



# My Name is Bryan

*Stacy Lynn Carroll*

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If your friends jumped off a cliff, would you jump too? Bryan chose to dive. Moments later, as he lay on the beach, unable to move his arms or legs, two questions ran through his mind: Would he walk again? And would he ever have kids? Based on the incredible true story of life, love, and never giving up.

## My Name is Bryan Details

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Author : Stacy Lynn Carroll

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## **From Reader Review My Name is Bryan for online ebook**

### **Canda says**

The human spirit shines in this retelling of Bryan Carroll's struggles and triumphs! The whole range of emotions played through my mind as I imagined scenes from his experiences; sorrow, joy, fright, anger, disappointment, happiness. I just couldn't put it down and read it in one sitting. Although the book is named for Bryan, it's very much Nedra's story of courage and determination too.

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### **Chanzie says**

I chose this book (even though I am totally not supposed to be signing up for tours) because when I read the summary it struck a cord and I knew I just had to read this story. I actually didn't realise how close to home it would hit until I opened it up and got drawn into the story.

I love inspirational stories that carry hope and a happy ending. That is exactly what My name is Bryan is about. A boy who became a man and someone who beat the odds and never gave up hope. I finished this book in record time. Every chance I picked it up to carry on reading Bryan's story.

When I was 16, two of my friends were in a car accident. One didn't make it and the other broke his back in 3 places. As I was reading what Bryan went through in the hospital, I realised how much more my friend and his family must have gone through. I remember visiting him a few times in ICU after school and playing him music while we waited for him to regain consciousness. Unfortunately he did not recover completely but he is still here with us today. He is full of life and still has his fantastic sense of humor.

I loved how Stacy took us through Bryan's life from childhood, through Bryan's recovery and how he got to where he is today. My heart ached and swelled with emotion throughout the journey. She gave us just enough at each stage. The pictures at the end had me sniffing and holding back tears as I saw the real people behind the characters.

Another character that deserves special praise and mention is Nedra. What a wonderful, strong, beautiful, committed woman. Her strength, determination and love for Bryan and her family is truly inspirational.

Cover talk: 5/5 I loved the cover - it is perfect!

Final Thoughts: This is an amazing book and one that I am so happy I squeezed into my schedule. Stacy has inspired me and reminded me why I need to continue writing my own story. You never know who's life life you will touch and how you can help others just by sharing your own story. Bryan is a man I would love to meet if I ever had the opportunity.

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### **Stephanie says**

My Name is Bryan is a novel based on the true story of Bryan Carroll, Stacy's very own father in law, who in 1979 at the age of 18, took a jump that changed his life forever.

Once I started reading Bryan's story, I could not put it down. It was both heart wrenching and heart warming. I cannot even imagine the grief that would come from going from a healthy, strong, active young man, to a quadriplegic in a matter of seconds. And yet, Bryan's story is not one of anger or bitterness, but instead one of hope and perseverance. As I read I kept finding myself trying to imagine what it must've been like to be in his shoes. And, with each new obstacle he faced, I was inspired by his positive attitude and humble perspective.

This is a great story for readers of all ages.

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### **Kathy says**

I met Stacy earlier this year at a writer's conference. At the time I was interested in reading her Princess Sister books because I love twisted fairy tales. Unfortunately my review is list so long I never got around to getting those books read. Stacy contacted me a couple weeks ago asking if I would be willing to review her newest book which is based on her father-in-law's life. Honestly I'm not sure why but initially I wasn't really excited to read this book. However yesterday morning found me looking for something Sunday appropriate to read so I started this book. And then read it every chance I had until I finished it long before bedtime.

I actually love stories like this. Ones that show the power of the human spirit and what love and determination can achieve. I cried multiple times while reading this but they were a happy sort of hopeful tears. I felt so much admiration for a few of the characters and the choice they made. And I loved when I got to the end of the book and saw the actual photos of the people I had just read about. This world needs more people like Nedra and Bryan.

There were a few times the story lagged a little bit but it would pick right back up before I lost interest. It has a memoir-ish feel to it and rightfully so as it is based upon actual people and events.

If you are looking for something uplifting and motivational read this heart-felt story of love and hope.

Rating: 5 Stars - I Loved It!

Content: Clean

Source: Ebook review copy

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### **Melinda says**

Bryan Carroll's story is a wonderful example of possessing a positive attitude, a true zest for life, determination and acceptance.

Bryan's life forever changed the moment his body hit the water. As his life was just beginning, Bryan refused to allow his accident to steal his hopes and dreams as it claimed the use of his limbs.

