

The Dirt: Confessions of the World's Most Notorious Rock Band Study Guide

The Dirt: Confessions of the World's Most Notorious Rock Band by Tommy Lee

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Plot Summary

The Dirt: Confessions of the World's Most Notorious Rock Band is the story of the four young men who would join to create the musical group Motley Crue. The book provides background on the four men to provide the reader with insight on the personal motivations driving each of them toward their career with music.

Motley Crue is composed of four young men: Nikki Sixx, Tommy Lee, Mick Mars and Vince Neil. Their paths began in Indiana, Idaho and California and converged in Los Angeles in the early 1980s to create a heavy metal group that rises to global notoriety and success. Along the way, the men exploit their celebrity by abusing alcohol, drugs and women. Consequently, the personal relationships they form are flawed and are not able to sustain or be sustained.

Nikki comes from a completely dysfunctional family with an absent father and alcoholic mother whose behavior runs from complete disinterest to stifling control. Nikki finds his only stability on the farm of his grandparents in Idaho but he realizes that Los Angeles is where he needs to be to start his musical career and moves there as a young boy on his own. Mick Mars travels the farthest to launch his dream, when his family moves from Indiana to California to help his sister's respiratory condition. Mick lives the estranged life of a rock musician and eventually meets Nikki in a music store and half of Motley Crue is formed.

Vince Neil is raised in the gang-ridden, inner city neighborhoods of Compton, California, a suburb of Los Angeles. Vince and his family are terrorized by gangs until the family moves to Glendora and he becomes a juvenile delinquent as he also becomes more heavily involved in music. Vince encounters Tommy Lee, who is obsessed with playing the drums and the two become friends, establishing the other half of Motley Crue.

The group struggles to make a living while hoping for a record deal when they are discovered one night while playing a gig at the Whisky A Go-Go in Hollywood. From that point, the boys make a record, go on tour and rise to the top of the charts in rock music. This newfound celebrity and wealth is seen as a ticket to excess as well as success and all the boys abuse heavy drugs and alcohol. They also have unlimited, indiscriminate sexual encounters with girls and become famous for their exploits before and after concerts as well as in hotel rooms and even in their own homes.

In spite of the meteoric rise to fame, each of the boys longs for stable home lives but their lifestyles prevent any sort of long-lasting relationships or stability. Each of them suffers personal tragedies including death and estrangement in core relationships but they persevere and maintain through it all because of their love of the music.



Part 1, The Motley House; Part 2, Born Too Loose; and Part 3, Toast of the Town

Part 1, The Motley House; Part 2, Born Too Loose; and Part 3, Toast of the Town Summary and Analysis

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In 1981, Vince Neil, Tommy Lee and Nikki Sixx share a rundown house in Los Angeles as they struggle to become stars as the rock group Motley Crue. The house is filthy from neglect and run over with vermin but the boys are oblivious to everything but music, booze and girls. For work, the boys play gigs at the Whisky A Go-Go Club and are followed home by fans who participate in all night orgies complete with Quaaludes, Percodan, blow, smack and any other drugs they can get for free. The boys live in the house for nine months hoping for a record deal but none comes and they leave to move in with their individual girlfriends.

Mick Mars, the fourth member of the group, never lived in the Motley Crue house as he had been living with his girlfriend. Mick is also a little bit older than the other three members and finds some of their antics counter to the goal of achieving a record contract.

Nikki was only fourteen when he had his mother arrested because she was mad at him for an offense he cannot recall. Nikki destroys his room, kicks a hole in the television and throws rocks through every window of the house before ramming a knife in his arm. He then calls the police to report that he has been attacked by his mother. Nikki had hoped they would lock up his mother so he could live alone but instead he agrees not to press charges in exchange for his mother letting him leave the house.

Nikki (Frank Carlton Feranna) never knew his father, Frank Feranna, for whom he is named or his sister whom he is told has also gone somewhere else to live. Nikki's mother remarries when Nikki is six and the family moves many times in the Southwest. Nikki does enjoy spending time with his grandfather but really does not fit in anywhere in his life. In school, Nikki gravitates toward football because it is a permissible outlet for his anger.

The family moves to Seattle when Nikki is a teenager and he steals a guitar in a pawnshop and works hard to join a local rock band. Nikki gets picked up for selling drugs outside a Rolling Stones concert and he decides to leave Seattle and return to his grandparents in Idaho. Nikki's Aunt Sharon visits a few times with her new husband who



is the president of Capitol Records in Los Angeles and Nikki realizes that that is where he needs to be.

One night, Mick walks into a liquor store in Los Angeles and talks to Nikki who is working there and invites him to a club to hear Mick play. Nikki comes to the club that night and the two connect but part company because Mick is headed for Alaska to do some club gigs.

Nikki is living with his Aunt Sharon and her husband who give Nikki every opportunity in their Los Angeles home. Nikki has a job at a record store where he snorts cocaine but at home, his punk rocker persona does not fit with the family's more conservative lifestyle. "I had angst dripping out of my pores. I wore skin-tight red pants that laced up the front, Capezios, and makeup. Even when I tried to fit in, I couldn't," *Born Too Loose*, p. 26. Eventually Nikki moves into an apartment and loses his job because he steals money from the music store where he was employed. After a series of evictions and lost jobs Nikki legally changes his name from Frank Feranna to Nikki Sixx.

One day Nikki finds an ad placed by Mick Mars advertising "extraterrestrial guitarist available for any other aliens that want to conquer the Earth." They realize that they met in the liquor store months ago and agree to meet and have Mick audition with Nikki's new band. Mick recalls that Nikki seemed too young to drive any kind of rock vision but Mick is knocked out by the band's drummer, Tommy Lee.

