# Gay journo Charlie Porter’s novel Nova Scotia House focuses on the AIDS crisis in ‘90s London



In his debut novel, Nova Scotia House, gay journalist Charlie Porter explores the complexities of queer life amidst the backdrop of the AIDS crisis in London during the mid-1990s. Drawing from his personal experiences and creative background, Porter crafts a narrative that intertwines love, loss, and resilience in the face of a public health tragedy that profoundly impacted the LGBTQ+ community.

The story centres on Johnny, a 19-year-old who arrives in London and falls in love with Jerry, a 45-year-old man living with HIV. Their relationship is depicted through a "golden thread of queer magic" as it navigates the cultural landscape shaped by the struggles of gay activists since the 1970s to the intimate realities of Jerry's illness. A poignant moment in the narrative arises when Jerry, before his death in 1995, questions, “What am I to do with this anger?” This reflects the emotional turmoil experienced by many during the crisis.

Porter's novel does not shy away from the harsh realities of the time but instead seeks to appreciate the lives lived through and beyond the crisis. Johnny, later revisited at 45, grapples with the pain of his past while striving for a more hopeful future. The author addresses the quiet yet profound loss of creativity and vibrancy due to the AIDS epidemic, contemplating how much artistry and culture were lost when so many creative minds perished.

When discussing the differences between his nonfiction and fiction work, Porter noted that Nova Scotia House predates his other acclaimed works, Bring No Clothes and What Artists Wear. He shared with Vogue that his fiction writing process, distinct from his intensive research-based nonfiction, is more about allowing characters to develop organically within their environments. "It’s like The Sims: I build the house, put people in them, and see what they do there," he explained, indicating his desire for realism and spontaneity in character development.

While Porter has referenced the importance of historical context in his earlier nonfiction works, he took a deliberate approach to distill his character's lives in Nova Scotia House without drawing directly from existing AIDS-related art or media at the time of writing. Despite viewing notable productions such as Angels in America and The Normal Heart, he held off from exploring newer adaptations like It’s a Sin until after completing his novel, saying that immersing himself in other narratives could disrupt the unique world he was crafting.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/218583908-nova-scotia-house> - Supports the claim that 'Nova Scotia House' by Charlie Porter is a novel about queer love, loss, and resilience during the AIDS crisis, focusing on the relationship between Johnny and Jerry in London.
* <https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/464548/nova-scotia-house-by-porter-charlie/9780241721049> - Corroborates the novel's themes of love, community, and the impact of the AIDS pandemic while highlighting its status as Porter's debut.
* <https://www.shakespeareandcompany.com/books/nova-scotia-house> - Further emphasizes that 'Nova Scotia House' is both a love story and a lament, reflecting on queer life and resilience during a poignant historical moment.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AIDS_crisis> - Provides context about the AIDS crisis, which serves as the backdrop for Porter's novel, detailing its impact on the LGBTQ+ community.