



# **Will's Red Coat: The Story of One Old Dog Who Chose to Live Again**

*Tom Ryan*

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## Will's Red Coat: The Story of One Old Dog Who Chose to Live Again Tom Ryan

A true story of acceptance, perseverance, and the possibility of love and redemption as evocative, charming, and powerful as the *New York Times* bestseller *Following Atticus*.

Drawn by an online post, Tom Ryan adopted Will, a frightened, deaf, and mostly blind elderly dog, and brought him home to live with him and Atticus. The only owners Will ever knew had grown too fragile to take care of themselves, or of him. Ultimately, Will was left at a kill shelter in New Jersey.

Tom hoped to give Will a place to die with dignity, amid the rustic beauty of the White Mountains of his New Hampshire home. But when Will bites him numerous times and acts out in violent displays, Tom realizes he is in for a challenge.

With endless patience and the kind of continued empathy Tom has nurtured in his relationship with Atticus, Will eventually begins to thrive. Soon, the angry, hurt, depressed, and near-death oldster has transformed into a happy, gamboling companion with a puppy-like zest for discovery. Will perseveres for two and a half years, inspiring hundreds of thousands of Tom and Atticus's fans with his courage, resilience, and unforgettable heart.

A story of a dog and an indelible bond that is beautiful, heartbreaking, uplifting, and unforgettable, *Will's Red Coat* honors the promise held in every living creature, at any stage of life.

*Will's Red Coat* includes eight pages of color photographs.

## Will's Red Coat: The Story of One Old Dog Who Chose to Live Again Details

Date : Published April 25th 2017 by William Morrow

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Author : Tom Ryan

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# **From Reader Review Will's Red Coat: The Story of One Old Dog Who Chose to Live Again for online ebook**

## **Connor says**

[4.25? 4.5 Stars] Oh the emotions!

My Video Review:

<https://youtu.be/bFLrgy10pns>

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## **Lori says**

This book written by Tom Ryan is about Will a very old dog he adopted from an animal rescue. Will was almost 16 years old when he was surrendered by an elderly couple who could no longer afford to take care of him. Will was deaf, had many ailments, and very limited eye sight. He was terrified and in pain. For the first few months he lashed out by biting and yelping. It took awhile for Tom Ryan to gain his trust. Slowly Will decided to live again and started to perk up. Tom found Will liked the scent of flowers so he had them put near Will. For over two years Will was given another chance for a home and some happiness in his twilight years. A sweet book by Tom Ryan who also wrote "Following Atticus" For those who read the former book will also see Atticus in this book.

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## **PAULA says**

If you have read Mr. Ryan's Following Atticus you will absolutely love Will's Red Coat. Just don't expect it to be the same. This is more personal. Yes the story is of an old dog that no one wanted. But, it's so much more. It's about changes and how we adapt to them. Tom has such a way with words that he makes you feel what he feels and sees. I swear I had to rub my hand to make sure I wasn't the one that was bitten.

I've followed Tom and Atticus on Facebook and, then welcomed Will as many other fans did. What I didn't know was the courage and strength it took to say "yes" to bringing Will into his and Atticus' life. As I said many changes. But, change is good. As the story unfolds you see how good that change was. This little dog brought so many together for a great cause.....and was loved by so many across the world.

I cried and laughed while reading this book. That's when you know you have a great book. When it moves you that way.....

I'm reading the Advanced Readers Copy and can't wait to get my pre-ordered book as it has the pictures....not that you need them because Tom describes everything so vividly that you swear you are right next to him.

No spoilers here....just know you will so enjoy this story of a man and his adventures with Will and Atticus.

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## Mark Hawthorne says

“Life has a strange way of leading you to where you need to be,” writes Tom Ryan in “Will’s Red Coat.” The aphorism is arguably as applicable to animals as it is to humans, as is clear in this powerful follow-up to Ryan’s 2011 bestseller “Following Atticus.” While that book centered on Ryan’s relationship with his canine friend Atticus, the emphasis here is primarily on Will, a deaf and mostly blind senior dog whom Ryan adopts. Will has other health challenges, and he’s not expected to live more than a few months when the author and animal activist brings him from a New Jersey kill shelter to his home in bucolic New Hampshire. He simply wants to give Will a peaceful place to die with dignity.