Tommy was born to an American father and Greek mother who could not communicate in each other's languages; in order to communicate they would use sign language and draw pictures. Tommy is raised in Covina, California, where his parents totally support Tommy's love of music and buy him drum sets and convert space in their home into a soundproof practice room for Tommy and his friends. In high school Tommy forms his first band and meets Vince Neil who is in another band and eventually attends Tommy's high school.

Tommy joins Vince's band, Suite 19, and they eventually play at the Starwood, a major rock club in Los Angeles. Before long, Suite 19 breaks up and Tommy spots Nikki playing in a group called London. Tommy learns that Nikki has left London and they meet and soon become roommates and search for other band members. Tommy answers Mick's newspaper ad and he joins the group followed quickly by Vince as vocalist. Motley Crue is officially formed.

Vince recalls that "When Motley Crue came on the scene, it was less as a band than as a gang. We'd get drunk, do crazy amounts of cocaine, and walk the circuit in stiletto heels, stumbling all over the place," *Toast of the Town*, p. 61. The band gets a manager, Allan Coffman, who gets jobs for the band and tries to instill some professional discipline but the band resists all attempts at structure.

In June of 1981, the band is officially announced with its members as Nikki Sixx, 22, bass guitar and vocals; Mick Mars, 25, guitar, vocal, songwriting; Tommy Lee, 21, drums; and Vince Neal, 21, lead vocalist and writer.



The first section of the book describes how the band members met and eventually formed the rock group Motley Crue. It also provides some information on their personal backgrounds to show why the boys gravitated toward being rock musicians. In most cases, the family backgrounds were so dysfunctional that the boys needed an outlet for their rage. The music is also a means of communicating which is important because their families are so shut down that there are only two methods of communication: silence or screaming. In Tommy Lee's case, a psychiatrist even attributes his tattoo-covered body as a means of communication evidenced by his parents' pictures and sign language. Ironically, the boys want nothing more than to fit in somewhere but their anger-induced appearances and behavior does the opposite with most people they meet.



Part 4, Shout at the Devil; Part 5, Save Our Souls; Part 6, Girls, Girls, Girls

Part 4, Shout at the Devil; Part 5, Save Our Souls; Part 6, Girls, Girls, Girls Summary and Analysis

One night Tom Zutaut from Elektra Records sees the Motley Crue performing at the Whisky A Go-Go and soon negotiates a record deal with them. The group records their Too Fast for Love album and goes on tour before the record is even released in order to fulfill a debt made by their manager who disappears soon afterward. The record has amazing sales in spite of the record label's unwillingness to promote it. During this time, paranormal events begin to occur especially to Nikki and the band changes its next album name from Shout with the Devil to Shout at the Devil.

Tom soon meets a booking agent named Doug Thaler who knows a wealthy man named Doc McGhee who wants to start a management company. Doc becomes the manager for Motley Crue and vows to financially back them to make them big stars.

Motley Crue's first big gig is the US Festival held Memorial Day weekend in 1983 in California. Soon after they begin to record their next album, Shout at the Devil, which they record in three days with no sleep because they are all now snorting cocaine which keeps them awake. Nikki is the first of the group to try heroin and soon all the band members are high or drunk all the time. The group becomes enthralled with two movies, Mad Max and Escape from New York and they adopt a more road warrior style instead of the glam punk style they had been sporting.

The group goes on tour as the opening act for Ozzy Osbourne whose bizarre behavior both on and off stage affect the group. Ozzy likes the Motley Crue members and introduces them to the frenetic world of touring as a major rock act. Ozzy is even more of a rebel and attention getter than the Motley Crue guys and joins them in their daily cocaine snorting sessions, even resorting to snorting a line of ant in the sand when cocaine is not available one night. Ozzy's wife, Sharon, is the only conscience Ozzy has and his behavior improves dramatically when she accompanies the group on the tour. Eventually, Sharon advises Motley Crue on their behavior as well. Motley Crue tours with Ozzy off and on for a year and receives their first gold and platinum record awards.

During this time the boys in the band use women, booze and drugs indiscriminately, sometimes even sharing the same women at the same party or backstage before a show. On a European tour, the boys destroy hotel rooms with flare guns and out-of-control parties and activities. At the last concert of the tour the group has strayed from its Road Warrior look into ridiculous looking one-piece jumpsuits, their voices are strained and patience is nonexistent.



They do not realize the toll that all the drugs and alcohol are taking on them physically and do not consider themselves to be addicted, merely using the substances out of boredom. The guys resist pressure from friends to get help for their substance abuse thinking they are invincible because of their rock and roll status.

During one episode in December of 1984, Mick, Vince, Tommy and some guys from the group Hanoi Rocks party at Vince's house. By the end of three days, they realize that their alcohol is gone and Vince takes Razzle, the Hanoi Rocks drummer, with him in his new car to the liquor store a few blocks away. Mick disappears from the party and no one knows where he is. Soon the group at the house hears the sirens and follows the flashing lights of ambulances to the site where Vince has wrecked his new car. Razzle has been killed in the wreck and Vince is taken to jail and ultimately charged with vehicular manslaughter.

Vince learns that the couple riding in the car that he hit during the accident sustained serious injuries and one is in a coma and the other is in traction. Vince knows that he should probably remain in jail but he is released on a twenty-five-hundred-dollar bail to await trial which could result in seven years in prison. Vince is forced into rehab and feels that the other band members will forget about him and move on with the group without him.

Nikki had been in Martinique at the time of Vince's accident and hears reports that Vince has died in the crash. Mick recalls the night of the accident by being drunk, waking up on the beach the next morning and going back to the party house where everyone is crying and thinks that he must have drowned and is in a spirit state watching people mourn his death. Instead of curbing his alcohol use after this event, Mick only increases his drinking.

