torture porn. The descriptions are so effective I thought I was watching a movie.

Roger doesn't have any predispositions in being a hero. He's a typical college boy, shy and a little asocial, who doesn't have a clear idea what to do with his life. While he was captured, I couldn't really find more about him since all he had was fear and panic.

I really have a problem with the way Skinny Man was shown. He's a bad guy, no arguing there, but I would've appreciated some background. His only role is to butcher and that was his whole personality. Maybe that was the goal, I don't know.

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## **Stephen says**

That is significantly **understating** the effect this book had on me. I finished it last weekend having been reduced to a shocked, **emotionally shredded** child who suddenly didn't feel comfortable with the world around me. Since that time, I've **mostly** recovered from the experience though there are aspects of the story that may never completely leave me. In light of the above, I want to be careful in my recommendation of this book to others (there's a verbal **ink blot** test below that may help).

This book is troubling, depraved, graphic and unrelenting in its brutality, and there are passages and events that **WILL** affect you, possibly significantly. However, this book is also superbly crafted and deftly told by a writer who has earned my deep respect for creating this dust-jacket wearing nightmare of terror.

Before I continue, here is a quick tour of the set up.

### **PLOT SUMMARY**

Roger and Tooth are best friends. Roger is home from college for the summer and is staying at his parent's with his sister while mom and dad are on vacation. Tooth is Roger's intelligent, thrill-seeking best friend who drinks way too much (a legacy from his alcoholic father) and, at 20 years of age, sees no way out of the dead end life he has carved for himself.

One day, Roger and Tooth are target shooting in secluded woods miles outside of town. As they're getting ready to leave, they hear a woman screaming. They decide to investigate...and find the most unimaginable

nightmare you can possibly conceive of waiting for them.

From there...non-stop horror.

## THOUGHTS

This story is gut-wrenching...as unfiltered and unwavering a depiction of torture and sadism as you are likely to find. For those that have read American Psycho, there are scenes in this novel that rise to the level of depravity depicted in the most graphic passages from Ellison's novel. However, what makes this story's violence so much harder for me to handle is that I truly cared for both Roger and Tooth by the time the horror began.

That is a critical difference because, as callous as it may sound, watching a stranger get shot, while traumatic, does not compare emotionally with watching a loved one suffer the same fate. **That is the darkest, most painful aspect of this story.** We care desperately about the victims and it makes the telling of their fate so much worse.

So, is this or is this not torture porn?

This is a tough one for me because I am NOT, I repeat NOT, a fan of movies that seem to revel and bask in torture and/or sadism (e.g., the Saw movies, Hostel, etc.). However, I have enjoyed (probably not the most apt term) some movies that are deeply disturbing and have significant violence in them because I thought they were terrifying (and isn't that why we watch them). An example of this kind of movie is *The Strangers* which freaked me out.

So back to the question...is this torture porn? Well, if torture porn is defined as a novel where violence and torture are a central component of the plot than *The Summer I Died* is clearly torture porn. Torture and violence are key ingredients. However, the non-torture, non-violent elements of this are so well done and the prose is so engaging that I have trouble bestowing what I feel is a derogatory label on it.

I guess that will have to do as a non -answer.

Roger and Tooth are wonderful characters. Their relationship is real and genuine and pitch-perfect. This makes the horror of their ordeal difficult for me to adequately describe because you need that sense of attachment to fully comprehend it. Even more impressive is that the bonds of friendship between the two reaches new levels of strength **AFTER** the nightmare begins.

I'm not going to give away spoilers but there is a point in the story when, as a reader, you are gasping for breath, begging for a pause in the narrative to be able to gather yourself. However, instead of any reprieve, the author devilishly introduces a **new element** into the story that rips away the last vestiges of sanity and makes you suddenly cognisant that the horror is inexorable and that you are treading territory you've not walked before.

Full stop...

Now, the above paragraph is a decent **Rorschach Test** to assist you in deciding whether you want to read this. If the curiosity for what happens outweighs your sense of dread...than enter reckless reader, but remember my warning. Alternatively, if your "squeamish sensor" is going off like a police siren, than you may want to skip this one and save yourself the night terrors that may follow.

My final word on the book (again without a spoiler) is the ending. It was **PERFECT**. I can not adequately express how impressed I was with the author's ability to find a way to bring a sense of uplift to this unrelentingly brutal tale. The ending was as shocking in beauty as the **new element** referenced above was in its vileness.

For me, it was the ending that raised this book to among the ranks of among the best "horror" experiences of my literary life. While I found much of the last half of the book tough to stomach and did not "enjoy" it, the narrative engaged me to exhaustion and made me feel at a level few books have. When the author gifted me with the end, he made it a profound statement on friendship and the strength of bonds between people that I think makes this worth experiencing.

**Bravo**, Mr. Thomas. Well done, sir.

Thus, 5.0 stars and my **HIGHEST POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATION**...but with the caveats above as you must be able to tread the darkest, most depraved corners of the human experience.

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### **Tressa says**

OK. Somehow my earlier review praising this glorious novel disappeared, and if this were any other book, I'd just shrug my shoulders and move on. But I won't do that because I want you to read this book. You must read this book. *I need* you to read this book just so I can take comfort in knowing I'm not the only one to witness such atrocities.

