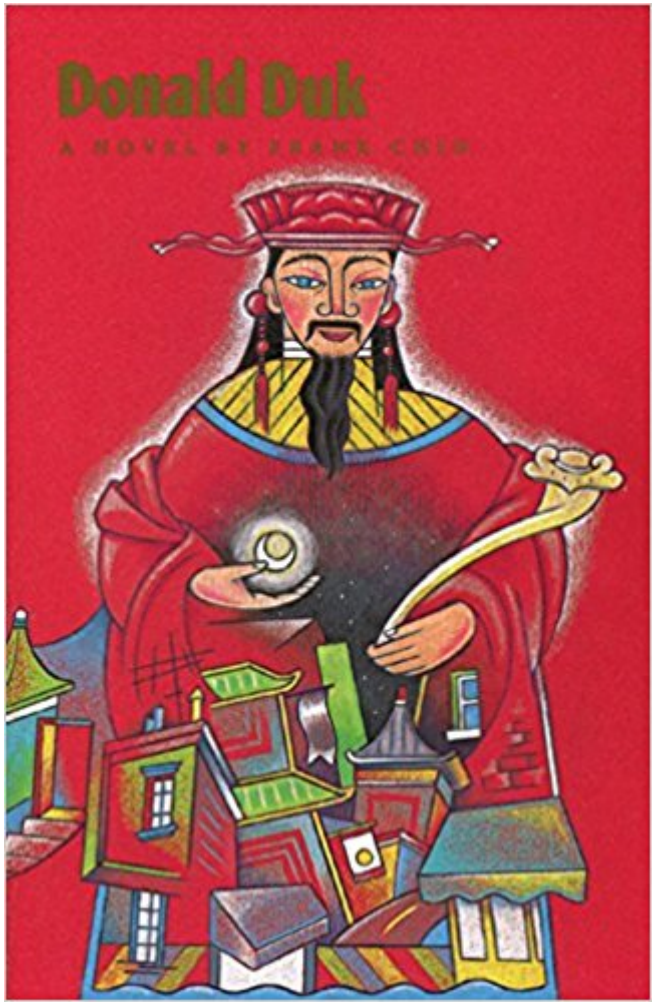
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Donald Duk



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Synopsis

"The 11-year-old hero of Mr. Chin’s inventive, energetic first novel is educated in his Chinese heritage through a series of astonishing dreams about working on the Central Pacific Railroad in 1869."--New York Times Book Review "Doubt not the ability of the gifted, passionate, funny Mr. Chin."--New Yorker

Book Information

Paperback: 172 pages

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Age Range: 6 and up

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Customer Reviews

The eponymous narrator of this first novel, which bulldozes stereotypes about supposed Chinese timidity and passivity, isn’t a cartoon character but a smart 12-year-old Chinese-American boy who, with all the vehemence and certainty of youth, spits on everyone and everything Chinese. Although his female characters are underdeveloped and often the humor is broad and seems to exclude its audience, Chin’s descriptions are acute and gifted, vivifying the virtuoso technique of Donald’s father, who fashions 108 model airplanes--named for Chinese outlaw heroes--that he plans to launch and set afire during the Chinese New Year celebration, and Donald’s nighttime dreams, which cast him as an underaged railroad builder in 1869 California, one of 1200 unheralded Chinese workers. The New Year festival in San Francisco’s Chinatown becomes Donald’s rite of passage and doorway to self-acceptance and -respect; Donald and the reader find themselves on an odyssey that is at once stinging and seductive, reclaiming the exquisite myths of a beautiful and

proud ancient civilization. Chin wrote the short-fiction collection The Chinaman Pacific this is correct/pk & Frisco R.R. Co. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.