After the accident, the four guys begin living separate lives even though they must still tour and record together. The other three members ostracize Vince because of his arrest and rehab. Ironically, Vince begins drinking even more after his release from rehab and becomes an alcoholic in attempts to forget the accident and the lives he has ruined. Eventually Vince is sentenced to thirty days in jail, \$2.6 million in restitution and 200 hours of community service.

Nikki's drug abuse escalates and by the end of the European tour he is wasted and calls ahead to have his dealer in Los Angeles meet him at the airport to get the high quality drugs he is used to.

The day before he starts his jail sentence, Vince and his wife, Beth, move into a \$1.5 million dollar home. Vince is released after nineteen days for good behavior and finds that Beth has been intimately involved with another man and left their home. Vince establishes his home as a bachelor pad complete with all types of adult entertainment.

Tommy meets actress Heather Locklear at an REO Speedwagon concert in 1983 and they marry in 1984. The couple lives in a multimillion-dollar home in Hollywood and does not associate much with the other Motley Crue members.



Soon after Tommy's wedding, the Motley Crue management team holds an intervention for Nikki and he checks into the same rehab clinic where Vince had gone. Nikki escapes three days after he enters the facility and walks the five miles home in his hospital gown. Nikki hires a live-in personal assistant to help him kick the drugs but eventually the two men become friends and using drugs is a main source of entertainment. When Nikki's grandmother dies, he is too drugged out to dress and drive to her funeral.

This section is one of contrasts; the group gains worldwide popularity and success; and the guys are personally changed by Vince's accident and the repercussions. As Tommy Lee says about life after the accident, "Something had changed. Sure, we still partied, went crazy, got fucked up, and stuck our dicks in anything. But it wasn't the same: Partying led to addiction, addiction led to paranoia, and paranoia led to all kinds of stupid mistakes with huge repercussions. Even fucking wasn't the same: Fucking led to marriage, marriage led to divorce, divorce led to alimony, alimony led to poverty. We became conscious of our own mortality—as human beings and as a band," *Save Our Souls*, p. 157. It is interesting to note that the other three band members ostracize and monitor Vince's behavior after he leaves rehab even though they are abusing drugs and alcohol as much, if not more, than he ever did before the accident. Vince is viewed to be the one who has ruined the fun for the group and the one who brings the adult world into their universe and he is highly resented for it. It is not until much later that they can put the accident and their resulting behavior in perspective.



Part 7, Some of Our Best Friends are Drug Dealers; Part 8, Some of Our Best Friends Were Drug Dealers; and Part 9, Don't Go Away Mad

Part 7, Some of Our Best Friends are Drug Dealers; Part 8, Some of Our Best Friends Were Drug Dealers; and Part 9, Don't Go Away Mad Summary and Analysis

Mick relates his story as a bad boy who, as a five-year-old, tried to hang his brother during a game of cowboys and Indians. Mick's real name is Bob Alan Deal and knows from an early age that he wants to be a performer after watching a rhinestone cowboy act at a county fair. Mick receives guitars for Christmas gifts for several years and before Mick is a teenager, the family moves from Indiana to California to help his sister's respiratory problems.

Mick rebels against his parents' rules and moves into a gardening shed at the back of the family's home. Ultimately Mick stops going to school because none of the subjects hold any interest for him. Eventually Mick goes to Fresno to play in a rock band but the venture is unsuccessful and Mick returns home. Mick gets into drugs and runs away from home to Orange County where he is befriended by some bikers. Mick meets a girl named Sharon and they have a baby and try to make it as a family.

Mick works at a Laundromat during the day and plays clubs at night. Mick and Sharon have another child and Mick injures his hand at work one day and does not return to the Laundromat. Sharon takes the two children and leaves Mick and he returns to the shed behind his parents' house.

Mick is afflicted with ankylosing spondylitis, a degenerative bone disease which keeps Mick in considerable pain most of the time. The disease grows between open spots between or inside bones and essentially fuses them together until mobility is almost impossible. Mick tries antidepressants and pain killers to manage the pain and immobility but finally resorts to alcohol use to dull his senses.

Motley Crue sets out on its Girls, Girls, Girls tour and the outrageous use of drugs, alcohol and women escalates. In Japan, the guys are so stoned that they spray liquor on passengers on a commuter train and flip over tables in a restaurant when they assume that patrons who are speaking Japanese are making fun of them. At the end of the Asian leg of the tour, the group breaks up to spend Christmas with their families but Nikki, who has no family left, remains in Asia for a tour of substance abuse.



When Nikki does return to Los Angeles, he overdoses and is rushed to the hospital while all the news media report that he has died. Nikki escapes from the hospital and gets a ride home with some fans.

The story transitions to Doc McGhee's perspective and he is regretful that he let Vince get off so easy after the accident that killed Razzle. Buying Vince's freedom from jail time did not teach Vince any lessons and only validated what Vince already thinks: that he is a rock star and is above the law.

Doc thinks about the relatively calm and prosperous life he left in Miami to manage Motley Crue which has turned out to be an unending chain of police arrests, financial damages and court dates. Doc knows that Nikki especially is in danger of dying from the substance abuse and enlists the help of Aerosmith singer, Steven Tyler, to help convince Nikki to get clean. The rest of the band members are also in bad shape so Doc cancels the European leg of their tour and requires the band members to repay the European promoters.

Tommy is the first one to check into rehab at a facility called Cottonwood in Tucson. It is there that Tommy sees a sign that says "Silence=Death" and he knows that much of his anger comes from being given the silent treatment as a child. Being punished in silence with no reasoning is the ultimate form of rejection for Tommy and he carries the feeling into adulthood.

