

Nick Hornby

Laughing all the way to the cemetery

1) What information do we get about Hornby's other novels?

We hear about four novels, which is Fever pitch, High Fidelity, About a Boy and How To Be Good. Fever pitch tells the story of the author's relationship with football and with Arsenal Football Club.

High Fidelity is about a music obsessed geek, but it's also the story of an emotional illiterate who can't make head nor tail of life.

About a Boy is about Will Freeman, a 36-year-old rich but lazy man and Marcus who is a bullied twelve-year-old boy who lives alone with his depressive mother. How To Be Good, which shows a middle-aged couple striving unsuccessfully to find hope in their relationship.

The journalist Simon Hattenstone describes the books as funny, warm and cute. But the last one The Long Way Down is depression in spades, or so you'd think. The novel has four narrators, all of them planning to kill themselves on New Year's Eve.

4) What was his early adult life like?

He went to Cambridge, and it wiped his self-belief. "Studying English was useless, completely useless. It took him years to recover from that. Every time he tried writing something, it just sounded like a bad university essay.

Cambridge ruined his social confidence. That took him a long time to recover from.

So Hornby hung out with the losers and football fans. But the trouble was that, deep down, he wanted to be one of the winners. After university he fantasized about writing for the New Musical Express.

5) What role does football play in his life? And music?

Football is a big part of his life. He has even written a whole book about being a football fan. And which he has written in the book Fever pitch "Football isn't just a game; it's a lifestyle". I will say that the book has been written from personal experience and of how Arsenal has affected Hornby's life.

Nick Hornby has a clear definition of what good music is. He says that the best music is the simple and transparent. He includes Bruce Springsteen's Thunder Road because it reminds him of becoming successful and finding a voice.

6) Why do you think he wasn't any good as a teacher? And do you believe it's true that he wasn't?

I will say he was too young to be a teacher, and as he mentions himself: "I was too young, there were riots in the class". One of the reasons why he was not a good teacher, was that he maybe did not have the authority to make the students respect him, and therefore he couldn't work with the class in the ideal way.

7) How has his life changed over the past few years?

After he started writing this book about suicide, life has taken a considerable turn for the better. He has got two sons in the past two years with his film producer partner Amanda Posey. Nick Hornby is not so sure that he is even depressed any more.

8) What is characteristic of Hornby's style of writing? What do some people criticize about his books?

Nick Hornby writes about regular and normal people and about their problems. He isn't one of those writers who only write about the huge things in history. He uses his own experience in his books. He has been criticized for lacking depths.

9) What seems to be the relationship between life and books in his case?

It seems to me, that the most of the books he had written is about something he

has experienced in his real life. But I think the books are way more dramatic, than his experiences in real life. I believe that he exaggerates a bit.