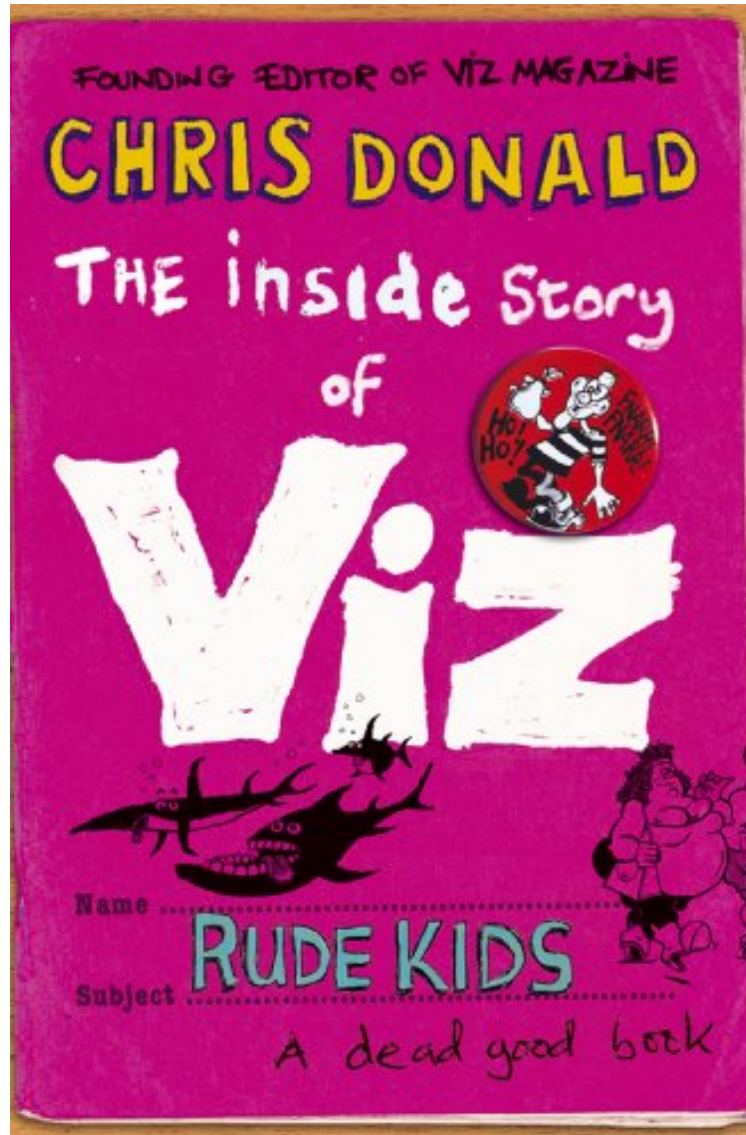


## The Inside Story of Viz: Rude Kids

Chris Donald

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**Chris Donald : The Inside Story of Viz: Rude Kids** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Inside Story of Viz: Rude Kids:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant, compelling, hilariousBy J. PhillipsViz is a British comedic institution, way up there with the likes of P.G. Wodehouse and Monty Python. There, I've said it. They shaped the sense of humor of an entire generation. I started reading it religiously from around 1984, at the age of 11. I'm not sure how accurate it would be to say that the Viz team put Newcastle on the map, but they certainly had a hand in it. For kids growing up in Newcastle in the 70's and 80's there was this sense of resentment that the national media seemed to