The rest of the band members join Tommy in Tucson for some group therapy. Vince and Nikki begin to realize the childhood traumas that have been the foundation for their rage and destructive behavior but Mick remains closed to the therapy. Before the band is allowed to record their next album, they must agree to stay sober. The group moves to Canada to record the Dr. Feelgood album and brings their therapists with them.

By this time, Doc McGhee has managed Motley Crue for ten years and he quits because he simply does not like them anymore and is tired of cleaning up after their destructive personal and financial messes.

Vince falls in love with a girl named Sharise who is a mud wrestler whose verbal and physical bellicose behavior drives Vince to drink again. Professionally, the band is in the best shape it has ever been in on the Dr. Feelgood tour but sobriety forces them to interrelate with each other in ways they never had to before and the tour closes early because the boys are too weary of the pace and each other.

In Los Angeles in 1992, the boys get angry at Vince for showing up late or not showing up at all for recording sessions. Vince has lost interest in the group and before long, he is ostracized from the group again and eventually quits. The group hires a new singer named John Corabi whose voice is welcomed by Tommy and Nikki but not appreciated by fans or the record label when sales decline.

Tommy's marriage to Heather breaks up in 1993 because Tommy had wanted to start a family and Heather did not because of her acting career.



Without the band, Vince begins a personal decline into drugs, booze and women and becomes a partner in a Beverly Hills club called Bar One. Vince hangs out with celebrities including actress Pamela Anderson who will one day marry Tommy Lee. Vince also plays with other rock bands during this period and also buys a huge, opulent home in Malibu where his daughter, Skylar, can visit him on weekends. Skylar is also the daughter of Sharise, the mud wrestler Vince married in 1988. Vince begins recording his own songs and takes an avid interest in auto racing.

The addition of John Corabi to Motley Crue is having a negative financial impact because venues which used to fill for their concerts are sometimes filled to only a third of the capacity. Both Tommy and Nikki write personal checks to keep the band on the road but it is not enough to keep the tour alive and the band members return to Los Angeles. This is the first time in ten years that Motley Crue has experienced any type of failure.

In this section of the book, things begin to fall apart for Motley Crue. After ten years of being together, the drug and alcohol abuse and unrestrained lifestyles are taking their toll on physical and emotional health of the guys and their significant others. Even the band's manager, Doc McGhee, quits because he cannot tolerate the total disregard for propriety exhibited by the group. Vince leaves the band because he is weary of the group and all of them need a break from each other. Mick remains physically and emotionally distant. This is a critical point for the band which now suffers financially because of Vince's absence and the fans' unwillingness to accept John Corabi as his replacement.



Part 10, Without You; Part 11, The Guns, The Women, The Ego; and Part 12, Hollywood Ending

Part 10, Without You; Part 11, The Guns, The Women, The Ego; and Part 12, Hollywood Ending Summary and Analysis

Vince grew up in the rough, inner city of Compton, California, on Los Angeles' south side. Every day Vince had to fight for his life beating off gang attacks in deteriorating neighborhoods. One day Vince is hit by a bullet while waiting for the ice cream truck and bullets had been fired into his home before. Eventually Vince wins the respect of some of the gang members and his life is a little easier but he turns into a juvenile delinquent and is picked up for stealing. One day Vince returns home to tell his parents about a teacher being thrown out a window at school and the family finally makes the decision to move to Glendora.

During high school Vince's girlfriend has his baby and he makes child support payments while working odd jobs. Vince also forms a band with some friends, does a lot of drugs and eventually gets kicked out of school.

After Vince leaves Motley Crue, he does not speak to the band members for three and a half years. Tommy recalls that it is Vince's daughter Skylar's death which prompted him to finally call Vince after all that time.

Four-year-old Skylar had been rushed to the hospital after it was thought that her appendix had burst. Instead of a ruptured appendix, the surgeons discover an exploded cancerous tumor spreading cancer throughout her abdomen. Skylar is taken to Children's Hospital in Los Angeles where new surgeons find cancer on her kidneys. The tumors are too large to remove and the treatment option of radiation is begun.

Vince begins drinking heavily again to mask his emotional pain and spends the balance of his time at Skylar's bedside. After a month of treatment, Skylar returns home for only four nights before returning to the hospital. Skylar endures another operation to attempt to realign her intestines which have become twisted due to massive amounts of foreign tissue. The tumors on Skylar's kidneys do not shrink from the radiation, however, and Skylar is placed into an induced coma so that her body can focus on healing.

Eventually, doctors are able to remove a six-pound tumor from Skylar in addition to one of her kidneys, half her liver, some of her diaphragm and a muscle in her back. Less than a week later another operation is necessary to remove infection from her remaining kidney. Skylar's body cannot take any more and she slips into a coma. Vince and his



girlfriend trade shifts with Sharise and her parents and Vince is having dinner late one night when Sharise calls to tell him that Skylar is worsening. Vince hurries but does not make it back to the hospital in time to see Skylar before she dies.

Vince is inconsolable after Skylar's death, falling even deeper into drug and alcohol abuse. After Skylar's funeral, Vince is taken to a rehab clinic but he escapes to return home where he swallows more pills and does not remember checking into a hotel where he awakens the next morning. A few days later, Vince is taken to the Betty Ford Clinic for rehab. Vince stays only three days before he leaves and checks into a hotel and spends his time golfing, drinking and taking drugs.

Eventually Vince gets grief counseling and slowly begins to recover. Vince and Sharise finalize their divorce and Vince learns that many people who had lived in their residential area have contracted cancer due to nuclear reactor waste being dumped in the area. Vince and Sharise hire an attorney to prepare a lawsuit against the company dumping the hazardous material.

