

## Livre it to Me

Chip Kidd

*Chip Kidd (États-Unis) est designer graphique et écrivain. Il a réalisé plus de 1 500 couvertures de livres, principalement pour les éditions Knopf. La monographie Chip Kidd: Book one: Works 1986-2006 (Rizzoli, 2006) rassemble la majeure partie de son œuvre. Il écrit par ailleurs régulièrement sur le graphisme et la culture populaire pour Vogue et The New York Times.*

*À travers une sélection de couvertures de livres réalisées ces dernières années, Chip Kidd évoquera son mode de création, présentera quelques projets refusés par ses clients et parlera de ses travaux en cours et à venir.*

[...] One of the great advantages of designing book covers is that you don't ever have to have an idea, much less a thought, ever, in your head. That is the author's job. Through a manuscript, he or she will give you all the ideas and thoughts that you could possibly need to design a jacket. What you have to do is sort through them, figure out which ones to use, and make them look interesting. Give them a visual meaning. Sometimes it is easy, sometimes it is impossible, always it is worth trying.

Most of what I've worked on are jackets for hardcover books. This was not a matter of choice, it was just one of the givens of my job at Knopf. What you must remember about hardcover books is that they are like tattoos. Once you get one, it's never really going to go away. That may sound like the delusion of a navelgazing book designer, but really —when was the last time you tossed a hardcover book in a trash? Yes, you may have boxed it up and left it on the doorstep of the Salvation Army, but only because you could no longer care for it and wanted to give it a good home. I've found that for most people, the financial commitment made to a book eventually becomes an emotional one (especially if the read is good enough), and they will hang onto it. So I always try to keep that in mind — what will something I work on look like in five years? In ten, twenty, a hundred?

Another thing to keep in mind about hardcover books when designing their jackets is that you're dealing with luxury items. They are, in most cases, the more elaborate version of something that's going to come out in about a year for half the price. But that doesn't mean they're supposed to be bound in mink and stamped with platinum (Trump books notwithstanding).

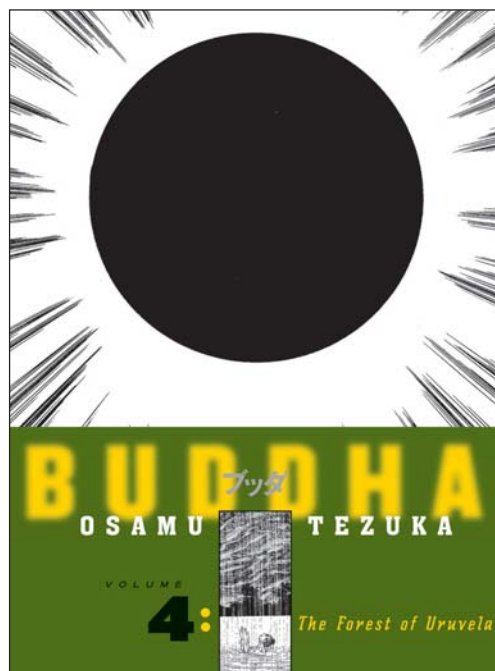
What it means is that the luxury extends to the intellect as well as the wallet. It is almost embarrassing to have to point out that the audience for a book designer reads, and if they read they probably think, and if they think they should be receptive to something they may actually have to think about. There was an editor I worked with once who used to dismiss certain jacket ideas by airily decreeing, "Oh, come on —let's give the reader a break." To which I would always reply; in silence, to myself: "Oh, come on —let's give the reader some credit." [...]

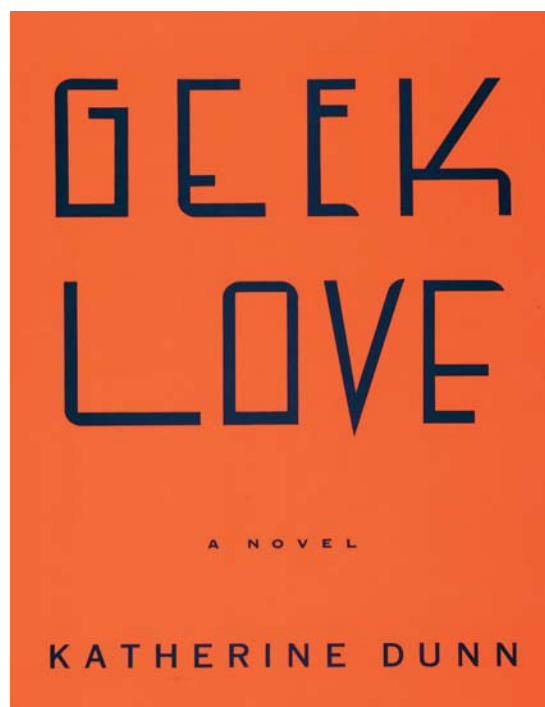
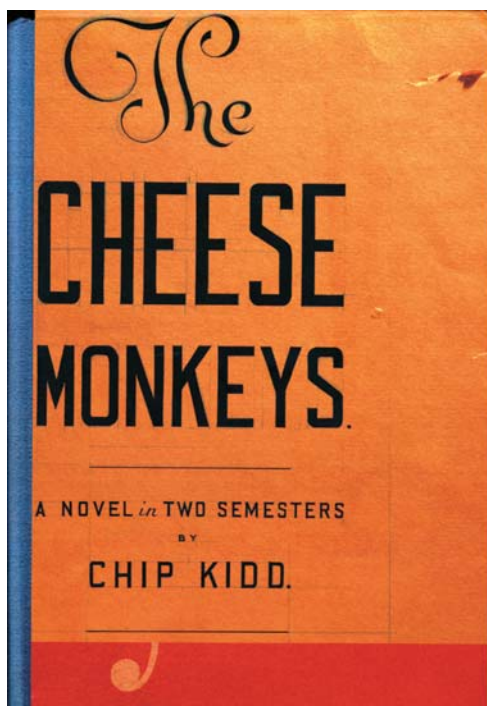
Extrait du prologue de Chip Kidd, *Book One Work: 1986-2006*, New York, Rizzoli, 2005



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