



New Kids on the Block: Five Brothers and a Million Sisters

Nikki Van Noy

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An intimate, all-access, backstage pass to everything New Kids on the Block, from their rise to fame in the 1980s to their fall from grace in the 1990s--and their triumphant comeback today. Jordan, Jon, Joe, Donnie, and Danny. They set the bar for every boy band to come and changed the course of pop music forever. In the 1980s, for millions of young people around the world, they were gods. But behind the scenes, they were just kids. In this completely authorized biography of the band, the New Kids tell it all to rock author Nikki Van Noy.

From makeshift stages in Boston clubs to sold-out shows at Madison Square Garden, through winning American Music Awards and selling 80 million records, the New Kids on the Block (NKOTB) were a rite of passage and a touchstone of youthful memories. Scoring platinum albums, and with a series of sold-out international tours, NKOTB blazed through North America, Europe, Australia, and Asia, leaving throngs of screaming teen and tween girls in their wake. Today, fans both old and new celebrate the band's triumphant comeback. Nikki Van Noy talks directly to those loyal fans, as well as the band members, weaving their stories together in this no-holds-barred chronicle.

With frankness and honesty, each New Kid recalls nearly thirty years of experience with the group, both on and off the stage, from their first auditions in a run-down brownstone in Boston to the lackluster sales of their first album, and finally to their current status as a household name. Like a time machine, this book will take you right back--giving you a behind-the-scenes look at the New Kids like you've never seen them before.

New Kids on the Block: Five Brothers and a Million Sisters Details

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From Reader Review New Kids on the Block: Five Brothers and a Million Sisters for online ebook

Tamara says

Being a huge NKOTB fan back in the circa 1989/90/91 years- I wasn't sure what to expect from this book. Began reading it, and felt a total sense of nostalgia. I can see myself singing my heart out, wearing the NKOTB tshirt, knowing all the words to the lyrics, my first celebrity crush- all while I'm wearing my hair in a side pony-tail (with a scrunchie!), denim shorts, keds and floppy socks- very fashionable attire at that point (but a major WTH moment later in life).

This book is a behind the scenes, tell-all book. It tells the story of how they became NKOTB, their rise to stardom after being mis-marketed, the crazy, almost like over-night sensations they were in the pop world (this book tells the true story behind that common thought) and the eventual dimming of their stardom.

Also included in book is pictures, memories from fans, and the tale of the reunion process.

Perfect for a die-hard NKOTB fan or a fan from years ago- this is a book for all.

Andi (Andi's ABCs) says

This book just straight up made me smile! I didn't learn anything new for the most part, but I got to relive those butterfly feelings I had for NKOTB back in the day. I got to remember all the concerts I went to, the shirts, buttons, pillowcases and dolls I had, and my pure love of Danny Wood. Um, when is their next concert again?! Brava!

Angela says

a must read for blkheads

Veronika says

This book made me to appreciate and admire more this group (and this statement comes from a BSB fan). I have to admit the first time I saw the performance of both groups (London event) I was focused just in BSB but after that I discovered Donnie's acting career and his, apparently, perfect charming behavior. That was the moment when I started to be a "newbie blockhead" and after read for what they passed through in all these years, I'm convinced I will be a BH forever.

""

Tiffany says

The short review:

As was expected, it was a fluffy, light read. I was kind of torn about this book--it was interesting and had some good history and stories about the band, but seemed like it was glossing over a lot of stuff, too. I gave it 4 stars mainly for the subject ("Oh my God! A book about the New Kids on the Block! *fan girl squeal*"), but I think substance would have only gotten it 3-3.5 stars.

The long review:

Ah, my childhood.

