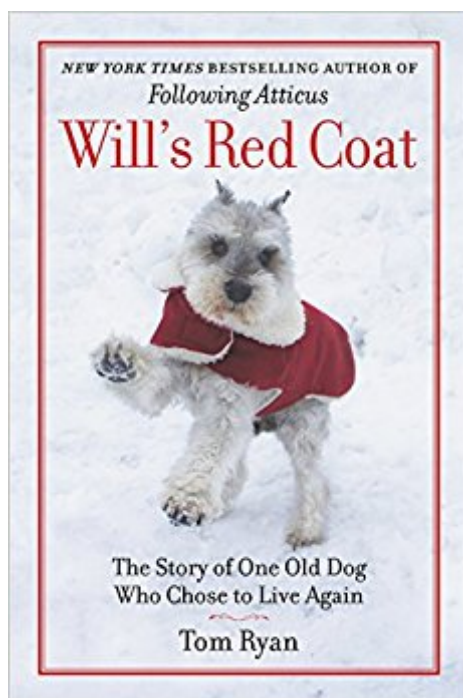


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# Will's Red Coat: The Story Of One Old Dog Who Chose To Live Again



## Synopsis

Boston Globe Bestseller 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 all of us, at any stage of life. Will's Red Coat includes eight pages of color photographs.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“To the right of my old scraped and scarred desk, a tiny red coat with a thick white collar dangles from a hook. It looks a lot like Christmas and is just about the right size for an elf. There is a bit of magic in it. Of this, I have no doubt. For that little coat gets me to stop each day to consider what

matters in life, and what it means to be human. From the author of *Following Atticus*, an international bestseller that has inspired hundreds of thousands of people around the world, comes the moving true story of a despondent and broken old dog and the man who gave him a second chance. Drawn by a fateful online post, Tom Ryan, with the help of his canine hiking partner, Atticus M. Finch, adopts Will, an elderly, deaf, and nearly blind soul. Long neglected and filled with anger and pain, Will finds himself in a curious world unlike any he has ever known. Tom hopes to give Will a place to die with dignity surrounded by the natural beauty of the White Mountains of his New Hampshire home. But when he witnesses Will's fear and lack of trust, Tom realizes that his task entails so much more. With endless patience and the same meditative empathy Tom has nurtured in his relationship with Atticus, Will eventually begins to thrive. Soon, an angry, hurt, depressed, and near-death Will has transformed into a happy, frolicking fellow with a puppy-like zest for discovery, inspiring hundreds of thousands of people with his courage, resilience, and renewed heart. Will's Red Coat is a real-life fairy tale of promises kept and a life-changing, inviolable bond between friends. Heartbreaking, uplifting, and ultimately unforgettable, it honors the possibility held in all of us, at any stage of life.

Tom Ryan served as publisher and editor of the Newburyport, Massachusetts, newspaper *The Undertoad* for more than a decade. In 2007 he sold the newspaper and moved to the White Mountains of New Hampshire with miniature schnauzer Atticus M. Finch. Over the last five years, Tom and Atticus have climbed more than 450 four-thousand-foot peaks.

"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 Tom's 2011 bestseller *Following Atticus: Forty-eight High Peaks, One Little Dog, and an Extraordinary Friendship*. While that book centered on Tom's relationship with his canine friend Atticus, the emphasis here is primarily on Will, a deaf and mostly blind senior dog whom Tom 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. Tom 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 many of 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 œfur 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 Tom’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 Tom’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 Tom’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. Tom 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 Tom’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, Tom 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 certain to give you a lot of food for thought. If you enjoyed “Following Atticus,” I think you will love Tom Ryan’s latest book. The writing is even better—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 if I would read it again; I plan to enjoy 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.

Tom Ryan follows up his wonderful "Following Atticus" book with "Will's Red Coat." This is a page turner that is extremely well written. Tom is a great storyteller. The pictures included are an extra bonus. Will was a very lucky dog to have found Tom. And vice-versa! This book will forever change the way you view older dogs. They need homes and add so much joy. My hope is that this book skyrockets to become a bestseller and that older dogs who are in shelters are given a second look and a second chance at life. It also helps me to understand my aging dogs better. Over all, an excellent read. Highly recommended. This story will stay with you forever.

Since I pre-bought this much anticipated second book by Tom Ryan, I had not had reviews to read before ordering. None were needed since there had been little glimpses shared with the "Following Atticus" FB page as well as postings of current progress towards its release. At this point, there are only 95 reviews....surprising since the quarter of a million likes for the FB page would indicate more readers with even more to say. The five star rating is NOT surprising in the least as the quality and depth of writing I enjoy from this writer deserves nothing less. Perhaps many readers felt as inadequate as I to write a review that could even begin to describe or explain the quality of word smithing Tom exhibits. What is this story about? It's about rescue of a companion...I thought. It's about new beginnings, it's about an unexpected path found on an expected journey. I found it was about me... and all the possibilities. It's about you... and all the things I hadn't thought to consider, yet. It is a "keeper" that one wishes didn't stop.... My second read is under way and I am sure there will be new nuggets of treasure to uncover as if it is new. That is the best thing about a really good book...there's always something new each time one reads it. It's just that good of a story.....I don't know how to explain it...

Tom Ryan has written another amazing book. A beautiful story about life, love and redemption wrapped around a story about an elderly dog, Will, Tom brings to live out the few months they think Will has remaining. But in fact Will decides to live, trust and love again. Will is really all of us. Even if you have not read Tom's New York Times best seller "Following Atticus" you should read "Will's Red

Coat. On one page you are laughing, the next you are crying and the next page has you examining your life. A must read!

Could not help but feeling that one of the emotions felt when reading the book - of wanting to slow time down and savor the experience - mirrors Tom's underlying message of his take of life in general, and both Will's and Atticus' in particular. A heartwarming story, written in a distinctive, expressive style, worthy of the very finest of English prose.

What a wonderful read! I started out with *Following Atticus*. I absolutely loved that book so naturally I couldn't wait to read *Will's Red Coat*. Tom Ryan is a gifted writer and story teller. He takes you into his heart and soul without holding anything back. His journey is similar to many pet owners and very relatable. As I read his story, it brought back many emotional experiences with my own pets. The pages are filled with laughter but also tears. I especially enjoyed the books because there were things I had never thought of that I could do for my pets as they are declining in age. It's very difficult for me to stay focused when reading. But Tom Ryan held me captive throughout his heartfelt memoirs. Now, I cannot wait for the next and the next books. Keep writing Tom and I will keep reading. You are now my favorite author! This is an unforgettable, must read. Buy it, gift it, share it!

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