We become acquainted with Bryan as a young boy, a daredevil, inquisitive and fearless. He embraced life

from the onset and as he became a young adult his passion for life continued to grow. Rather than mourning his plight after his tragic accident, Bryan accepted his paralyzation and was ready to do all he needed to do to live a fulfilling life. He accepted his situation and forged ahead with gusto, always pushing himself, refusing to view his circumstances as a negative, rather a challenge to embrace because 'it was what it was.'

A very uplifting story, despite a horrific accident altering a young man's life, his positive outlook, successes, his faith and family all serving to make his life as fulfilled as possible. Bryan is inspiring and amazing, never let your dreams slip away under any circumstances. The power of hard work, and positivity ease the way for unexpected. With the love of family, holding on to your faith and seeing ahead rather than behind anything is possible, you control your destiny no matter the circumstances.

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### **Sara says**

This is such an inspiring story of facing trials in your life and not letting them define you. My name is Bryan is an inspirational story and I loved reading it!

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### **Segullah says**

My Name is Bryan, by Stacy Lynn Carroll. Bryan Carroll, the author's father-in-law, suffered an accident as a teenager that left him a quadriplegic. She tells about Bryan's accident, his subsequent marriage, and his work to overcome many obstacles as he graduates from college and finds a job that helps support his family. It's an amazing, inspiring life, and I can see why Carroll wanted to write it down and record it. It's an excellent record of events. As inspired-by-life fiction, though, there were several things I struggled with. Fiction needs tension, an up and down in each scene to keep interest and keep me turning pages. I felt like many of the scenes, instead of creating a need at the beginning that could be fulfilled (or not) by the end, were merely passing through time, telling me what happened next. The pacing of the novel as a whole, as well as the structure of individual scenes, made it hard for me to really get into this book. Finally, I wanted a little more rawness. Bryan and Nedra seemed too perfect, except perhaps for the parenting scenes at the end (which were some of my favorite). I wanted to see more of their warts and flaws, because I think in a book like this those make their goodness even more powerful. If there are no warts, I need even more specific, concrete scenes that ground me in the sensory reality of their lives.

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### **K.D. Reed says**

Inspiring! Highly recommended, for reals. This read was a great pick me up. It flowed fantastically, and didn't stall once. The style of the novel was beautiful. The quotes chosen tied everything together in a perfect little package of motivation and inspiration. Well done!

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### **DW says**

Five stars for the story, three stars for the writing. Eye-opening and hard to believe. Several points struck me

(spoilers abound):

- They went on a week-long rafting trip with no communication to the outside world. It was the 70s, so obviously no cell phones, but I'm really surprised the guide didn't carry a radio with them. I can't imagine the father and six boys rowing through the night and then hiking up to the ranger station, only to have the ranger joke that all the phones were out (!!), and then having a military helicopter come (18 hours after the father and boys left) because there were no Life Flight helicopters close enough. In scuba diving training, we were taught to consider how long it would take to summon help from our location before undertaking risky activities.
- On the cliff diving in general - I don't understand why the other people didn't know that it was too shallow to dive head-first there. Since they jumped in, wouldn't they have hit the bottom fairly soon? Or did Bryan go deeper in his swan dive than they did in their dives? Or did he hit a shallower area?
- They had him suck on a wet sock when he was lying on the beach waiting for help, because if he vomited he could die. Also, they were running low on water because it was the last day of the trip. Did they not have water purifiers or at least iodine tablets or something for emergencies?
- Compared to Arash's story (Little Big Steps: A Life-Changing Injury and the Inspirational Journey to Overcome the Odds), the doctors were very quick to pronounce Bryan paralyzed, and there was almost no talk of recovering any function. I can't even imagine the horror of having them say, we're going to curl your fingers so they will stay that way *for the rest of your life*, so if somebody puts a spoon in your hand you might be able to hold it. After spending weeks lying in a rocking bed (to help with bedsores) with his head screwed into a traction device.
- It is just hard to believe that Bryan skipped straight to acceptance of having to give up the independence of being able to use a toilet and feed himself, let alone all his active pursuits and his new career as a mechanic. It's amazing to read about him playing pranks on the nurses, going on dates, two-timing his girlfriend, and getting engaged and married to his nurse in one year from his accident. Maybe it's because he came from a large, tight-knit family where the standard response to "how are you?" is "Fabulous, marvelous, and wonderful!" (The first time I read that, I thought it was sarcastic.) Surely he went through a grieving process at some point, particularly when he lost the use of his arms later? His grandfather seemed to take the news harder than he did ("Not my Bryan. Not my Bryan.")
- Also quite something was the thought that his mother was disappointed that she wouldn't be needed to take care of him when he was released from the hospital (because he got married so soon after). That hardly seems like a job that a person would be sad not to have. (Maybe it also had to do with the tension with his new wife.)
- I liked their wedding planning philosophy. Gown: "I want it white with long sleeves." Reception: "I like the color blue." End of thinking about it.
- It was heartbreaking to read about his very young son Matt tormenting him, running out the door, turning off his wheelchair and trapping him in the stairwell, squirting water in his face. Of course when Matt got older, he got into fights defending his dad, but how many parents have to deal with a toddler who is physically more capable than they are? Nedra even threatened to kick Matt out of the family at one point.
- I can see how a person who has to control his wheelchair by breathing into a tube could complete a college degree, however slowly and laboriously, by having scribes, automatic page-turners, and voice-recognition software *that required him to spell out every single letter using the International Radio Alphabet!!!!!!*. One imagines life would be boring without a goal. But the fact that he routinely got trapped in elevators because he lacked the strength to push the button, and that he had to wait to eat dinner until 11pm when his wife came home from work, or that he could have a wheelchair accident and lie on the floor for hours until someone came home, or that once his wife had to call over a man she vaguely remembered meeting at their new church because she had dropped him in the bathtub and needed help lifting him again? Wow. I can't even comprehend the mental state required to go through that with patience and good humor, knowing his condition would not improve. Good on him for getting the degree and persisting until he found a job that would support his family.