Motley Crue hires a new manager, Allen Kovac, for his reputation for being ruthless. The boys are invited to New York to meet with Doug Morris, the CEO of Warner Music which owned the Elektra music label. John Corabi is not invited to attend but the boys bring him along although he is not included in the meeting once they reach New York. Morris wants Motley Crue to bring Vince back and he promises to record them again and send them on tour.

The boys refuse to dump Corabi but eventually let him go and bring Vince back because Elektra does not release any money for another record or another tour. After a few days of working together again, the band's sound has returned to the old Motley Crue sound and everyone is cautiously optimistic that the group will be successful again.

Tommy begins dating a former Playboy model named Bobbie Brown but their relationship is volatile and she calls the police because Tommy is abusive toward her. When Tommy returns home from jail, he finds that Bobbie has moved out of their home, leaving only a fork remaining in the dishwasher. Bobbie and Tommy see each other after that but eventually break up.

Tommy soon meets actress Pamela Anderson when she sends him a drink at a club on New Year's Eve 1994. Tommy attempts to secure a date with Pamela but it takes six weeks to connect due to their hectic schedules. Tommy goes to Cancun where Pamela is doing a photo shoot. After spending four days together, Tommy and Pamela marry on a Cancun beach in their swimsuits.

In Los Angeles, Nikki's marriage to Brandi is disintegrating and she leaves their mansion with their two children. Nikki dates a few other women before he meets actress Donna D'Errico and the two soon become a couple.

Tommy is especially thrilled when Pamela becomes pregnant but sinks into depression when Pamela suffers a miscarriage. The couple does have a child, Brandon Thomas, in



May of 1996 and Tommy's initial exhilaration is replaced by feelings of loneliness now that Pamela is giving most of her attention to the baby. They have another baby, Dylan Jagger, soon after and the marriage begins to suffer.

Tommy and Pamela find even more notoriety when a private video tape of them having sex is released on the Internet.

Nikki feels lost after his divorce and makes attempts to connect with his long-lost family. Nikki is able to connect with a half brother named Randy who tells Nikki that their father had died on Christmas in 1987. Nikki also attempts to reconnect with his mother who is now living in a mental hospital in Seattle. The visit does not go well and Donna encourages Nikki to visit his father's grave and he does, which enables him to vent some of his pent up rage at the cemetery.

Randy tells Nikki about Nikki's sister, Lisa, a young woman who is blind, mute, crippled and has Down's Syndrome and has been living in a home for thirty years. Nikki had always been told that his sister had left the family and wanted no contact with them when in actuality she was not capable of making that type of decision. Nikki vows to find Lisa when the band returns from its tour.

Vince decides to quit the band again because of the newly-enforced sobriety rules for the group's behavior. Eventually the guys iron out their differences and continue their tour after which Vince checks into rehab and quits drinking.

Tommy and Pamela's marriage is disintegrating and Tommy is arrested one night when Pamela calls the police to come to their home after he has been abusive. Tommy is sentenced to six months in prison for spousal assault and his anger and depression escalate because he is separated from the other prisoners because of his celebrity and because of the nature of his crime. Mick visits Tommy every week but he has no contact with anyone else. Tommy has lots of time to think about his life and his role in the fragmented marriage which is not salvageable at this point due to too much hostility.

After his release Tommy learns that Pamela has finalized a divorce so he begins dating other women including actress Carmen Electra. Tommy's perspective on life and the band change during his incarceration and he decides to leave the band to start another group. The band members hear that Pamela is back in Tommy's life and blame her for Tommy's leaving the group.

Nikki is able to locate his sister living in a sanitarium in Santa Cruz, California. Nikki calls the institution and makes plans to visit Lisa but she dies a couple days later before he is able to make the trip. Nikki arranges Lisa's funeral and sees her for the first and the last time at her service.

Mick's ankylosing spondylitis is taking over his body and he hallucinates not from the antidepressants and painkillers but from the pressure on his bones and joints. Mick falls in love with a new woman named Robbie and he remains with the band even though his disease prohibits him from performing like he would like to.



Vince marries Heidi with Nikki serving as best man and the couple moves into a Malibu mansion. One day Tommy sees Nikki at his son's school and discovers that Nikki's son also attends the same school. Tommy philosophizes that a whole new generation of Motley Crue offspring is about to be unleashed on the world.

This section begins with Vince's history which helps to explain the anger and frustration which exhibits in his combative adult behavior. The story of Vince's past is severely tempered by the death of his young daughter, Skylar. Vince suffered major disappointments and losses in his life but nothing prepared him for the loss of his daughter, an event which puts all the pettiness and infighting of the group into a very clear perspective. The other group members also experience major revelations and events which force them to finally mature. Nikki learns that his estranged father has died and that he had a physically and mentally disabled sister he never had the opportunity to know. Tommy is jailed for spousal abuse and is forced into solitary confinement, a period which takes him back to his childhood when Silence = Death. Mick's bone disease takes a further toll on him and medication only staves off the inevitability of incapacitation someday. Fortunately, the guys emerge from their individual places of darkness and find reconciliation with each other as they find paths that will separate them as well as bring them together again to perform the music they love.



Characters

Tommy Lee

Tommy Lee was born Thomas Lee Bass on October 3, 1962, in Athens, Greece. His father was a U.S. serviceman stationed in Greece when he married a native Greek girl. When Tommy is one year old, the family moves to California where Tommy shows strong signs of musical interest as a boy. Tommy drops out of high school his senior year to pursue rock music and forms his first group, Suite 19, which plays local gigs. Tommy meets Nikki Sixx during this period and they are the first two members of Motley Crue. Tommy becomes the group's drummer and is considered the most sensitive and emotional of the four members. Tommy indulges in alcohol and drug abuse just like the other band members and also engages in indiscriminate sexual relations with girls, often abusing them physically. Tommy Lee marries actress Heather Locklear in 1986 but they divorce in 1993 when his interest in starting a family conflict with her career goals. Tommy Lee meets actress Pamela Anderson on New Year's Eve 1994 and marries her in 1995. The couple has two children, Brandon Thomas and Dylan Jagger, born in 1996 and 1997 respectively. Tommy Lee's predilection toward physical abuse exhibits during their marriage and Tommy Lee is sentenced to six months in prison for spousal abuse after hitting Pamela Lee in their home.

