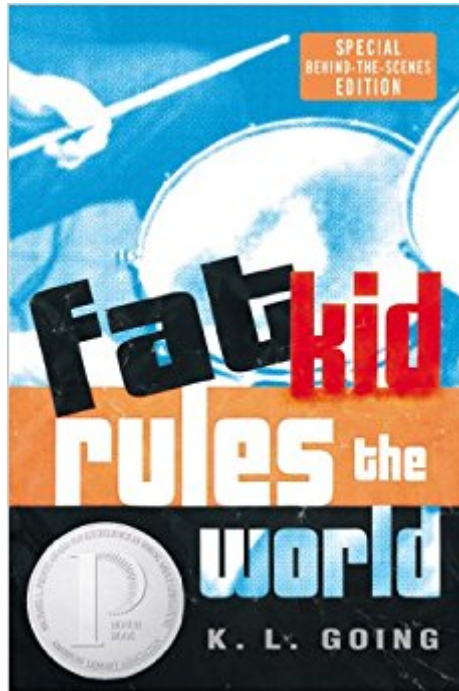




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# Fat Kid Rules The World



## Synopsis

A Michael L. Printz Honor Book Troy Billings is seventeen, 296 pounds, friendless, utterly miserable, and about to step off a New York subway platform in front of an oncoming train. Until he meets Curt MacCrae, an emaciated, semi-homeless, high school dropout guitar genius, the stuff of which Lower East Side punk rock legends are made. Never mind that Troy's dad thinks Curt's a drug addict and Troy's brother thinks Troy's the biggest (literally) loser in Manhattan. Soon, Curt's recruited Troy as his new drummer—even though Troy can't play the drums. Together, Curt and Troy will change the world of punk, and Troy's own life, forever. "Troy's voice is candid, irreverent, realistic and humorous. [A] wonderful, engrossing tale." —SLJ An ALA BBYA — BCCB — Blue Ribbon Book — Booklist — Editors' Choice — SLJ — Best Book of the Year — Miami Herald — Best Book of the Year

## Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Speak; Reprint edition (November 1, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0142402087

ISBN-13: 978-0142402085

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 0.6 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 72 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #225,359 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #53 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Performing Arts > Music #72 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Suicide #739 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Friendship

## Customer Reviews

Grade 8 Up-Actor Matthew Lillard (Scooby Doo, Scream) is briefly accompanied by punk rock music as he reads K. L. Going's novel with expression, enthusiasm, and emotion (Putnam, 2003). Lillard narrates clearly and fluidly, changing his voice for each character and making each role convincing. Troy, a 17-year-old 298 pound "Fat Kid," is considering suicide, but can't think of an approach that won't be funny to those who stifle giggles when they see him carry out everyday tasks. Deep in thought, Troy doesn't notice Curt watching him. Curt interrupts and claims that Troy owes him lunch

in exchange for saving his life. Going named Curt after Kurt Cobain, an appropriate namesake for this troubled, genius guitar player determined to form a punk rock band. Curt is convinced Troy is the ideal drummer-except that Troy can't play the drums. These imperfect, but lovable and sometimes funny characters, developed through off-the-wall, powerful descriptions, create a realistic picture of the teen punk music world. Through some difficult life lessons, Curt inspires Troy to see himself differently. Ultimately, though, Troy finds his own path to self-confidence by reaching beyond himself to the needs of others, especially Curt. The poignant relationship is reminiscent of *Holes*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *Freak the Mighty*. The few female characters are portrayed as sexual objects, except for Troy's mother who died of cancer, and Curt's mother who wants nothing to do with him. Sexual references, negative portrayals of adults for most of the novel, and excessive use of expletives, especially the "f word," make this novel most appropriate for individual listening. Kariana Cullen Gonzales, Lincoln Consolidated High School, Ypsilanti, MI Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

Gr. 8-12. His name is Troy, but to the world--and in his internal dialogues--he is the Fat Kid. Really Fat. Almost 300 pounds of sweating, unhappy insecurity. Then out of a moment of despair comes magic. As Troy considers whether to splatter himself on a subway track, Curt MacCrae, a charismatic punk rocker/homeless kid/dropout, comes along and stops him. For the price of a meal, Curt befriends Troy, and he sees something under all those layers: a potential musician, a friend, and someone with the ability to see through life's bull. First-time novelist Going has put together an amazing assortment of characters. Troy is the ultimate fat kid, the kind whose every move, every thought is predicated on what it is like to wear a coat of blubber. Curt, as thin as Troy is fat, is a combination of Kurt Cobain, Ratso Rizzo, and a fairy godfather. He sprinkles Troy with the dirt and grime of punk rock and brings out the prince hiding inside the weight (to the book's credit, Troy doesn't get any thinner). Equally well drawn are the lesser characters, including Troy's father, a former Marine with an innate sense of what kids need. The narrative could have been tighter in places, but this is an impressive debut that offers hope for all kids--dross transmuted into gold. Ilene Cooper Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

I started reading this book this morning, and had to finish it before going to bed. What a great story, and told in a way that doesn't drown you in details. KL Going does a wonderful job of leading you through the story while leaving enough room for you to fill in the blanks. As an adult who struggles

with weight, I could certainly identify with Big T's insecurities. It is so easy to get wrapped up in feeling like everyone else is perfect while you miss the mark. Curt's frazzled ability to cut through the hypocrisy and show T that everyone is flawed is a fantastic bonus in this book. I believe parents who are not comfortable with their children being familiar with the struggles of young people suffering from addiction, minors in possession of drugs and alcohol, or foul language should read this book with their child. The issues that the characters face are not far fetched, and this story is a great way to start a conversation with young people about skipping school, drug abuse, sex & managing hormones, and how to handle difficult situations. Great story, only giving 4 stars because I wish the book had another 60,000 words to read.

