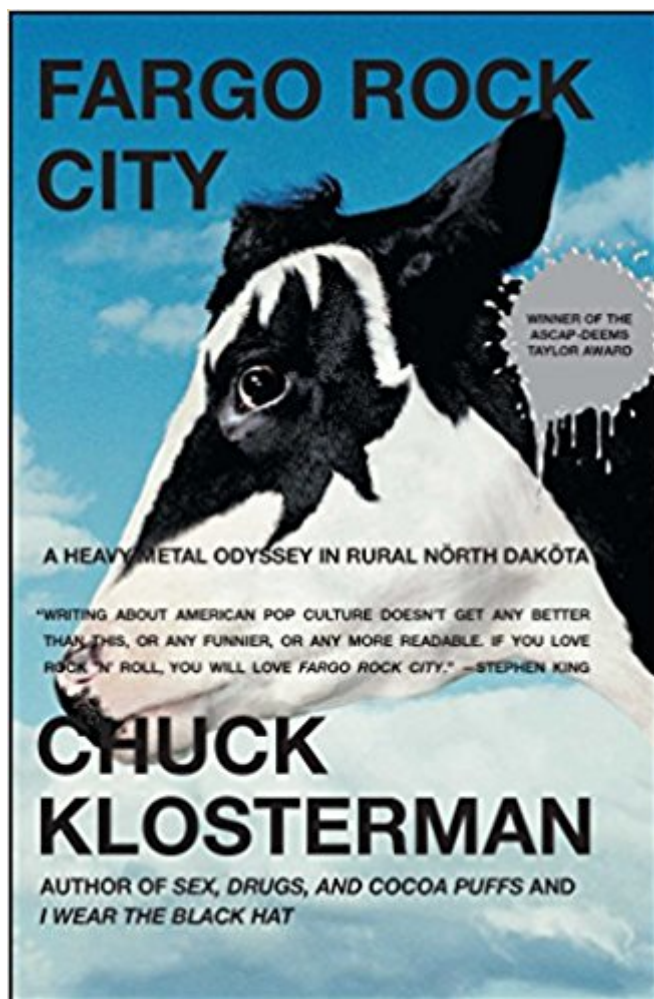


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Fargo Rock City: A Heavy Metal Odyssey In Rural North Dakota



Synopsis

Empirically proving that "no matter where you are" kids wanna rock, this is Chuck Klosterman's hilarious memoir of growing up as a shameless metalhead in Wyndmere, North Dakota (population: 498). With a voice like Ace Frehley's guitar, Klosterman hacks his way through hair-band history, beginning with that fateful day in 1983 when his older brother brought home Mötley Crüe's *Shout at the Devil*. The fifth-grade Chuck wasn't quite ready to rock—his hair was too short and his farm was too quiet—but he still found a way to bang his nappy little head. Before the journey was over, he would slow-dance to Poison, sleep innocently beneath satanic pentagrams, lust for Lita Ford, and get ridiculously intellectual about Guns N' Roses. C'mon and feel his noize.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Klosterman's highly touted debut has as much to do with Fargo, N.D., as the Coen brothers' slice of *Americabre*, Fargo. That is, nothing at all, really. Misleadingly titled to cash in on Fargo's cinematic mystique, Klosterman's memoir about growing up a sexually repressed metalhead, with a humiliating (mom-dictated) Richie Cunningham haircut is actually set in Wyndmere, N.D. Klosterman starts up with a bang ("You know, I've never had long hair"), shifts gears often (from memoir to music criticism, somewhat jarringly at times), and rarely idles. Ultimately, though, Klosterman, ironic throughout the book, does not write with enough sincerity to prove his thesis "that all that poofy, sexist, shallow glam rock was important." Granted, it's a daunting task to write a hymn of praise to the genre that spawned David Lee Roth so the author wisely stretches his pop-culture references like taffy. In the final chapter Klosterman, now an arts critic for Ohio's Akron Beacon

Journal, quotes a friend's definition of a "guilty pleasure" "something I pretend to like ironically, but in truth is something I really just like" to explain how he really feels about glam metal. His closing summation of what metal means to isolated kids in the heartland will strike a power chord for many readers. (May)Forecast: Klosterman has tapped a gold mine. Fans of 1980s Mötley Crüe, Poison and Ratt are pushing 30 and 40 and seeking a nostalgia trip. Also, Gear magazine will run an excerpt of the book along with a conversation between Klosterman and Aerosmith singer Steven Tyler. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Let it be known that Fargo Rock City does not detail a burgeoning music scene in North Dakota's largest city (population: 70,000). Nor is it a yarn about a heavy metal band gigging across the frozen tundra of the Red River Valley. Rather, it's one Middle American's memoir of growing up with and loving 1980s heavy metal (e.g., Ratt, Poison, and Guns 'n' Roses). In other words, this book is for the myriad metal-heads from Fargo to Phoenix who inked "Mötley Crüe" on their notebooks during high school study halls. The music, film, and culture critic at Ohio's Akron Beacon Journal, Klosterman uses refreshingly candid language: reading his debut is like overhearing a drunken discussion between two music fans. He nicely blends metal music theory with compelling tales of self-realization. Perhaps more than a memoir, this is a seriocomic defense of a culture that was only cool to those who participated in it. Recommended for all public libraries, especially those in the heartland.- Robert Morast, "Argus Leader Daily," Sioux Falls, SD Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I share five basic traits with Chuck Klosterman. We were both born in the same year, we both grew up in somewhat culturally isolated communities, we both love 80s hair metal, Mötley Crüe's Shout at the Devil was the record that had the biggest impact on our early teenage lives and finally, we can both karaoke Guns 'n' Roses' Appetite for Destruction from start to finish. There are still some differences in our journeys from childhood to maturity, but those are mere details. I spent my teen years baking on a tropical Latin American shithole instead of freezing on a Midwestern wasteland and I had access to MTV as early as in 1982. Instead of becoming an indie rock loving hipster during College like the author I kept my metal faith in the early 90s, Nevermind notwithstanding, and moved on to extreme metal as the decade progressed, but in the end, it doesn't matter, since we both still rock to the same aquanet friendly songs when drunk. You might say that because my teenage music related experiences are pretty similar to Chuck's I'm bound, even obligated to love