Mick Mars

Mick Mars is born Robert Alan Deal in May of 1951 in Terre Haute, Indiana. His family relocates to California to aid his sister's respiratory condition. Mick rebels against his parents' rules and moves into a gardening shed at the back of the family's home. Ultimately Mick stops going to school because none of the subjects hold any interest for him. Eventually Mick goes to Fresno to play in a rock band but the venture is unsuccessful and Mick returns home. Mick gets into drugs and runs away from home to Orange County where he is befriended by some bikers. Mick meets a girl named Sharon and they have a baby and try to make it as a family. Mick works at a Laundromat during the day and plays clubs at night. Mick and Sharon have another child and Mick injures his hand at work one day and does not return to the Laundromat. Sharon takes the two children and leaves Mick and he returns to the shed behind his parents' house. Mick is afflicted with ankylosing spondylitis, a degenerative bone disease which keeps Mick in considerable pain most of the time. The disease grows between open spots between or inside bones and essentially fuses them together until mobility is almost impossible. Mick tries antidepressants and pain killers to manage the pain and immobility but finally resorts to alcohol use to dull his senses.



Vince Neil

Vince Neil is born in February of 1961 in Hollywood, California. His family moves around Southern California and eventually Vince grows up in the rough, inner city of Compton, California, on Los Angeles' south side. Every day Vince had to fight for his life beating off gang attacks in deteriorating neighborhoods. One day Vince is hit by a bullet while waiting for the ice cream truck. Bullets had been fired into his home before. Eventually Vince wins the respect of some of the gang members and his life is a little easier but he turns into a juvenile delinquent and is picked up for stealing. One day Vince returns home to tell his parents about a teacher being thrown out a window at school and the family finally makes the decision to move to Glendora. During high school Vince's girlfriend has his baby and he makes child support payments while working odd jobs. Vince also forms a band with some friends, does a lot of drugs and eventually gets kicked out of school. Vince meets Tommy Lee while playing in his band, Rock Candy, and he joins Motley Crue to become the group's lead singer. Vince's life is dotted with substance abuse, failed personal relationships and the death of his four-year-old daughter, Skylar, to cancer in 1995.

Nikki Sixx

Nikki Sixx is born Frank Carlton Ferrana in December 1958 in San Jose, California.

Nikki never knew his father, Frank Ferrana, for whom he is named or his sister whom he is told has also gone somewhere else to live. Nikki's mother remarries when Nikki is six and the family moves many times in the Southwest. Nikki does enjoy spending time with his grandfather but really does not fit in anywhere in his life. In school, Nikki gravitates toward football because it is a permissible outlet for his anger. The family moves to Seattle when Nikki is a teenager and he steals a guitar in a pawnshop and works hard to join a local rock band. Nikki gets picked up for selling drugs outside a Rolling Stones concert and he decides to leave Seattle and return to his grandparents in Idaho. Nikki's Aunt Sharon visits a few times with her new husband who is the president of Capitol Records in Los Angeles and Nikki realizes that that is where he needs to be. Nikki and Tommy Lee start Motley Crue in 1981 and Nikki becomes the group's primary songwriter and undeclared leader. Nikki later learns that he has a half brother who tells him that his father died on Christmas Day in 1987 and that he has a disabled sister living in a sanitarium. His sister dies before he has a chance to meet her and Nikki is haunted by the loss of a family he never knew.

Sharon and Don Zimmerman

Sharon is Nikki's aunt and she is married to Don Zimmerman, the president of Capitol Records.



Alan Coffman

Allan Coffman becomes Motley Crue's manager in 1981 when they first start in the music business.

Tom Zutaut

Tom Zutaut is an executive with Elektra Records who signs the group to a record deal.

Doc McGhee

Doc McGhee forms a management company and manages Motley Crue all the way to stardom.

Ozzy Osbourne

Ozzy Osbourne is a British heavy metal musician noted for his outlandish performances.

Razzle

Razzle is the drummer for the rock group, Hanoi Rocks, who is killed in a car accident while riding with Vince Neil.

Heather Locklear

Heather Locklear is a Hollywood actress who becomes Tommy Lee's second wife in 1986. The couple divorces in 1993.

John Corabi

John Corabi is the singer hired by Motley Crue in 1992 when Vince quits the group. John is with the band for only a year before Vince returns to the group.

Skylar Neil

Skylar Neil is Vince Neil's young daughter who dies of cancer in August of 1995.

Allan Kovac

Allan Kovac is hired by Motley Crue to be their new manager after Doc McGhee quits.



Objects/Places

The Motley Crue House

The Motley Crue House is a rundown house in Los Angeles inhabited by Vince Neil, Tommy Lee and Nikki Sixx in 1981, prior to their success as a band.

Los Angeles, California

Los Angeles is a major metropolitan city located on the Pacific coast of California and is the home of the Motley Crue band members.

The Starwood

The Starwood was a club in West Hollywood, California, where many rock groups played to gain popular exposure.

Suite 19

Suite 19 was the name of the group started by Vince Neil and later joined by Tommy Lee.

Cocaine

Members of the band snort huge quantities of cocaine and take other drugs during most of their time together.

Jack Daniel's Whisky

Jack Daniel's whisky is the alcohol of choice of the band members and it flows freely all the time they are together.

Ankylosing Spondylitis

Ankylosing Spondylitis is a degenerative bone disease which creates much pain and disability for Mick Mars.

