



The Fine Wisdom and Perfect Teachings of the Kings of Rock and Roll: A Memoir

Mark Edmundson

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"I was at a point of crossing in my life then—a liminal moment, as the anthropologists like to say. I was trying to figure out what the world was about and what my place in it was going to be. And somehow I got the idea that these characters, these kings, could help me along."

After graduating from college in 1974, Mark Edmundson leaves his small Vermont campus determined to fulfill his destiny—a quest he knows involves rock and roll and America's high court of mischief and ambition, New York City. Under the wing of a carousing, Marx-quoting friend, Edmundson moves into a grungy uptown apartment and embarks on a career lugging amps in a New Jersey arena for rock's biggest acts: the Grateful Dead, Pink Floyd, and the Allman Brothers.

But as his first year after college wears on, Edmundson finds himself increasingly at odds with life in his adopted city and drifts through a regimen of late-night cab driving and radical politics that leaves him cold and neglectful of the hopes he nursed back in school. Prodded and enlightened along the way by a cast of rogue mentors—his "Kings (and Queens) of Rock and Roll"—Edmundson checks out of New York, detouring through the Colorado mountains (in a hapless attempt to reconnect with nature), and tending the front door of a Northampton disco (witnessing the death throes of the sexual revolution), before landing in Vermont to teach English at a progressive boarding school.

It's here that Edmundson begins to grasp, with the help of the charismatic headmaster and the dazed student body, the inkling of a valuable lesson. It's here, rather surprisingly, that he finds his "it": the perfect vocation—his slightly crazy, ideal way of life.

A coming-of-age memoir that asks enduring questions about the world and our role in it, *The Fine Wisdom and Perfect Teachings of the Kings of Rock and Roll* is a soulful, whip-smart, and resonant testament of the postcollege years and the challenges of navigating one's own dreams.

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