Roger and Tooth are best friends. Roger is home from college on a break, and he and Tooth are parked in the woods shooting the breeze when a woman's scream fills the woods. They contemplate leaving and calling the police, but their consciences won't let them do that, so they sneak up to an isolated house just in time to see a panicked woman running out the front door, chased by a man with an axe. Circumstances soon place them inside the house, where they are tied up and at the mercy of Skinny Man, who loves to torture slowly and deliberately.

If you're thinking this will be just another generic torture porn book with cardboard characters, you are sadly mistaken. There is more love, friendship, and triumph of the spirit in *The Summer I Died* than in some of finest literature out there. And if you're a horror nut like me, there's lots of blood and screaming, too.

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### **Dan Schwent says**

When Roger and Tooth are out shooting at tin cans in the mountains, they hear a woman screaming. When they go to investigate, they wind up in a hell on earth. Will either of them survive the ordeal?

*The Summer I Died* is the story of two friends who wind up captured by a psychopath in the woods and tortured. It reminded me of *The Girl Next Door* in that it's a bleak, powerful book.

It's a pretty brutal book and horrifying because it isn't that far out of the realm of possibility. The Skinny Man kept inflicted more and more tortures on Tooth while Roger watched helplessly.

The Summer I Died is a pretty powerful book but I can't say I actually enjoyed it. "Survived it" sounds more accurate. I did like the ending way more than The Girl Next Door however, and I never once contemplated not finishing it. I guess I'm going to slap the traditional safety rating of 3 on it. I won't be reading the sequel, however.

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### **Bill says**

Torture porn.

The mere mention of it induces cringes.

The makers of movies and books that fall under this category are looked upon with disdain, as well as those who willingly shell out their hard-earned money to subject themselves to the viewing and reading of such disgusting material.

Am I right? I mean, look at the first couple of Saw movies: horribly violent situations, the will of the victims to endure dreadful agony to somehow survive their captivity. Could you imagine anyone wanting to sit through something like this?

Yes. Guilty.

I have to admit, as cringe inducing as they were, those first few Saw movies were pretty damn captivating if you're any type of horror aficionado. Despite enduring the screams of agony, you still stick through it because you just have to know how the hell the victims are going to get out of this.

And, in the case of The Summer I Died, you also care about the characters.

I finished this novella about a week ago, there are still images I can't get out of my head. I wish I could, because one in particular is so nasty that I wish I hadn't read it. But I also can't get the ending out of my head. That's where Thomas really hit it out of the park for me.

I usually prefer the type of horror that is a slow burn, one that haunts or gets under your skin for days after. I have long since grown out of the slasher flicks (although I did watch the original Halloween a few months ago and it still creeped me out...they just don't make 'em like that anymore), so the flicks or books that gore you out for shock value only do nothing for me. The Summer I Died is that rare exception.

You care about these characters. It's almost impossible to stop reading because you can't bear to leave them in their predicament.

The writing is perfectly paced. This is a very well done story. Just a warning though: the violence may be unbearable for many, but I doubt that anyone picking up this book wouldn't go into this without the expectation of some cringe-worthy moments. So, for you folks:...um...enjoy?

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### **Kelly (and the Book Boar) says**

Find all of my reviews at: <http://52bookminimum.blogspot.com/>

**WARNING: IF YOU HAVE A WEAK STOMACH, RUN AWAY FROM THIS REVIEW AND NEVER LOOK BACK!**

If you're like me and your idea of a great date movie is something like this . . .

over something like this . . .

Okay, that's kind of a lie. There's always room in my ~~bed~~ life for some more Ryan Gosling. For the most part, though, I'm down for a slasher movie over a "chick flick" any day of the week. If you can't ever seem to meet your annual quota of gore either, *The Summer I Died* is probably the book for you.

***"I would wake up soon. I knew I would because this stuff only happened in dreams."***

The story begins like so many other horror stories. Two friends reunite for the summer after one has gone away for his first year of college. They have planned out a couple of months of (fairly tame) debauchery, beginning with a little road trip to the sticks where they can shoot some beer cans. Y'all *know* what happens when you go to the boonies, right????

followed by . . .

Well, yeah. Sometimes that happens too. This time, however?

When the boys hear a woman screaming, their conscience won't let them ignore it. Instead, they find themselves walking directly into harm's way . . .

The remainder of the story is . . . well, it's enough to induce a complete and total barf-o-rama . . .

If you're a fan of the *Saw* and *Wrong Turn* franchises, *The Summer I Died* is almost sure to be a winner (and it's soon to be a major motion picture if you'd rather watch all of the various ways of dismembering humans).

I'm kind of at a loss as to what to rate this one. If I'm judging strictly on how many times I got asked "WTF are you reading that has you making those faces constantly?????" this would get a 5. However, the plot is pretty much along the lines of the typical horror movie where the shock and awe factors far outweigh any character/plot development, which brings the rating down. Buuuuuuut, since I'm intrigued enough to see where the second book in the series plans on going I'm settling on 3 Stars. I don't generally give a rip about book #2 – especially when #1 works so well as a stand-alone.

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**Shelby \*trains flying monkeys\* says**

Holy crud. Not for the squeamish at all..like a train wreck though..you just can't look away. October is my month for horror books and this one fit that bill with bells on.

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