Children's Hospital of Los Angeles

Vince's daughter, Skylar, is treated and dies at Children's Hospital of Los Angeles.

Tattoos

The members of Motley Crue are covered in tattoos which are permanent inked designs on the skin.

Addictions

Addictions are chemical, physical and psychological habits which create constant cravings for harmful substances.



Themes

Family Dysfunction

A pervasive theme throughout the book and throughout the lives of the Motley Crue members is family dysfunction. Each one of the boys comes from either a fragmented or abusive home life which fuels their rebelliousness and anger. Nikki has an alcoholic mother who stifles him after Nikki's father abandons the family. As a young boy, Nikki even sues his mother for abuse hoping the courts will let him live on his own. Nikki finds much later that he had a disabled sister living in a sanitarium but his mother always kept Nikki from her. Tommy's parents love him but because his mother is Greek and does not speak English, people in the household communicate via notes and sign language. Later a psychiatrist will tell Tommy that his need to communicate is exhibited through the inordinate amount of tattoos on his body. Also, Tommy concludes that Silence = Death; that the silent treatment from anyone is punishing for him who equates it to the silence in the home after bad behavior. Mick also has a dysfunctional start when the family moves from Indiana to California to help his sister's respiratory problems. Mick rebels and lives in the gardening shed at his parent's home; drops out of school from boredom; gets a girl pregnant; works in a Laundromat; and chases several rock band jobs before landing with Motley Crue. Vince Neil grows up in a struggling family in South Los Angeles where he dodges bullets and gang members in inner city neighborhoods. Vince gets a girl pregnant and makes child support payments doing odd jobs. Eventually Vince drops out of school, gets heavy into substance abuse and bouts with the law before finding success with Motley Crue. Each one of the boys comes from a dysfunctional home which probably forms the foundation for their anti-social and rebellious behavior as adults.

Sex, Drugs and Rock & Roll

"Sex, Drugs and Rock & Roll" is a mantra adopted by young people in the late 1960s and remains a philosophy for those who rebel against authority and established life expectations. The members of Motley Crue exemplify fully the principles of this rallying cry because they completely abuse themselves and other people in pursuit of these shallow and short-lived pleasures. The escapades of sexual use and abuse of girls and women is extreme as the boys learn to manage their celebrity and the permissive environment in which they now live. Girls throw themselves at the band members all the time and they make no effort to resist, even when they are in supposedly committed relationships in their personal lives. Most probably, the rampant use of drugs and alcohol which dulls their senses and judgment contributes to this behavior but the boys see no reason to stop any of it. Even after periods of rehab and enforced sobriety, the old patterns return and the boys see the substances as an integral part of their lifestyles, as are the women who pass through the turnstiles the boys call relationships.



Passion for Music

The drive that all the boys share is the passion for music. All of them can remember as children how they either beat on pots and pans to make distinctive sounds or played air guitar in their minds. Most of them get guitars for Christmas gifts and as the years pass, the guitars increase in value and professional quality. The need to play sometimes exceeds the ability to pay and guitars are even stolen from pawnshops in order to feed the passion to make music. Most of the boys drop out of school to either start their own bands or look for existing bands with which to play. Day jobs are soon dropped in favor of practice for night gigs at small venues and clubs. Even after the group is formed and well established and all the substance abuse and excesses of their lives threaten to destroy them, the boys always return to the music and know that that is their core. Ultimately, when the band splits up, the members go out as solo acts or establish other bands because the music is what drives them and makes their existence complete.



Style

Perspective

The book is written in the first person narrative perspective which means that the person telling the story tells it from his own view. This means also that the narrator cannot truly know what the other people are thinking or feeling; he can only project what he thinks they are experiencing. This style essentially relates details and events as viewed from the author's mind with no ability to fill in details of the others surrounding him. This book is unique in that it is written by the four band members so the reader grows to understand events from the perspective of each of them. This helps to fill in the story of the band's establishment and growth to celebrity and also provides the reader with personal and poignant details about the lives of each of them as told by each of them. This allows the reader some additional perspective on the story and helps clarify events as they are related by the different boys. In addition, each chapter is preceded by a few lines provided by a third person, unidentified narrator who gives a witty, sometimes sarcastic description of the contents to follow in the chapter. The first example of this in the book is "Of and concerning the first house, wherein Tommy is caught with his knickers down and his baubles in a hole; Nikki is set on fire to the eminent displeasure of the carpet; Vince covets narcotics on the person of David Lee Roth; and Mick maintains a righteous and bemused distance," *The Motley House*, p. 1.

Tone

The tone of the book is extremely casual as if the reader is listening to the boys talk in personal conversations. This means that there are many incomplete sentences and many fragments which are indicative of conversational style. This informality makes for a quick read and the story is very engaging. Readers who are easily offended will find not only the content but some of the language particularly offensive as vulgarities liberally populate the entire book. Due to the informal style, emotions are easily understood. For example, the passion for the music is evident as is the anger felt toward anyone who tries to thwart their progress. Since the book is of a conversational nature, there is some rambling in the story and backtracking on dates and events but this only adds to the authenticity of the piece.

Structure

The book is structured into twelve parts containing small chapters within each. The chapters are named for each of the band members to indicate that the content will be that person's narrative on events and the unfolding story. The first section sets up the story of the current Motley Crue band and the following sections and chapters provide background information. Similar to a flashback technique, the chapters detail the circumstances and events leading up to the group's formation. The book is compiled to

include different chapters from the different boys so that the story is told in an overlapping but somewhat sequential pattern. Each of the chapters also has an accompanying preliminary statement in the style of a third person narrator to give an indication of the content of the upcoming chapter. The book also contains passages from letters and notes as well as song lyrics and a generous amount of photos showcasing the evolving style and relationships of the band members.