- I notice that the book really glosses over him being in pain from the fragments from the burst fracture in his neck, and his frequent hospitalizations for urinary tract infections and so forth. There's a lot more unpleasant things that come from being paralyzed than not being able to walk or hold objects.
- Wow, Nedra had to do so much. All the physical care for two young children, plus her completely paralyzed husband, plus having a job. Mind-boggling.
- The story of his accident up to him being stable in the hospital would have been riveting no matter how it was told. But overall the writing wasn't brilliant. What stuck out to me as amateurish was the dialog which at some points felt reconstructed and forced, the irregular shifts in point of view, and the long strings of anecdotes that seemed unrelated (even though they were very interesting. His little sister ended up clinging to the car door that had popped open while he drove? Where were the seat belts? Guess not in the 70s.)

I hope that opportunities and quality of life have improved for people with spinal cord injuries now (I bet just the Internet helps a lot), but I'm sure that it is still terrible, and it gives me a lot of food for thought that somebody could live such a fulfilled life without being able to move his arms or legs after age 19.

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### **? Jeri's Book Attic ? the Romance Bibliophile ? says**

Incredible story but for my taste the writing was to much like a biography and therefore I was not really able to connect to it.

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### **Selina says**

First- I think this true story is amazing and uplifting. By this review, I don't mean to diminish the strong perseverance of the man this story was based on, however...

I found that there were some parts that were really emotionally absent. The fact that Bryan is so upbeat and positive is awesome. However, I doubt that he was constantly that positive. I would have liked to see some more emotional exploration about what everything meant.

I also struggled at times to like some of the characters. While I know this is based on true life, I had a really hard time believing the engagement before he even broke it off with his loyal girlfriend. It just kind of rubbed me the wrong way. I can understand the desire to break up with someone in person, but waiting until well after you are already engaged and cheating seemed low. Again, I think if there had been more emotional

depth, this could have helped explain or justify the huge shift.

The time jumps and shifting POV were difficult to follow at times, but good otherwise.

A good book for an uplifting story about determination and love, but not great if you really want to get into the emotional depth of this journey and situation.

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## **Becca says**

### **IF I COULD GIVE THIS 6 STAR I WOULD!**

If you are an emotional reader like I am then grab a box of tissues. I have always said I love it when an author can pull me in and make me feel like I am walking in the story right along with the characters. This one did just that, and so much more.

I don't know how many times I have asked my kids this questions "If your friends jumped off a cliff would you". Never once did I consider "if your friends went cliff jumping would you". I loved cliff jumping when I was younger. Now as an adult / mother, I would never do it. Plus the older I get the wimpier I get...hehe.

Bryan is looking forward to going on a trip with the youth. This will be his last time to go because he is 18 . He sets off on his adventure with his best friends, sister Becky, and much to his chagrin his parents as chaperone's, along with other youth. (youth, a word in my world (LDS world) meaning ages 12-18 groups). They are going on a white water rafting trip.

Bryan's father tell him that there will be some cliffs they will be able to jump off of when they are on the trip. Bryan is so excited and shares the news with this friends. All of the boys are even more excited to go on this trip now.

Two days into their rafting trip they make camp and find the cliffs. Bryan's friends were enjoying themselves before Bryan was able to join. When he arrived he didn't want to "show" every one up, but he decided he must dive. Bryan takes a running jump and does the most beautiful swan dive and enters the water like butter, and his whole life changes.

Bryan realized when he hit the water that something was wrong.. The bottom was coming too fast, and then he hears a pop. He knows, right then that his life will never be the same.

