



Why? Because We Still Like You: An Oral History of the Mickey Mouse Club

Jennifer Keishin Armstrong

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This book will tell the behind-the-scenes story of how *The Mickey Mouse Club* paved the way for all that came after, from its humble beginnings as a marketing ploy, through its short but mesmerizing run, to the numerous resurrections that made it one of television's first true cult hits--all through the recollections of those regular kids-turned-stars who made it a phenomenon. It will reveal, for the first time ever, the untold stories of Annette, Darlene, Cubby and Karen, Bobbie and the rest of the beloved cast. It will explore, through the reminiscences of former fans who grew up to be some of television's finest minds, what made the show so special. And it will examine why the formula the creators of the show invented is more relevant than ever, and whether we'll ever see yet another *Club* for a new generation.

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Author : Jennifer Keishin Armstrong

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Lori says

found this to be a fun nostalgic read. I was not born when the original mickey mouse club was on from 1955 to 1958. but watched it on reruns during the 1960s. there were some interesting facts about the "kids" who were the original mouseketeers. what they are doing now. i remember how there was the "red team" of kids who were the first string entertainers. there was a whole chapter on Annette alone since she was the most famous of the original Mickey mouse kids. this is a fun read. if you ever watched the original mickey mouse club. {even if it were reruns or snippets of the show} i was happy to come across this book. to revisit the mickey mouse club.!

Rach says

Back when I was a kid in the 80s, the only premium tv channel we received was the Disney Channel. My parents loved all things Disney, and in our innocent, impressionable states, my siblings and I followed suit. One of my favorite shows to watch was the old reruns of the Mickey Mouse Club show from the 50s; despite the show being in black and white, I couldn't get enough of the singing and dancing kids. Of course, my very favorite days were the ones they showed the serials - first, the Adventures of Spin and Marty, and then later Annette. Ah, Annette. She was so pretty and perfect and charming. You just wanted to be her best friend!

When I saw this book mentioned in a magazine, I immediately wanted to read it. I was certainly not disappointed; I had no idea of all the hard work and drama that went on behind the sets. It makes sense that the kids were divided into "teams" based on performance and popularity, but it still makes me kind of sad for those that were relegated to the back up roles. But no matter what, they were still Mouseketeers! They had the ears! But the kids I remember most ARE the kids from the Red Team, the ones who got to shout their names during roll call every day, and what I was most intrigued by was hearing their back stories, their experiences on the show, and where they've gone since. I also loved reading about the opening of Disneyland, and the kids' experiences there, especially as I was actually *at* Disneyland while reading this. :)

More than anything, this book makes me wish there was a definitive DVD set of all of the episodes of the show, so I could go back and rewatch them all. I can imagine there are a lot of people that feel the same way, so Disney people, take note! You can have our money, just give us what we want! That is all. :)

Incidentally, this book is a perfect illustration of how Kindles work fantastically - with the convenience of my mom, sister and I having connected Kindles, we were able to buy it once and all read it at the same time. Magic! :)

David says

Pretty good. I learned that the Micky Mouse Club was originally conceived to promote Disneyland. Also, it was an interesting seeing the similarities of kids being affected by the Disney pixie dust in much the same way they are today, as well as the effect of being child actors who have to deal with school, teenage

hormones, etc. I envied their bright, clean, young lives, growing up in Southern California/

The book seemed somewhat incomplete, however. I would have liked to know the depth of depression of those who we're kicked off the show. Did they cry every day?, wonder what they did wrong?, etc? Additionally, it seemed like the book focused on two few folks, rather than a greater selection of Mouseketeers. The book repeatedly mentioned the story of some, like Don Grady who went on to My Three Sons, rather than telling the story of a greater variety of ex-mice.

Paula says

I loved the Mickey Mouse Club!!! Who wouldn't have wanted to be a Mouseketeer!! I thoroughly enjoyed reading about what happened behind the scenes and how the club came to be. It was a very nice trip back to the 50s.

Carol says

I think this book is a "Where are they now?" Book and a "Behind the Scenes" Book of the original Mickey Mouse Club . It is fascinating to learn about the different personalities of the show including the two adult members of the cast.

Unfortunately, of what happened to the individual Mouseketeers, I already knew from little pieces of news stories. Some missed the attention from being stars so much that they acted out but others were real success stories later in life.

So what was new for me was what it was like to be a Mouseketeer. The difficult auditions, the scary rehearsals, the friendships and backstage jealousies were all covered.

I was a little surprised at how strict Walt Disney was and unforgiving of childish wishes and desires. Also, I was surprised at how quickly he fired children from the show. If you can sing and dance, must you also act? The kids treated him with great respect but could not bring themselves to call him "Uncle Walt".

The children's' favorite was Jimmie Dodd. I think he was their best grown up friend.