Quotes

"We lived in that pigsty as long as a child stays in the womb before scattering to move in with girls we had met. The whole time we lived there all we wanted was a record deal. But all we ended up with was booze, drugs, chicks, squalor, and court orders. Mick, who was living with his girlfriend in Manhattan Beach, kept telling us that was no way to go about getting a deal. But I guess he was wrong. That place gave birth to Motley Crue, and like a pack of mad dogs, we abandoned the bitch, leaving with enough reckless, aggravated testosterone to spawn a million bastard embryo metal bands," *The Motley House*, p. 5.

"What's on the inside of people like that is stuff that's a little too much for me. Everyone likes to look for aliens, but I think we are the aliens. We're the descendants of the troublemakers on other planets. Just like Australia was a prison to England, where they sent all their criminals and so on, it's the same thing on Earth. This is where they dropped us off. We're the insane fucking people from somewhere else, just a bunch of trash," *The Motley House*, p. 7.

"People say that you can't predict your future, that nobody knows what life has planned for them. But I know that's bullshit. It's not just the tattoo images that later became reality for me. It goes much further back. I predicted my future when I was three and, in a childish effort to make louder and better noises, arranged pots and pans on the kitchen floor and whaled on them with spoons and knives. My friend Gerald tells me now that I knew in my soul what I wanted to do back then. And the day I started making that racket on my mom's cooking shit was the day I manifested it. But I didn't know it at the time. I was stupid," *Toast of the Town*, p. 45.

"I don't know how we ever dragged our incestuous, partied-out little selves to the next level as a band, because we didn't even believe that a next level existed," *Toast of the Town*, p. 74.

"Every city in America must have sprouted its own equivalent of the Sunset Strip. This wasn't an underground thing anymore. It was a mass movement and finally we were all meeting to put a new nation on the map. Looking down on it all from the helicopter, with a bottle of Jack in my left hand, a bag of pills in my right hand, and a blond head bobbing up and down in my lap, I felt like the king of the world. That lasted for about a second. Then I got scared shitless," *Shout at the Devil*, p. 90.

"But unlike us, Ozzy had a restraint, a limit, a conscience, a brake. And that restraint came in the form of a homely, rotund little British woman whose very name sets lips trembling and knees knocking: Sharon Osbourne, a shitkicker and disciplinarian like no other we had ever met, a woman whose presence could in an instant send us reeling back to our childhood fear of authority," *Shout at the Devil*, p. 105.



"Ankylosing spondylitis is a degenerative bone disease that I'm told is inherited, though I don't know of any relatives who have it. It usually affects the joints and ligaments that allow the spine to move, making them inflamed and stiff. It is as if hot, quick-drying cement is growing on the inside of your spine, becoming so heavy over the years that it starts to pull you down. People think that I walk hunched over because I'm shy, but it's because my spine is slowly forcing me down to the ground," *Some of Our Best Friends Are Drug Dealers*, p. 186.

"Just before we left for Japan, an earthquake hit Los Angeles. I had been up for three days straight, and when I ran out of the house, the only thing I grabbed was my freebase pipe. That's how important it was to me. I didn't even take my house keys, and had to break open my side door to get back inside. I knew I was in a downward spiral. But I didn't realize how low I had actually spun until we started our second tour of polite, civilized Japan, where our antics made us stick out like clowns at a funeral," *Some of Our Best Friends Are Drug Dealers*, p. 198.

"When I became older, nothing would piss me off more than someone not talking to me. It still fucking gets to me if a girl doesn't call back or if I do something wrong and get the silent treatment from a friend. Dude, I want to crawl into a hole and die every time. So when I saw that sign in rehab, 'Silence = Death,' I said to myself, 'You know what? That's exactly what it fucking felt like as a kid,'" *Some of Our Best Friends Were Drug Dealers*, p. 215.

"In rehab, they had told me that the only way to get clean is by believing in and seeking the help of a higher power that could return sanity to my life. Most people chose God or love. I chose the only woman who hadn't abandoned me my whole life: Music. And it was time to pay her back for her faith and perseverance," *Some of Our Best Friends Were Drug Dealers*, p. 223.

"Our attitude was: Fuck Vince, dude. He was lazy, he didn't care, he didn't contribute to Motley Crue, and he had no fucking respect for any of us. He became a punching bag: united against motherfucking Vince. We even put a picture of him on the back of the toilet, dude, so that when we went to the bathroom we could piss on his face," *Without You*, p. 293.

"I walked down the steps and peered into the window of the classroom to make sure Brandon was making friends. And he was: He was sitting there laughing at something. I took another step forward to see what he was laughing at and saw Nikki's son, Decker, taking off his shirt. A whole new generation of Sixxes and Lees—and Neils and Marses—was about to be let loose on the world," *Hollywood Ending*, p. 426.

Topics for Discussion

Each of the boys comes from a dysfunctional home. Discuss the similarities and differences in each that laid a foundation for rebellion.

What do you think is lacking in the boys' early lives that makes them search for fulfillment through their music and lifestyles?

The boys rebel at an early age. Do you think that stems from their environments or their personalities?

The tendencies toward substance abuse can be inherited or environmental. Discuss the rampant abuse of drugs and alcohol among the band members and why they use to such extremes.

Discuss the interrelation of the boys' early rebellious behavior and their later behavior. Do you think they started out rebellious and were obligated to continue because their fans expected it? Or did they get tired of acting like wild rockers as their lives matured and deepened?

Discuss the changing music scene from the time the boys started Motley Crue in the early 1980s and how they were able to adapt to their changing fan base.

How do you reconcile the boys' habit of wearing high heels and lipstick with the hard core personas they want to project?