In San Francisco's Chinatown, a boy's 12th Chinese New Year is a momentous occasion, but Donald feels cranky about the holiday, annoyed by his comical name, and by all things Chinese. Over the festive days, folklore, Donald's singular family, and his alluring dreams of the historic completion of the Central Pacific Railroad by Chinese workers in 1869 draw him to a new, emphatic racial pride. A California-based playwright, poet, and outspoken critic against Chinese-American stereotypes, Chin spices his first novel with a flip, clipped, present-tense narrative voice, slapstick dialog, and kinetic dreamscapes. The result is a tart social comment packed into a cartoon, with verbal energy verging on hyperactivity. Recommended for contemporary, regional, and YA fiction collections.- Janet Ingraham, Spartanburg Cty. P.L., S.C.Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This book has won awards and is on a list of Common Core. It is written for young adults, but since Harry Potter I think the best writers are writing for the Young Adult market. This story will help us all understand better the difficulty of being a first generation American. The main character wants only to be an American and is embarrassed to be Chinese stuck living in China town in San Francisco. His white school friend is fascinated to experience the first week of Chinese new year with his best friend's family. It is a heartwarming story not at all "Pollyanna", but mixes hardship with judgment in a way that compels the reader to want to reach out to the characters and encourage them to love their lives and each other.

I think a lot of people will find this book hard to get into, and hard to maintain interest in. Perhaps the main reason of this is because of the way Frank Chin tells his story, through the confused eyes of a boy. I also found it hard to keep my interest in the book, but for some reason, my second reading of it was much more enjoyable. Perhaps I just appreciate the journey that Donald Duk goes through in order to learn his culture and discover his identity. There's a lot to take in from this book, but it's worth the effort and the time. Here's a question that I thought would be interesting to pose, why give the main character the name Donald Duk?

It's ok, I guess. I had to read it for a college class...a COLLEGE class. Pathetic. It's really for a much younger reader...like elementary!

I LOVED this book when I first read it. I am Korean-American and very much into race politics but that's not the reason I loved this book. First of all, it is simply an entertaining, well done book. It deals with racism in a head-on more REALISTIC way that many Asian-Americans and other minorities could probably identify with. It simply portrays a Chinese-American boy in Chinatown and how he deals with being Chinese-American. Though I don't really agree with Frank Chin's philosophies I do appreciate this book. It's not perfect, but its REAL and it's good to hear a clear voice of an Asian-American speaking about being Asian-American without much pretense or political correctness. Let's face it, there are not a lot of books aimed at Asian-American youth or about Asian-American youth (especially not *written* by other Asian-Americans). The ones that are out there (and believe me, I've read most of them) are not that well done. In fact, a lot of them stink. I think a lot of crap gets printed just because the author is 'Asian-American' or deals with the 'Asian-American experience' and there aren't a lot of books filling that void. However, 'Donald Duk' is not an example of this. For a teenage Asian-American, this book is refreshing and maybe even revolutionary. I thoroughly recommend this book to any Asian-American of any age. C'mon, it's practically considered a 'modern classic' of Asian-American literature. It's an enjoyable read and you'll be glad you did. Even if you hate it.

This book is one of the best Asian American coming of age novels I've ever read. Frank Chin understands the struggle of identity that every Asian American male has to go through. Donald's transformation from self-loathing to eventual self-acceptance is a timeless theme told very well by Frank Chin. Being an Asian American, I'm finally glad I found a book that tells our experience right.What makes Frank Chin's novel so special is his understanding of Chinese culture, history, and philosophy. I was absolutely impressed by the segments on the Chinese railroad workers in the US, the allusions to the great Chinese literary classic Water Margin, the dream-sequence interactions with famous Chinese warrior Guan Gong (aka Guan Yu or Guan Yun Chang), and the discussion of what the Mandate of Heaven really means. Added to these literary and historical allusions were the absolute spot on descriptions of the inner thoughts of our main character. Everything that Donald thought has been in my mind too when I was growing up.Besides the great allusions and the spot on mental soliloquy, Frank Chin also imbeds some good messages for any minority group--stand up for yourself, read read read, don't let others write your history, and be proactive in your pursuit of your goals and dreams.My one complaint about the book was that the third person narrative style sometimes got annoying, and it seems half the reason why people hated this book was because of

Frank’s unique style of writing. But I would say that if you aren’t too put off by the writing style, then you will have an amazing educational and cultural experience with this book.Anyone who’s open-minded and wants to learn the Asian American perspective from a true Asian American like Frank Chin needs to read this book.

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