I loved getting to know the background of the kids and how they got on the show. So my quarrel is not with this unauthorized but well researched book but with the way children were treated back in the 1950s. I do remember some regimentation then in public school so it shouldn't be all that surprising.

I am very glad that Paul Peterson, a former Mouseketeer and heart throb from the Donna Reed show runs an advocacy group for child stars. It was sad to read about the fired Mouseketeers who didn't think of themselves as 'good enough'. I hope that Paul Peterson and others will create ways and means to protect young stars.

This book is very well written, there is an appendix in the back with summaries of the different star lives.

'Why, Because we still Like You' brought back so many memories. I remember racing home to settle down in front of our Philco TV set with my mother on the couch. I sang the Mickey Mouse song along with TV and the roll call was my favorite part of the show.

I would highly recommend this book to fans of the original Mickey Mouse show.

Heather L says

I don't usually care for biography, so for me this was a pretty good comprehensive behind-the-scenes look at the original *Mickey Mouse Club* -- how the show was conceived, how the cast was assembled, what they did after the show and are doing today, and how it influenced television programming into the current century.

I remembered a few of the names from the show: Annette, Tommy, Darlene, Doreen, Cheryl, Sharon, Cubby...but not others. For example, my sisters and I also used to watch reruns of *My Three Sons*, and I had no idea two of the sons (Tim Considine and Don Grady) had been Mouseketeers.

If you like biography, are a Disney fanatic, or are/were a fan of the show (either when it originally aired in the mid-50s or one of its many runs in syndication), I'd say it might be worth checking out.

Sue Seligman says

On the recommendation of my "west coast facebook/goodreads" friend, I read this very interesting oral history of one of my favorite childhood shows, *The Original Mickey Mouse Club*. I used to watch the reruns every day after school (no, I am not old enough to have seen them in the original run on tv..lol), and like most kids, I looked up to the talented kids and pretended to be friends with my favorites...Karen, Cubby, and Annette. It was really interesting to read the back stories and sad to learn about the twists and challenges some of them encountered in later years. Overall, an interesting and bittersweet portrayal of life associated with one of the biggest names/companies in entertainment history. Thanks, Theresa for the recommendation!

Tammy says

I received this book in a Goodreads giveaway.

I have no memory of this, other than the pictures of myself as a toddler wearing the iconic ears, but apparently I was a huge fan of the *Mickey Mouse Club* (during its second run in syndication, if I'm following the dates provided by the book correctly).

I enjoyed the book, but it seemed as though the author was being a little bit - careful. She had clear opinions about a few of the key players - some positive and some negative - and they came through. Which is fine - she's entitled to opinions, of course. I think I, personally, may have enjoyed the book more without them.

A previous reviewer mentioned that the same stories were repeated or alluded to over and over and I would definitely agree with that assessment.

I enjoyed the pictures and wished there had been more - not something I would usually say, but when it is a book about pop culture - well - the visuals are important.

This was essentially a fun and easy read.

Terri says

I received this book as part of a Goodreads giveaway. I remember watching the Mickey Mouse club when I was a kid, and I loved it. The mouseketeers looked like they were having a great time, and I had a great time singing along with them. I remember being shocked when my dad told me that he had watched these same shows when he was a kid. What!?! I couldn't believe I was watching reruns of a show from the 50s. The show seemed timeless. Even all these years later, the show still enchants and fascinates. Jennifer Armstrong's book was a wonderful read. The behind the scene stories and the updates on the mouseketeers were insightful as well as incredibly interesting. This book is a great read for all mouseketeer fans.

Jules says

I am a big Disney fan so I was really looking forward to reviewing this book. I watched re-runs of this original cast when I was a kid. Used to drive the parents nuts running around singing the song.

I have to admit that I never watched the newer version of the show which launched Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake, but I was surprised that there wasn't more details regarding it. Especially since they discuss the possibility of a newer version being created.

The book wasn't quite what I expected after reading the blurb from the publishers. I didn't find it to be the exciting and gripping read they promised. There wasn't as much depth as I was looking forward to either. It seemed to skim over several issues and not delve more into what happened with some of these child stars other than Annette.

Overall I felt it was a light, nostalgic look back at some of the "kids" that entertained many of us as kids ourselves. It would be a nice, quick read for a fan of Disney or the Mouseketeers.

The Rainbow Zebra says

I like to say that if you were to look at my blood cells under a microscope, they'd be wearing mouse ears. That's how ingrained the world of Disney has been in my life. My grandfather worked with the construction crews building Disney World here in FL, so I visited the park before it was open to the public (Okay so I was still in diapers...)

Although I wasn't around when the Mickey Mouse Club first aired, I watched it--and bits of the later remakes--over the years. This nostalgic look at the origins of the show, the lives of the Mouseketeers before and after, is an interesting read for any Disney buff. What began as a marketing ploy for the opening of Disneyland, became a first-of-its-kind show: a show for kids, with kids as the entertainment.

