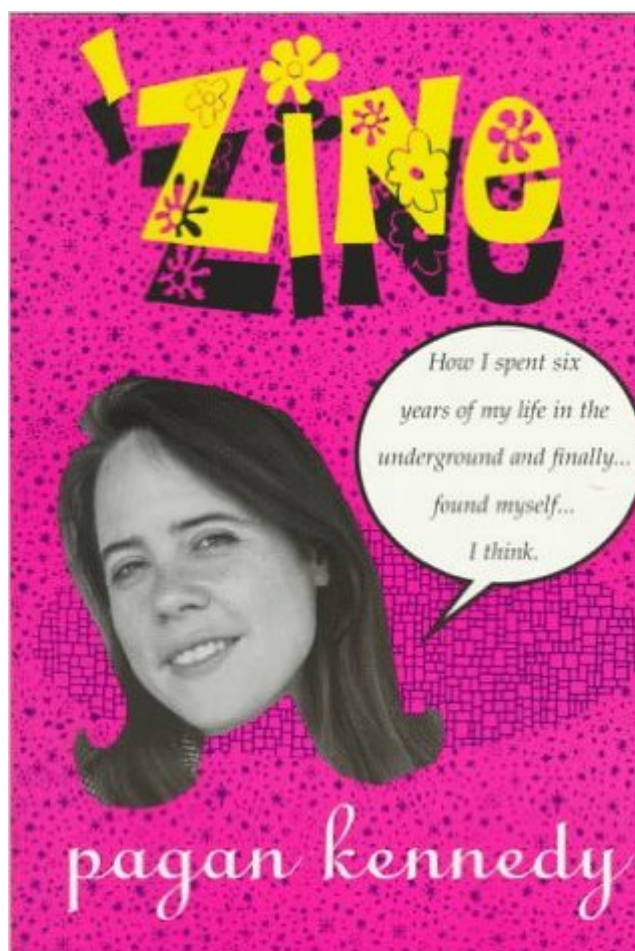


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Zine: How I Spent Six Years Of My Life In The Underground And Finally...Found Myself...I Think



Synopsis

A young woman named Pagan, just graduated from a writing program at a very prestigious university, is left with one burning question--Now what? She then takes an unusual step by deciding to invent her new self--the one the public will know--by creating her own magazine, written, created by, and starring none other than herself.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Zine is a term that gets tossed around a lot nowadays and, like all overused terms, the original concept has become obscure. A zine is an independently produced publication that is usually somewhat underground in orientation. Over the years, zines have surfaced as everything from hand-written pamphlets to xeroxed broadsheets to even a few glossy periodicals. However, in the beginning of the so-called "Zine Revolution" at least, what they all had in common was a desire to give exposure to unique voices that, probably, would have been ignored by more mainstream, commercial publications. That's not to say that it always worked out that way -- from the beginning, there was always a handful of zines that weren't quite worth the effort. However, when a zine did live up to its ideals, the results were often amazing. Over the next couple of years, an underground community of sorts was formed on the basis of these zines circulating across the country until soon, it seemed that everyone you met had their own zine (myself included, though hopefully all copies have been burned). Which of course, pretty much led to the whole thing collapsing underneath its own weight. Before that collapse however, one of the best of the so-called "personal zines" was

written and created by one of the zine world's most talented writers, Pagan Kennedy. Her zine was one of the founding publications of the "zine revolution," and many other lesser zines later tried to copy her unique style. However, as this memoir of her life in zines shows, Kennedy was a truly a unique and individual talent. For the most part, "Zine" is a reprinting of the eight issues of Pagan's Head and for that reason alone, this is a valuable book.

In many ways, reading Pagan Kennedy's Zine was like a trip down memory lane. The author and I are the same age and I fondly remember the 1980's as a time when my friends and I all had vaguely artsy ambitions. I even tried my hand at quasi-feminist collage art pieces that I sent out anonymously to total strangers in an attempt at mail art. And while I never created my own zine, I was certainly a fan of the genre, frequenting Untitled, a shop in NYC's Soho, to pick up home-made chapbooks, illustrated periodicals (my favorite being the postage stamp sized Public Illumination), underground comix and zeroxed zines. So it's definitely cool that this book includes the entire run of Kennedy's zine, Pagan's Head. Issues of the zine itself (in all its amateurish glory) alternate with chapters describing what was going on in her life at the time, offering some fascinating insights into how some of her more depressing experiences manifested themselves in the work. Ultimately I found myself more interested in the expository material written specifically for the book, which is much more personal and less cloyingly glib than the zine itself. Groovy as it was as the time, a lot of that stuff hasn't really aged all that well. Early on, Kennedy claims that the zine-writer Pagan was a persona who wore madcap outfits and enjoyed being the center of attention everywhere she went, as opposed to the "real" Pagan who was more reserved and mundane. But over time, it seems like the two versions of Pagan came closer together as the zine begins to focus less on quirky, arcane subjects (like her teenaged obsession with The Partridge Family) and more on her real-life experience of burgeoning celebrity.

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