Unable to move Bryan sits in the water holding is breath until someone finally is able to get to him and bring him to the surface. They boys and leaders know right away something is wrong. Bryan's dad knows that Bryan will not survive a trip to the hospital on the rafts so he goes to the nearest ranger station. Leaving Bryan and his mother on the shore to wait for help. 18 hours they waited. I cannot even tell explain how hard it was to read about those 18 hours, yet also so loving to read. A true showing of love and friendship was shown during those long hours.

Bryan, from the moment he was retrieved from the water did not complain even once. He responded when he saw his dad "That was the best swan dive ever". Who says that? He knows he will probably be paralyzed but this kid. This kid..is amazing. He had unwavering faith.

This book brought me to tears so many times. Not only because of the hardships Bryan faced, but because even when facing them, he went forward with perfect faith and determination. I cried at the devotion his family. I cried at his determination. It was such a beautiful story.

Bryan faces a life in a wheel chair but during the healing process finds love. I love stories like this. I could go on and on. I really could. There is so much I want to say, but then I would ruin the book. Maybe not ruin but wouldn't allow you to feel your own "emotions" while reading. Spoilers do that to me.

My heart ached for Bryan. It cried for Bryan. It laughed for Bryan. This man. What can I say. Determined. Charismatic. Optimistic. Kind. Loving. Non judgemental. I think about the things Bryan had to go through and it reminds me of everything I have to be thankful for. I have the use of my arms, and legs. I can do things for myself. I can play with my kids. I can read without help. I can do many things. So could Bryan. He was determined not to let his disability define him.

There are quotes before every chapter that just made my heart happy. I want to share a few:

"Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny." C.S. Lewis

This next one is my favorite quote. It is from one of the sweetest ladies to ever walk the earth (besides my mother; ).

"The only way to get through this life is to laugh your way through it. You either have to laugh or cry. I prefer to laugh. Crying gives me a headache." - Marjorie Pay Hinckley \_

Bryan was one of the best examples of this. He is such a funny guy. A prankster. Even without the use of his legs...a prankster :).

Okay, I will stop. It was such a beautiful story, of trials, determination, love, hope, and unwavering faith. I was touched so deeply by this book, that even after I was done reading I thought about it all day. Every time a "hard" moment would come to me during the day I thought of this book, and began to cry all over again. I have nothing to complain about. My life is a wonderful life, and this book helped me look at things a little different. A little brighter. A little more appreciative. A little more loved. Seriously. Such a beautiful story.

Source: I was given this book as part of a blog tour in return for an honest review. I was not compensated in anyway for this review. These are my own PERSONAL thoughts on the book.

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### **Karan Eleni says**

This review was originally posted on [karaneleni.com](http://karaneleni.com)

Note to Self: Do not read or listen to books that you know will make you tear up at work.

A while back, I joined a clean reads author and reader group on Facebook and am so glad that I did! Everyone has been absolutely amazing!! Occasionally, the authors will put calls out for reviews and I snagged **MY NAME IS BRYAN** by Stacy Lynn Carroll. What an inspirational and extremely emotional story. **My Name is Bryan** is based on a true story. Bryan is injured during a weekend away with a group of friends and we have the privilege of reading what he goes through and how he stays positive. I guarantee I wouldn't have been able to do the same. Everyone can learn from this story. I certainly have! Giving up isn't

an option. Stacy, thank you for sharing Bryan's story!!

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### **Anna Marie says**

Told from a completely outsider point of view, this book isn't an interesting work of fiction, as I had thought. It's the biography of a girl's quadriplegic grandfather. And I'm sure she loves her grandpa, very much. I get that. But it felt detached because it was from a secondhand source. It wasn't captivating or moving. It wasn't anything good at all. It wasn't even written very well. Time passing wasn't conveyed to the reader, the emotions were just 'yelled' or 'laughed', never \*felt\*... it was almost clinical.

More? It's really hard to believe that a man who is reduced from 'really great diver' to moving a wheelchair with a straw isn't eventually going to break down and have a negative emotion about the situation. That doesn't even sound \*healthy\*.

It was like 'Joni', only without the angst and the 'Jee-zus'. And further from the experience. I... wasn't thrilled. Sorry.

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### **Beth says**

Well, I listened to it all in one day so I guess that's a good sign. But the book lacked a lot if you ask me. But it is hard to criticize a true story because that is what really happened. However, I did not feel the range of emotions that I thought I should. There wasn't real anger or grieving that would naturally follow an injury like that.

I also found myself disbelieving that the patient, at 19 years old, would end up marrying his nurse when she was 10 years older than he was! He had not even thought about his school or career or future. It seemed very immature and unrealistic to me but I guess they made it work.

Despite my criticism I am very glad for the Carroll family that things worked out the way they did. They are a testament to positive attitude, determination and community.

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