this book and that is a very valid point, but that doesn't mean anyone can enjoy it, since it's very entertaining and written with an unassuming, funny and down to earth style. Since the story of a nerdy teenager using rock music as a means to escape his boring, drab day to day life and overcome his own lameness can be the story of countless people everywhere, this book transcends its limited musical scope and ultimately becomes a paean to music lovers of every genre and origin, while still managing to make poignant observations about the radical changes media and music consumption went through the 80s. Highly recommended for pop culture enthusiasts, music lovers and anyone who was a teenager during the 80s.

I'm a big fan of Chuck Klosterman's writing, so I thought I might enjoy *Fargo Rock City* even though I do not care about metal music in the least. But I only made it about halfway through the book before I had to give up. I assumed that this book would be as much about Klosterman and his teenage experiences as it is about metal, but I was wrong. This book is ONLY about metal. All 270 pages of it. And what I discovered is that Klosterman is a great writer when he is writing about characters, not when writing about concepts. That's what makes his novels *Downtown Owl* and *The Visible Man* so good--Klosterman can conjure up rich, fascinating characters in just a few pages. Sadly he cannot do the same for metal music. I would only recommend *Fargo Rock City* if you are/were in to metal music or if at least has some bearing on your formative years.

As a 23 year old reading this book in 2014, I could not have been less informed about the topic this book presents. Metallica was my favorite band for 2 years in high school, that's the closest I get to relating to Klosterman's fandom. That said, I enjoyed every chapter here, and learned a great deal. I also related to the author's emotional bond with Crüe. That was enough to hold my interest from page 1.

As someone who came of age in the 1980s, when what Chuck Klosterman calls "glam metal" and I always called "hair metal" ruled the airwaves and charts, I knew of most of the bands he discusses and heard some of their biggest hits in passing, but metal wasn't my thing (I pretty much went from New Wave to punk to "college music" like REM and the SMiths). Since I spent the late 1980s hearing song after song on the college stations and thinking, "why isn't this getting mainstream airplay? It would be a hit!" I resented the stranglehold the crappy metal gods held on the charts and was happy to see them go and more of the music I liked begin to take over in the early 1990s. But Chuck Klosterman was a different breed. From the moment he first heard Motley Crue on cassette

in 1982, he had found HIS music. He spent the 1980s as a devout metal-head, and largely remains one today. As an articulate writer and critic, and a fan of music largely ignored or decried, he turned his word processor to an analysis of why his favorite music was good after all, and more importantly, why it worked for him and his friends in their backwater town in North Dakota. I loved this book.

Metal was never my music but I felt a kinship with Klosterman for the absolute passion and devotion he showed for what he loved. I had my own obsessions and could completely identify with his. I enjoyed his thumbnail history of heavy metal, his analysis of the different bands, and the memoir aspects of how events in the history of the music intersected with his own life and consciousness--for example, a story in the newspaper about Vince Neil's DUI killing a member of another band (and badly wounding several other people) didn't mean that Vince Neil was a criminal or possibly going to prison to middle school Chuck--rather, the appearance of the story in the local newspaper was an odd confirmation that the music and people he loved existed in a larger world that otherwise seemed to take no notice. I read the book straight through in one sitting--it's a fast, easy, often laugh-out-loud-funny read--and it was the kind of book where I kept reading bits and pieces to my partner. Definitely recommended to anyone who is feeling nostalgic about the metal bands of their youth, or even for those who aren't particularly fans of the music but can identify with spending one's pre-teen and teenage years obsessed with something others find stupid or dorky.

Any child of the '80's had heavy metal music as part of his life's soundtrack - it's a fact. The author has written a book about the genre with all of his trademark insight and humor but it's also really a book about the big dumb 1980's. Required reading for music fans of any genre but also an important piece of social criticism.

the ultimate heavy metal/glam diary. Klosterman is entertaining, insightful and intelligent. a book that needs to be on the shelf of every modern music fanatic.

One of Klostermans first books, as a rock fan, really enjoyed it. Live on the east coast, so learning about the living in the Dakotas and mommy was interesting as well.

This was my first Chuck Klosterman book. Needless to say, it will not be my last. Klosterman keeps the reader engaged and interested, all while getting his witty points across. I'm looking forward to reading my next CK book!

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