as expected

From the first sentence of "Fat kid" I was hooked. KL Going gives us sights, sounds, smells, and a vivid telling of a tale of two mismatched friends and their adventure to form a band and play a successful gig. The first person telling took me into Troy's (the fat kid) mind and heart and allowed me to peer into his world. Living the good and the bad experiences in the tumultuous weeks spent with him. I enjoyed reading this story and found myself laughing out loud often. I think we've all known a Troy in our lives. Here we get to walk with him and get his thoughts on the situations he finds himself in. Including the whirlwind his new friend Curt takes him on. All the while wondering if Curt is for real, after all, who could like the fat kid? We all do Troy, we all do. I recommend this story to anyone interested in a fun uplifting tale about life, music, and personal triumph. 5 stars.

After reading the whole book (somehow I think this would be an important prerequisite for rating it...see "A Reader" review)...and not seeing any "fowl" language, in the bird sense, at least... I can say this was a great hook book for middle school reluctant readers. Without being "preachy", the whole of it had only positive messages to give our most influenced of adolescents. The main character, Troy does a great job of showing how easily we can obsess on our flaws, and let this obsession color everything we see. Curt is a great character to show the power of music (and punk) and the innate need in all of us for friendship and family -- without needing the reader to internally save him. My favorite character, however and undoubtedly, was the father, a good man in all senses of the word... (And it's great to see books that show how many good families are still out there) This book made me laugh, made me cry, and made me, most especially, think. It kept me reading (I couldn't put it down) most importantly. The only issue I could take up was the somewhat

stereotypical portrayal of punk being involved with drugs... Ever hear of "Straight Edge"???Overall, though, a great book. Definitely worth reading!

great book. read it when I was in middle school, so I got it again

My girlfriend initially recommended this book to me and then I found out that Matthew Lillard (of SLC Punk fame) had directed a movie based on the book so I figured I'd give it a shot. I was blown away at how great a book this is, I didn't want it to end!

"I'm a sweating fat kid standing on the edge of the subway platform staring at the tracks. I'm seventeen years old, weigh 296 pounds, and I'm six foot one. I have a crew cut, yes a crew cut, sallow skin, and the kind of mouth that puckers when I breathe. I'm wearing a shirt that reads MIAMI BEACH--SPRING BREAK 1997, and huge, bland tan pants--the only kind of pants I own. Eight pairs, all tan."As this head-bashing-yet-really-sweet-tale hits its first screeching chord progression, seventeen year-old Troy Billings contemplates jumping in front of an approaching subway train. A once average-sized child, he has eaten his way through years of depression after the death of his mother. Raised by his father, who is a retired military officer, and having experienced unrelenting contempt from a younger brother, who is a popular jock, Troy is certain that everyone is constantly eyeing him and laughing."First, the train is coming, its single headlight illuminating the dark tracks. I hear its deep rumble and take the fateful step forward. I want to picture myself flying dramatically through the air but realize I wouldn't have the muscle power to launch my body. Instead, I would plummet straight down. Maybe I wouldn't even get my other leg off the platform--my weight would pull me down like an anchor. That's how I see it."But Troy does not jump. Or plummet. His plans are rudely interrupted by the "disembodied voice" of a skinny teenager--Curt MacCrae--who is sitting in the dark behind him."He looks like a blond ferret. Stringy unwashed hair and huge eyes, jeans that are barely recognizable, stained white T-shirt, huge red overshirt, ratty old sweater...The sneakers, one Converse and one Nike, are both untied and the laces are all partially buttoned even though it's got to be one hundred degrees in the subway. The guy is so filthy I can hardly look at him. I mean, he's caked--looks like an old war victim from some black and white film."Curt, this majorly poor example of good hygiene, is a homeless, locally legendary punk guitarist who disappeared from the high school Troy attends. He is also a walking pharmacy. (He believes in self-inflicted health care.) Curt demands lunch from Troy for saving his life, and then informs the enormous young man that he, Troy, is to be the drummer in Curt's new band--a duo named Rage/Tectonic.

That Troy has not played the drums since junior high is irrelevant--at least to Curt. As Troy tries to conceive of a different self-image for himself and tries to overcome his paralyzing fears of what he believes everyone else is thinking of him, Curt's dicey health and his dicey relationship with Troy's dad and brother Dayle kept me alternately holding my breath and laughing so hard that I could barely catch it. Though much of Curt's on-the-fringe lifestyle remains an enigma to both Troy and to us, we do get vivid glimpses of the grunge and the glamor associated with being a teenage punk musician." 'You are punk rock, T. You just don't know it yet, and I don't know how to convince you.'

"FAT KID RULES THE WORLD is totally phat! While the joyfulness and quirkiness of the story and the body image issue may allow for grouping this book with some others you've read before, K. L. Going is truly a new voice on the YA scene. Richie Partington ...

I really enjoyed this touching story about two opposites on the scale. The flaws and dysfunctional problems they both have make them more real, candid and relatable. I hope my students enjoy it as much as I did

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