But then something surprising happens: Will flourishes. What follows is a beautifully written memoir of acceptance, trust, compassion, and friendship that manages to avoid the clichés that afflict other books regarding the human-animal bond. One of the things I most appreciate about Tom Ryan is that he never condescends to Will and the other dogs in his life. He treats them as his peers—not “fur babies,” but individuals who deserve the same considerations that humans do. He doesn’t shout commands at Will and Atticus, for instance, but asks nicely, as when he cautions one of them to be wary of wildlife: “Be careful, my friend.” Some readers may find it remarkable how animals respond to being accorded such courtesy.

Fans of Ryan’s first book will be happy to know that Atticus figures into this narrative, too. But this is really Will’s story. He arrives with baggage Tom and Atticus never anticipated—including some very aggressive rage issues of the bared-teeth-and-snapping-jaws variety—disturbing the tranquility of their home and challenging Ryan’s patience. Yet through it all, he treats Will with tenderness, recognizing that this elderly dog with severely limited senses had been abandoned by aging guardians who could no longer care for him and suddenly found himself navigating a strange new world. Will’s trust in others would come slowly, if ever, and would be hard-earned. I was constantly impressed by Ryan’s perseverance and wondered how tolerant I would be under similar circumstances; indeed, this book has inspired me to be more understanding of others—or at least try to be.

Ryan introduces us to some of the humans who have influenced him as well, most notably his Aunt Marijane, a former nun who ran a special education school and later did hospice work. Marijane shows her nephew a way of life that is non-judgmental and reminds him that “Dogs and coyotes and owls and bears and people are all the same inside. . . . We fear and love and get angry and are happy. We all have compassion and empathy.” The two share an abiding kinship with nature and an easy rapport.

The arc also follows Ryan’s evolution from an everyday “animal lover” to his discovery of how animals are treated in factory farms, zoos, circuses, and other enterprises that profit from exploitation. In considering his own treatment of animals, he eventually embraces veganism, thanks in no small part to knowing people who thrive on a plant-based diet and to having access to a wealth of vegan cookbooks. “I love animals,” he writes, “and yet I had done my best to ignore where the hamburger on my plate came from, the suffering of chickens that led to buffalo wings, or how many lives had to be sacrificed to fulfill my desire for barbecued ribs.”

A keen observer of the human condition, Ryan narrates the story with the voice of a philosopher-poet, bringing to mind many of the writers (Emerson, Thoreau, Muir, et al.) he mentions throughout. He has an extraordinary outlook on life (and death), and if he doesn’t manage to change your view of the world, however slightly, he’s at the very least certain to give you a lot of food for thought.

The writing here is even better than in “Following Atticus”—the prose is lyrical (without being sappy) and more assured. You by no means need to have read “Following Atticus” before reading “Will’s Red Coat,”

but you will doubtless get added pleasure by having done so.

For me, the sign of a good book is not just how it makes me feel, but if I would read it again; I plan to return to this one many times over, revisiting the spirit of compassion and hope that fills its pages. “Will’s Red Coat” is very highly recommended indeed.

*My thanks to HarperCollins for sending me an advance reader’s copy.*

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## **Ashley says**

When I was reading my ARC Will’s Red Coat, this is what I posted on my Facebook page:

“That feeling when you’re reading a book you simultaneously want to savor and tear through; when you know your heart’s going to break and burst wide open at the same time. When it makes you want to be more present, see more, love more, laugh more. That’s a book.”

A part of me wants to just leave the review at that, but it wouldn’t really be fair, or enough. Will’s Red Coat, being released on April 25, 2017, is the much-anticipated second book from Tom Ryan, author of the best-selling (and 2011 personal favorite read), *Following Atticus*.

Inevitably, readers and fans of *Following Atticus* will compare it to Will’s Red Coat. But just as Will and Atticus are two different dogs, these are two different books, and should be read and appreciated for their uniqueness.

