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July 2020 Newsletter

JACK KENT

On June 17, I finished a first draft of my biography of cartoonist and children's author Jack Kent. It took me eight weeks to write fifteen chapters, which hardly seems possible. Last week I did an informative interview with his nephew, who's a magician by trade.

All I have left now is a trip to Minneapolis to visit Jack's archives, and a series of interviews with his son.



MY NEXT PROJECT

With the lion's share of the work on the Jack Kent book finished, I'm starting to move toward the project that was *supposed* to be next, a history of 1990s superhero comics. After some consideration, I've decided to not approach this as a book but as a series of articles I'll publish on my comics blog, [24 Pages](#). It might sound insane, but my current plan is to write an essay for each month of the decade, totaling 120 (!) essays.

THE HOPEFULS

I've got two new Hopefuls-related writings up my sleeve, but I'm not quite ready to share either one. While we wait, why not read this article that showed up on Hear.by? ["Five Fascinating Facts from *The Hopefuls: Chasing a Rock 'n' Roll Dream in the Minnesota Music Scene*"](#)

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Like most, I watched the murder of George Floyd with horror. I watched the anguished aftermath with a mix of worry (for everyone's safety) and hope (that a real reckoning with systemic racism might actually be possible). It got me thinking again about the way empathy and understanding is built through stories, and the books about various aspects of the Black experience that have done that for me. Here are a few that came to mind immediately:

Native Son by Richard Wright

Song of Solomon by Toni Morrison

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston

The Friendship and The Gold Cadillac by Mildred D. Taylor

Bronx Masquerade by Nikki Grimes

Icon by Dwayne McDuffie and Mark D. Bright (comic series)

Apex Hides the Hurt by Colson Whitehead

While I think it's important that Black authors tell these stories, there are also books about race by white writers that have had an impact on me, including Carson McCullers' *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, Jonathan Lethem's *The Fortress of Solitude*, and Eleanor Cameron's *To the Green Mountains*.

BRAIN CLOUDS



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"We're more successful because we work harder."

As always, thank you for reading. Love and peace to you all.