

[PDF] King Dork

Frank Portman - pdf download free book

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Description:

In Frank Portman's dazzling debut novel, frustrated song-writer and high school student Tom Henderson finds his dead father's copy of *The Catcher in the Rye*, and his life changes forever. Part social satire, part mystery, with a healthy dose of rock music (and angst), *King Dork* is one of our must-read favorites of the year. **Bonus Content from Frank Portman**

Frank Portman (aka Dr. Frank) is not just an author, he's also a musician. We were lucky enough to get a few tracks and a few words from the man behind *King Dork*, his band The Mr. T. Experience, and the relationship between his book and his music.

"King Dork"

This is the "title track" for my new book. No matter how many times I say that (and I've now said it at least twice by my count) it still sounds strange...Anyhow, I wrote this song for my band, the Mr. T

Experience, back in the mid-nineties (you can hear the electrified rock and roll version on the MTX album). While I was gingerly, sheepishly exploring the idea of trying to write a book, and not really knowing where to begin, Krista Marino (who was to become my editor at Delacorte) suggested that I try to turn a song into a novel as a way of getting started. I can't remember why I settled on "King Dork" as the song to "novelize," but I started thinking about the narrator/character of this song and after quite a bit of staring at a blank Word document and banging my head against the bar I eventually started typing. I didn't tell anyone at the time, but for months the file entitled "King Dork_(novel)_ms" had only the words "there's no way I can write a whole book, absolutely no way, who am I kidding?" on it. The fact that this did turn into a sort of novel in the end continues to mystify me. So this is an acoustic recording of the song that started it all, in effect. "I'm King Dork and I want you to be my Queen..."

1.

"Thinking of Suicide"

The narrator of *King Dork*, Tom Henderson, has a band and is trying to figure out how to play his guitar and how to write songs. He writes several songs through the course of the book, and I thought it might be fun actually to come up with the songs rather than just alluding to them in the text. The songs were written by me "as Tom Henderson," know what I mean? "Thinking of Suicide" is one of the first complete songs Tom writes. The title comes from an informational pamphlet for troubled teens handed out by the school. He likes the drawing of the girl on the cover. "This would make a pretty good song," he thinks: "all I had to do was give the girl a name and feel sorry for myself while pretending to be her. And figure out some lyrics and chords and stuff." This song, which incidentally ends up echoing through and complicating his family life, his social life, and his psychological life, is the result.

2.

"I Wanna Ramone You"

This one is a little hard to "set up," but I'll give it a shot. There are three strands all tangled up in this song. Strand A: Tom is doing research on the life and times of his mysteriously deceased father, and part of that involves poring over ancient texts like the Bible and *The Catcher in the Rye*. It's a long story, but in the course of this research he inadvertently learns that the French verb *ramoner* (which literally means "to scrub out a chimney") can be used as a sexual metaphor. As a rock and roller, he of course immediately thinks of the Ramones, and, *voilà*, a new English euphemism for sex is born - I ramone, you ramone, he, she or it ramones... (This is useful to him, as it gives him a much cooler metaphor for sex than any of the other ones available; and it proved useful to the author, i.e., me, as well, for pretty much the same reason.) Strand B: Tom is taking Advanced French, which he describes as "a form of the French language in which only the present tense is used. Primarily employed for telling time and for describing the activities of this one guy named Jean and this other guy named Claude." So in writing his song about the timeless power of love, he decides to include some sophisticated, romantic French phrases in the lyrics. Strand C: He has this pretty big crush on a girl from a neighboring town, so he writes a song about her. (As one does in those situations.) "I Wanna Ramone You" is the result, one of his first full-on love songs.

3.

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From School Library Journal Grade 10 Up-Tom Henderson (aka King Dork, Chi-mo, Hender-fag,

and Sheepie) is a 14-year-old geek who finds solace in music (with his only friend, Tom Hellerman) and in inventing goofy band names (Tennis with Guitars, for one). He loathes *The Catcher in the Rye* (a revered book at his school) and everything that it stands for. But when he finds his late father's copy of J.D. Salinger's classic, he begins a journey to discover who his father really was. First time author Frank Portman's novel (Delacorte, 2006) is part mystery, part coming-of-age tale, and part running critique on teenage popular culture. Sexual references, vulgar language, and instances of drug use are prevalent, making this a problematic choice for some schools. Narrator Lincoln Hoppe expertly conveys Tom's slyness and shyness. This zany, heartfelt novel is written with panache and will appeal to the teen outsider and musician in every young adult. Portman also provides five original songs and an interview on the recording.-*Larry Cooperman, Seminole High School, Sanford, FL*

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