First things first: this is no “who rescued who?” story. Tom will be quick to tell you that if Will was rescued, he did it himself. Tom just gave Will a home and tried to surround him with things that pleased him. Will was the one who chose to take advantage of that. Followers of Tom’s blog, and/or the *Following Atticus* Facebook page, know the high points of this story. Tom agreed to take Will into his home with Atticus. Will was an old dog, surrendered by owners too old and feeble to care for him any longer. A rescue group was looking for someone willing to foster Will and give him a place to die with dignity. Tom said yes, and was greeted by a brittle, scared, angry Will. What was supposed to be just a few months of giving an old dog comfort in his final days turned into two years of wonder and life. Will’s Red Coat takes us deeper in this story. Tom tells the story of a little dog who was abandoned, mostly blind, deaf, and in all likelihood, terrified of being away from the only surroundings he knew. He chose to find beauty in the smell of fresh flowers and in the vibration of music, and eventually in his companions. This is a book about living as much as it is about dying. Dying well- surrounded by love and with dignity- is a privilege. It is just as much a privilege to be a part of someone’s death. This is something that can be appreciated by reading about it, and is one beautiful part of this book.

I said at the beginning of this review that like Atticus and Will, *Following Atticus* and Will’s Red Coat are different books. Their stories are different, and Tom’s relationship with each of them is different. So Will’s Red Coat is not *Following Atticus: The Sequel*. While “Onward, by all means” was a major part of *Following Atticus*, I think readers of Will’s Red Coat will find Tom’s Aunt Marijane’s words the inspiration in this book. People who read *Following Atticus* may feel they “know” Atticus better than Will, but keep in mind Tom and Atticus had a longer friendship than did Will and Tom.

I ugly cried in this book. But it’s crying from the simultaneous heart breaking and bursting open that I

mentioned. Yes, it was sad, but it was also beautiful. And I think that is the magic, the appeal, of Tom's writing. Tom lives an authentic life. He is true to himself and this comes through in his writing. It's what makes me, when I read his books, think about my own life, helping me be more authentic and focus on the activities and people that bring me joy. It's also Tom's approach to others in his life- both human and animal. He lets them be who they are, and it is something I take away from the books. The beauty of the mundane comes through in Tom's books, and that is one of the things I like most about them.

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### **Cheryl says**

Tom Ryan, author of the bestselling book *Following Atticus*, writes a heartfelt and moving account of his time spent with his beloved dog, Will.

William was 15 years old when Tom decided to adopt him. Tom was online when he saw a picture of a little dog named William. The dog was available for adoption from a "kill shelter". They were desperately trying to find a home for the little dog whose owners had neglected him and then abandoned him at the shelter. Many people had expressed an interest in William, but no one had adopted him. So Tom decided that he and his dog, Atticus, could make room for William, and let him live out his remaining days at their home in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

This simple story of patience, kindness, understanding, love, and trust brought me to tears. Mr. Ryan reflects on the lessons he learned from Will, and leaves the reader with a message that he calls Will's Wisdom: "It's never too late to trust again, to love or be loved again; and it's never too late to live again".

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### **Jane Katherine says**

Highly recommended, beautifully written memoir, which is really an uplifting modern day fairy tale about redemption, discovery and love. Having read and thoroughly enjoyed Mr. Ryan's first book, " *Following Atticus*", this new tale is by far and away a somewhat different adventure. Yes, there are dogs, but it isn't only a dog story, and yes, there is the glorious setting of New Hampshire's incomparable splendor of the White Mountains but in Mr. Ryan's heartfelt account of taking an old and broken down discarded dog to live with him and his dog, the mystical Atticus M. Finch, in order to give him a place to die in dignity, something totally unexpected takes place and what occurs becomes a testament to the spirit of renewal and affirmation that speaks to all of us on so many levels. Truly an inspirational and healing read on so many levels and one that will be savored and enjoyed for its truth, humor and emotional connection.

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### **Melissa says**

This was not as touching as I had hoped. There were some beautiful passages in the book, but it also seemed too long.