I was a big New Kids On the Block fan back in the day, but not what one would call a Blockhead. I didn't travel around the country or the world, my room wasn't wall-to-wall NKOTB, I didn't force my parents to take me to concerts. I didn't meet any of the guys at autograph sessions, nor did I wait outside venues to be able to see them for even a fleeting second (Okay, I would have liked to have done that one.). I guess, then, I was just a normal pre-teen (or teen or early 20s, or apparently, in some cases, mother) girl in the late '80s/early '90s. I had a nightshirt with the boys' picture on it, I had two posters, I had the albums, knew the words to almost every song, cut their pictures out of magazines, taped their TV appearances, went to two concerts (less than six months apart, but a two-hour drive difference), had a Jordan doll, and I watched the Saturday morning cartoon. But no bed sheets, no wall-to-wall pictures, no stalking. Like I said, I suppose I was just a normal girl of that era (although maybe the fact that I **didn't** have the wall-to-wall decorations and an entire New Kids wardrobe made me *abnormal*).

So when I saw this book, with the much older, but still decently cute, faces of the New Kids On the Block staring right at me, I decided I needed to read it. (Not being a Blockhead, I didn't need to read it *right away*, but being a fan back in the day, I needed to read it at some point. And hey, if someone's going to write a book about NKOTB, I knew I probably wouldn't delay reading it *too* long.)

The book is about what you'd expect of a biography about one of the most famous pop bands, and the band that (supposedly) Started It All. Van Noy has access to the band members, so there are a lot of current quotes used, rather than using "their own words" from back in the '80s and '90s (Ugh, I hate when authors do that. I could have gotten the same information from just reading the newspaper!), as well as lots of interviews with fans (And who knew the fan base was still so strong? Or that there's an annual cruise?! I want to go on that!). One thing that gets to me, though, is that she uses so many quotes at times that they don't flow into the text all that well. It also feels like there should be more substance. Not that the book isn't substantial, just that it *feels* like I remember hearing more controversy and gossip about them, and she's barely touching on any of that. Still, though, even the substance is what you would have expected in a biography about one of the most famous pop bands: girls everywhere (EVERYWHERE, even in their parents' kitchens), backlash against the band, fighting between band members after being on the road for nearly three years straight. So there's nothing really groundbreaking, but there are some things and some details you might not have previously known. I get the feeling that maybe some of the substance or in-depth details were sacrificed so that Van Noy could tell the fans' story, as well. There are so many quotes from fans--at times seeming like there are more fan quotes than there are band member quotes--to tell about the fans' relationships with the guys and their views of the band that it probably took away space in the book for the deeper stuff or particular details that had to get ignored or glossed over. At the end of every chapter, she also highlights some touching thing the band members did for fans, which can either warm your heart to the band and their humanity, or get on your nerves (For me, it's the latter. Their fans think they saved the world; I got it. They have done some nice

things for their fans, though.).

Overall, the book is a decently-written flashback. It's not Deep Literature, but it's also not a piece of junk that just got thrown together to cash in on a death or reunion or anniversary. Van Noy's access to the guys means we have their memories of the era as it happened, as well as 20 years of hindsight. I keep getting "Tonight" from *Step By Step* stuck in my head (which is always odd to me, since it isn't my favorite song on the album; just the easiest to latch on to, I suppose, with its "la la la la la"s), and I oftentimes will play some NKOTB on my iTunes after sitting and reading the book for a while. It makes me long to be in fifth grade again, but I'm okay with having moved on. It is kind of sad, though, when in the book both the band members and the fans say that you could tell it was coming to an end--between the backlash against pop, the backlash against the constant NKOTB merchandising, the rise of grunge, and a fan base and band structure (five young men in their teens and early 20s) that, by definition, had to grow up and thus move on. I also feel slightly guilty that I did move on and never came back, even when the band did. But it makes me appreciate the time we had together. Going to see them at the now-defunct Kingdome in September 1990, then seeing them the following Valentine's Day (yup) thirty miles away; my heart fluttering at Jordan Knight's dimples, smile, and intense eyes; watching the Saturday morning cartoon (especially the episode where they were performing at the Kingdome!), even with all of its cheesiness; listening to my older cousin pine for Joey (and here's how *I* knew their time was up and the fans were moving away: the day my cousin started to tell me about her crush on Billie Joe Armstrong from Green Day)... It was a simpler time, being 10 years old.