This was a quick read, but not "gripping" as a snippet from the back cover proclaims. Had they included more of the later resurrections of the club--particularly the MMC which featured Christina Aguilera, Britney Spears, and Justin Timberlake--perhaps then this would be more than a quaint look back. Instead, they were

just a footnote to the original club's tales, especially that of Annette.

I own more than one pair of Mouse Ears (including my very first). I still know most of the words to the Alma Mater. I wish they would re-air the show for my kids.

I give this an honest three stars and will be passing this onto my mom for her own look-back.

*Disclosure--I was not compensated for the review of this book.

Mary (BookHounds) says

This wonderful collection of stories from the original Mouseketeers gives you behind the scenes details and insights. These were the original child stars when television was a new medium and the regulations were probably more strict than today. Though there are tales of underage drinking and shy kisses, I don't think these kids were as wild as today's children stars. I watched the reruns of the shows since I had older brothers and a sister. We went to Disneyland regularly and were very much in tune with that culture.

This isn't a full historical account of the Micky Mouse Show, but more of recollections that probably couldn't have been told before. The updates of each member towards the end of the book is really enlightening. These people had the best and worst of show business. Overall it is just a nice book to quickly read.

Tracy says

This was interesting, and made me realize how short the run of the show really was. However, that was the downfall of the book. Because they were only in production for three years, there's a lot of emphasis put on how the kids were recruited, and what happened to them once the show was cancelled. The real "meat," or what I think most people are hoping to read about, is only a small percentage of the text. And because the author was interviewing the kids, most of what makes this type of book really fascinating--the dynamic between the creative minds and those who have to execute the creative vision--was missing. The kids, for the most part, did as they were told and had no input as to the content of the show whatsoever, which is not surprising, but makes for a rather one-dimensional telling. I understand the position the author was in--since the "kids" themselves are all in their 50s and 60s (or even older, since this book isn't newly published), the people who were actually running the show are all long gone. If you're a die hard Disney fan, like one of my sons, who will savor any tidbit, no matter how faintly flavored, it's a good read. If you don't really care much about Disney, you'll find it of only mild interest. But then, if you don't care much about Disney, you're unlikely to pick this up in the first place.

Chrissy says

I grew up watching the old reruns of the original Mickey Mouse Club so I was excited to start reading Why? Because We Still Like You. This book has the stories of the behind the scenes and things they went through of the mouseketeers who started the original Mickey Mouse Club.

I enjoyed the book and found it very informative and fascinating. I also thought it could have gone into more detail but it was a good read and interesting to know how things went down, what they went through and

where they are now. I was surprised to find out that it was only on the air for less than 5 years before getting canceled due to contract disputes.

Why? Because We Still Like You was a nice read, very informative and enjoyed by me till the end.

* I have been provided a complimentary copy of Why? Because We Still Like You for review from Grand Central Publishing and opportunity from the Hachette Book Groups. By receiving a complimentary copy it in no way obligates me to write a good or bad review. I am an honest reviewer and my reviews are based on my own opinion and written only by me.*

Angelc says

Today's kids watch reruns of shows that I used to watch when I was kid, like "Full House" and "Fresh Prince of Bel-Air." When I was a kid, I watched what my parents loved when they were little: "The Mickey Mouse Club."

This book was one of the most fun books I've read for a long time. It didn't seem overly gossip-y and I loved that the author actually interviewed most of the "Mice" herself. There were a few who were unable to comment, including the most popular Mouse herself, Annette. Armstrong used credible sources, like Annette's autobiography for her information about the missing Mouseketeers.

It was so fun to see all of the behind the scenes information. One moment that stands out is some of the girls giggling over seeing Guy Williams, aka Zorro, in the commissary eating lunch. These day to day tidbits were something I had never heard about before in all of my Mickey Mouse Club fan moments. While I was reading, I really felt like I was at Soundstage 1 on the Disney backlot, like I was one of the Mice too.

The book is separated into chapters detailing auditions for the Mickey Mouse Club, the early days of the show, the phenomenon years, "Spin and Marty", and the aftermath.

I'd recommend this book for a true fan of the show. There's no mean-spirited gossip here that would ruin anyone's feelings towards the show, but there is some great insider information straight from the sources. I don't think this book would take away any of the "Magic" of the show, or ruin any idealized notions a huge fan would have. It's all done respectfully.

True Mickey Mouse Club fans will not be disappointed in this book. Just like the original Mouseketeers, the book has a heart of gold with nothing but fond memories for the show. Now, please excuse me while I try to track down the out of print "Spin and Marty" dvd set on eBay!

book sent by the publisher in exchange for honest review

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