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## **Susan VanTrojen says**

I was lucky enough to get an advanced readers copy of Will's Red Coat and just finished it. Having read Following Atticus and also following the story on Facebook, I already knew that I would enjoy another story by Tom Ryan.

While it IS about Will, an old dog at deaths' door being rescued by Tom, it's so much more. Tom Ryan has a great way of weaving stories and characters together. He is also a bit of a philosopher and pretty funny at times.

While this book, just like the last one, left me in tears, knowing the compassion that Tom Ryan gives to all animal friends that enter his life gave me joy. I look forward to more stories. Onward.

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## **Valerie says**

Not what I expected... I think you need to go into this one with an empty brain and no preconceived notions and you will love it

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## **Marlinda Stull says**

As I finished "Will's Red Coat," I didn't want to finish it. It's a journey that you start and savor along the way. Tom Ryan's lyrical writing style painted a vivid picture of great reverence and humble love that he came to feel for Will, a broken, older dog that came to live with Atticus and him.

His story, their story, Max, Will and Atticus comes full circle with beautiful, thought provoking quotes sprinkled throughout by T. Merton, Chesterton, Burroughs, Thoreau, W. Berry and others, but his "Aunt Marijane"

I found to be central and the "wise sage" to their story. Ahh and the bears, too.

This is a story of compassion, empathy, forgiveness, dignity, acceptance, living life in the present, enjoying the natural world and knowing each day is new beginning.

Their story will make you cry, make you smile, make you think honestly about how we treat all souls, two legged and four legged.

We are all the better for reading, knowing and following this life affirming journey and story.

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## **Diane Yannick says**

As a fan of Following Atticus, I was anxious to read Tom Ryan's book about Will. It's a touching story about allowing a senior dog to spend his last days surrounded by love and beauty. Without Tom, this little guy would have been euthanized instead of the recipient of Tom's selfless and unconditional love. Learning to accept love wasn't always easy for Will but he gradually succumbed. The reader is treated to many sweet scenes that will make the average pet owner feel like a total slouch. I'm not sure whether to admire Tom's dedication to his dogs or to call him obsessive. A self proclaimed introvert, I'm sure Tom wouldn't care one whit how I label him. I also enjoyed catching up with Atticus who is beginning to show his age.



But, here's the rub. Even though it wasn't a long book, it felt padded. There are some beautiful descriptions of the landscape but many others feel redundant and overworked. Many of the tangents, such as becoming a vegan, were jarring. How many Aragnon, the bear, sightings needed to be described in detail? How much pee and poop did we have to watch Tom clean up? Quite a few passages were repeats from Following Atticus. For me, this book needed more meat, tighter editing and a focused narrative.

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## **Erin LaBaugh says**

### **Will's Red Coat**

A warm hearted story of an amazing elderly dog, and the kind man who helped make the last few years of his life full of new experiences, happiness and love. It's a story to make you laugh and cry but oh so satisfying to read.

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## **Pam says**

Normally I'm a little afraid to read animal stories because they are always sad, but the happy photo of Will on the cover drew me in. I have a great love for older dogs and much admire those who open their homes and hearts to a senior who is ill and either lost his family or was abandoned. Tom Ryan is a unique soul. His approach to dogs and to all animals is one of respect, tenderness, and communication. We see him taking in a terrified, ill, deaf, nearly blind Will who was in great pain. Even though Will reacted as any wounded dog would do by biting and trying to shield himself from more hurt, Tom persevered with patience and love. And Will came back to life. Hospice turned into 2 1/2 years of deep friendship and mutual love. We see Tom treat all of nature with the same heart. I haven't yet read Tom's first book about Atticus, but I'm very eager to now, having met that outstanding fellow in this book too. I was also drawn to Tom's aunt Marijane, a lovely, deeply spiritual woman. A treasure. This book is surely about 2 very special dogs, but it's also about facing difficulties in life, about growth, about beauty. I'm so very thankful to receive a copy as a Good Reads Giveaway. It has changed my life.

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