I may have grown up and like more manly male singers now, like Michael Stipe (umm...) and Dave Grohl, and like more sophisticated lyrics like those of Ken Stringfellow and Sean Nelson, but you should never forget where you came from, or forget the innocence of youth. Many people my age now embarrassedly admit they used to like the New Kids on the Block, or don't admit it at all. I, though, will always tell you loudly and proudly that I loved NKOTB. I was 10, and what girl didn't? They were exactly what I wanted back then--catchy music I could dance to, light-hearted lyrics about hanging out or having a crush, and cute boys who could dance. There's nothing wrong with admitting that once you were young and had different tastes and priorities than you do at an older age. I still have the cassettes I owned back then, even bought the CD versions of two of them (and obviously have them on my computer), still pull out the Christmas album in December, and can still sing along to most of the songs I could over 20 years ago. And most importantly, I can still remember what it was like to be 10, have a crush, and have my biggest cares in the world be whether an international superstar who was 9 years older than me might fall in love with me, or whether I was going to hear one of their songs on the radio that day. Nikki Van Noy's book offers a chance to return to that time, relive some memories, and hear a few stories I hadn't heard before.

Kelly Staten says

I was 4 or 5 years old when NKOTB was at the peak in popularity, yet I still love their music and had the opportunity to see them in concert back in 2009.

I read this book for nostalgia. It wasn't horrible, but it wasn't great either. At times, it felt like I was reading a very long research paper on NKOTB. There were lots of fan stories sprinkled throughout the book, but I'm curious how the author found those fans. She doesn't go into detail about where the fan stories came from.

There also isn't anything about where the band is headed or if there are plans for future albums.

Almost no time is spent on the years in between their break-up and reunion. I also felt that the author painted

a very squeaky-clean image of the band. I know I was young when they were popular, but I remember some stories about alcohol abuse and Jon coming out as gay.

Could have been better, instead most of the time is spent on fans gushing over the band.

Amy says

As a New Kids on the Block fan since 1988, I couldn't wait to read this biography. I read some concerns about Twitter about "why should we read this book? It's just going to be the same stories we've heard a million times." But that's so not what it was. Yes, there were a few stories we've all heard, but the majority of the stories I hadn't heard before. I loved reading about what it was REALLY like when the guys first got together all those years ago in Boston. I'm so happy to read someone getting their story right. I wish everyone, fans or not, could read this book so they could better understand the indescribable bond between these five amazing guys and their fans, affectionately known as Blockheads. NKOTB was not a manufactured group. They were not put together from some huge talent search. And I tell ya, their story would make a hell of a movie! It was so wonderful to read it and in a way, relive it all over again. I laughed out loud, cried (more times than I would like to admit) and even felt depressed while reading about the down times, when they lost control and the merchandising was insane. Words can't express how grateful I am for this book, to Nikki Van Noy for getting the real story out there. Honestly, I'm a bit jealous because as a writer myself, I always wanted to write a book like this, about NKOTB and our incredible bond. But I'm so glad Ms. Van Noy got the chance first. This was the way it was meant to be. Perhaps someday I'll share my story, in a different way, but I will always treasure this book and share it with as many people as I can. READ IT!!

Mel says

Up until now, there hasn't really been an all-inclusive biographical story depicting both sides of the coin: the band and the fans. This book filled that void and gave us all a voice - it is **our** biography and well-written as such. The author did a fantastic job of giving the reader insight as to why we, the fans, are so devoted to our favorite group and she explains perfectly the relationships we've been able to develop with the group both as individuals and as a whole. I've never been able to aptly explain the draw these men have on me and now I don't have to. I'll just tell them to read the book.

I was in tears and laughter throughout the whole book, recognizing names of friends and fellow fans whose anecdotes were shared in the best ways. It was fun to relive shows of the past and present through the eyes of the group members, as well as the fans.

The only reason I didn't give it five stars was because there were some inaccuracies in the book. (Some dates were wrong, as well as the spelling of Jonathan and Jordan's mom's last name.) While it's quite possible the errors could have been related to how the stories were told to the author, they are mistakes that could've (and should've) been caught with some research that would've taken a few moments of time and a Google search). Even so, I thoroughly enjoyed the read and will recommend it to others.