go out of its way to ignore the North East. It was as if we didn't exist. And then Viz went national. Having moved away from Newcastle and living in New York for almost 12 years, I'd completely lost touch with Viz until very recently when I started following them on Facebook. And once again they're making me laugh out loud every day. My interest in Viz rekindled, I came across this book by Chris Donald and bought it without a second thought. Having just finished it I can quite honestly say it's one of the best reads I've had in years. In "Rude Kids", Donald traces the history of the comic from its late 70's roots as a DIY 12-page fanzine selling less than 100 copies around the pubs of Newcastle, all the way through its early 90's heyday selling over a million copies, to its subsequent downfall and Donald's departure as editor in 1999. And it's a fascinating and compelling story. Chris Donald is an excellent writer and his narration kept me riveted throughout. I couldn't put the bloody thing down. I'm not sure I'd describe it as a rags to riches story - after all, the story starts in a nice house in the leafy middle class Jesmond, not a council flat in Byker - but the rise and fall of its success makes for gripping reading. Along the way, Donald paints vivid and colorful accounts of the various characters involved and documents his dealings with the southern types responsible for Viz's publishing and marketing (most of whom come across as complete tossers who didn't get what Viz was about, naturally). One of the best parts of the book - its meat and potatoes as far as I'm concerned - is its accounts of the Viz team's relationship with John Brown, their long standing publisher during Viz's heyday. Having read the magazine during those times, I vividly recall many comically snide references to Brown in the pages and was vaguely aware that some kind of ribbing was going on, but had no idea what was behind it. This book makes it all clear, and it's hilarious at times. Many of the stories follow a similar pattern - Brown would do something which incensed the team (usually along the lines of some extremely misguided publicity stunt or licensing deal), Chris would demand that he send thousands in cash up to Newcastle in order to placate the cartoonists, Brown would refuse, then give in and send the cash. The comic was evidently plagued by bad decisions, from the cringe-worthy attempts to animate some of the characters (I remember seeing these back in the early 90's and thinking how cheap and rushed they looked) to some frankly horrible marketing ideas. It's both depressing and hilarious at the same time. I particularly enjoyed Donald's accounts of the various controversies that Viz managed to get itself into, and the brilliantly Viz-esque ways in which they dealt with them. Yes the story gets a little gloomy toward the end as the Viz hemorrhages readers by the tens of thousands every issue, but Donald's quintessentially Geordie sense of humor (dark, dry, sarcastic, cynical) means there is never a dull moment. I think I laughed out loud on every page. Well maybe every two pages. Three at the most. Bottom line is this. If Viz makes (or made) you laugh, then so will this book. It's written by the man who conceived, founded and directed its content for its first 20 years. Donald's writing style has Viz written all over it - I don't think he can not be funny. You'll especially enjoy the tidbits of information about Viz characters and their origin, and the insights into the Viz creative process. This book just gelled with me and I was sorely disappointed when it was over. I wouldn't have minded if it were twice as long. It just left me wanting to read more by Chris Donald. I don't know if this is a Newcastle thing, or whether or not the fact that I'm basically from the same extended social circle that the Donald brothers were in (they're over 10 years older than me but I'm from the same part of Newcastle and had older friends and acquaintances who knew them), but I felt very comfortable indeed in the company of Chris Donald's narration. Best laugh I've had in ages. I wish he would write another book.

This is the straight-talking, fascinating story of Viz magazine, founded in 1979 by Chris Donald and editor until 1999. Chris tells the remarkable story of the magazine, from the tatty rag produced in his Newcastle bedroom to becoming one of the bestselling magazines in the UK. Chris was the creator of many of the characters and was responsible for all the magazine's written content. Characters from the magazine, such as Sid the Sexist and the Fat Slags, are now household names. This is an engaging tale told in Chris's unique, wry way. Chris takes us from his train-spotting childhood in the 70s through to setting up the magazine with family and friends, and struggling to sell even a few copies of Viz in the local pub. The comic's success swiftly grew, however, and remarkable events ensued, such as how Chris was invited to tea by Prince Charles, taken in for questioning by New Scotland Yard's Anti-Terrorist Branch and caught his wife up to no good with Keith Richards in Peter Cook's attic. Chris includes many original drawings in this integrated book as well as some fascinating images of early Viz creations.

Chris Donald is lucid and engaging, and he's affably disrespectful to the celebrities he meets when his life turns (relatively) showbiz. Q Magazine Chris fires out jokes and anecdotes with the rapid-fire intensity and lewdness of Sid the Sexist downing seven like Newkie Broons. Front Magazine...a very good read. It is briskly executed in the Viz house style: a rude and brutally accurate tabloidese. New Statesman About the Author Chris Donald was the creator of Viz magazine and drew its first characters. He was responsible for all the magazine's written content for over 20 years.