Good job!

Christopher McDonald says

Okay, I'm just going to come out and say it. I'm a New Kids on the Block fan. I'm a secure grown ass man, now, so I can say that without even flinching. But when I was a teenager living in Kentucky, I wouldn't dare admit that to my friends. As a result, I was an in-the-closet NKOTB fan.

I can vividly remember when I crossed over into their fandom. In 1990, I was all about R&B music. I pretty much liked everything, but pure soul music was my focus! I was very aware of NKOTB because every girl I knew liked them. But being a New Edition fan, I naturally hated NKOTB and they were a cheap rip off of New Edition in my opinion. But something intrigued me about their appeal... particularly the effect they had on their fans. I'd heard of such rabid fan behavior with the Beatles and the Jackson 5, but this was the first time in my memorable lifetime that I could witness it. Then one Friday evening, I decided to watch a concert special of theirs on the Disney Channel to A) see these crazy girl fans at work and B) to give NKOTB a chance and see what the hype was all about. To my surprise, I thought to myself "These guys are cool. I could see myself hanging with them." I also noticed they had a lot of soul for 5 white boys from Boston... I later learned they spent their childhood growing up in Dorchester, Jamaica Plains and Roxbury, so it all made sense. Color aside, they were more talented than I presumed. Plain and simple. So that was that. I was in... the closet.

In 2008, when they made their comeback announcement on The Today Show, I was so happy to hear the news. I was nervous for how the world was going to receive them, but I had hope. To show my support, I decided to go see their concert when they came to Los Angeles. Wow, they were better than ever... they were adults with better voices and more polished dance moves. Most importantly, they were humbled 40 year olds who were genuinely gracious to have the chance to perform again. We live in a society where people love to see others on top fail. But the only thing people like more than seeing failure is a good comeback story. I couldn't be more happy for them.

Okay, the book... this book uniquely tells the story of the New Kids in chronological order. Throughout the book, the story is interspersed with accounts from fans, and these accounts correspond with the given time. It's a very skillfully way to write a biography. More biographies should take a cue from this book. Talk about targeting your audience -- the fans. But what I really took away from this book is the New Kids have grown into very generous adults who are extremely grateful to get that shot again and are even more grateful for their fans. Even if you're not a fan and you like a good success story, check out this book.

All right. Enough with this review. Time for me to watch "Blue Bloods" on my DVR (see what I did there?).

Heather says

I liked this book overall, I laughed, cried and reminisced. I loved the info on the early years and quotes from the parents about that time. I sobbed when Mr. McIntyre was talking about Betty Wood. (I'm a Danny girl) Would have loved to learn more about their families and was I the only one that noticed Jordan & Jon's dad was NEVER mentioned, not once. It got really bogged down when they actually became stars. For one, very little of this was news to any fan from that time and there were way too many fan comments in this section. I know it had to be covered but it would have been nice to get more info from the siblings and their

perspectives perhaps.

The section on what happened between the break-up and the reunion is essentially what can be found on any of their press releases. The fact Joe's eldest son was born deaf was barely touched on, same thing with Jordan's drinking problem and really nothing significant on Jon's love life or the custody battle Danny had for his first son. Donnie's divorce is touched on quite a bit, though no real details, because that was the driving force on why he was ready for the reunion.

Pretty much if you haven't been following them on Twitter for years, haven't paid for the fan club or don't follow them around the country and go on the cruise, you aren't a good fan. Or at least that's what I got from the book. Personally I think I was always a good fan because I never stopped playing their albums.

Maybe this just seems important cause I was there, but the band played Detroit (or technically a suburb) the day Michael Jackson died. In hours they threw together a nice tribute and at least two of them said without MJ, they wouldn't exist. So it surprised me that it wasn't even mentioned. Seemed fitting they were pretty close to Motown the day he died.

Overall, if you've ever been a fan or just curious, read it. Donnie's personality and thankfulness for the fans really comes through in it and I got a little bit better idea of the rest of them too. Just the early years and how they came together is worth it, and how since, the powers that be have tried to duplicate it in cookie cutter models that never quite worked the same.

Cheryl says

New Kids on the Block: Five Brothers and a Million Sisters. Ok, so be warned my geeky side is coming out. I can remember when New Kids on the Block starting getting popular and their songs were on the radio. My girlfriends and I would listen to them all the time. Of course we had our favorites of the five guys. Mine was Jordan. Anyone who is a true fan of NKOTB will tell you their favorite guy and usually you will be surprised to find out that as we all grow up, our guy does not change. I even had a NKOTB lunch box.

What I was surprised to learn from reading this book was just how loyal and friendly NKOTB are towards their fans. The feel is mutual. I had just as much fun reading how the guys went from singing in prisons, birthday parties, to Fenway Park. As I did reading about the stories from real fans. Who had their own stories to share about meeting the guys. I have come away with more respect for the band after reading this book. This book did not just focus on the music but the guys and who there are and where they came from. I would suggest checking this book out for any NKOTB fan. You will not be disappointed.

Jessica says

This was a good read and interesting for an NKOTB fan. As the title "5 Brothers and A Million Sisters" suggests, it not only shows the story of the five band members but also interweaves that with stories of the fans who experienced various events. In that regard, it's different than most behind the scenes biographies. It is also full of quotes, both from the band and from the fans. It gives a rare glimpse into both sides of the

phenomenon. The author did a great job of making readers feel connected to the guys, of bringing the guys into our bedrooms, our living rooms, the bus, anywhere we read the book. I felt like the guys were telling me these things face to face rather than reading the quote from the book.

Ultimately where this book fell short is my own lack of previous experience with the band. I'm a rare late-bloomer: I only became a fan when they reunited as grown men. I was too young the first time they were a hit, which means I missed the mark for about 80% of the book. Had I been a fan back in the day, I'm sure this would have been a 4 or 5 star read for me.

Roe Quinajon says

I've been a Blockhead since I was 16 years old! Loved them back then. And I can't honestly say I love them even more now! NKOTB forever!!!

Trailhoundz says

I admit- I HATED NKOTB when they came out in the '80's. I was a Motley Crue/Poison/Warrant/Whitesnake fan- hair metal to the core! A few years ago, watching 80's videos on YouTube, I came to the sudden realization that as much as I despised the New Kids when I was in middle school... they REALLY were a great pop band (!). Ah, adulthood. New perspective, LOL. When I saw this book highlighted at the local library and decided to give it a read.

Review: This was a nice, light, "fluffy" book. Very bubblegum. It's not a tell-all, and there's really no depth. The writing is simple, as if it were a middle school report. As someone who doesn't know "the Kids" at all, I was constantly confused, because the author would write, "Danny said... Joe said... Donnie said..." all in one paragraph. I got all the bandmembers mixed up... they all melted together... wait. Who is the one with anxiety problems again? Which one was gay? Who is the Waffle House lover? Which one is falsetto again- ?? In that sense, I wish the author had split the chapters up by Kid (as it was done in Motley Crue's bio, "The Dirt")--I think it would have been much less confusing and jumpy for those of us who aren't NKOTB experts.

The "lightness" of the book also disappointed me. The author mentions a few very huge events... coming out of the closet (forgot which one- one of the J's)... sobriety (forgot which one)... anxiety problems (Joe maybe?? Forgot)... Divorce (Danny? Or was it Donnie?)... I wish the author would have dug into these a little more. I mean, they are huge, life-changing events. I wanted to know more about these, and how they affected each Kid.

All in all, this was a fun, light beach-read but left me wanting more. Maybe there's another book out there to better serve NKOTB newbies. :)

Jen

Alyssa says

5 stars for subject matter

4 stars for actual content

3 stars for writing style

While a nice book, there isn't anything groundbreaking or shocking here, even for someone who isn't a "Blockhead." i'm sure the group didn't want to go there, but i think there is a much more interesting story to be told about the early days.
