



Shut Up and Give Me the Mic: A Twisted Memoir

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From Reader Review Shut Up and Give Me the Mic: A Twisted Memoir for online ebook

Chris says

This book mostly chronicles the rise and fall of Twisted Sister from Dee Snider's perspective and gives very little beyond that. Maybe there will be a sequel to the book (Mr. Snider hints at it).

Similar to Gene Simmons of KISS, Mr. Snider takes a lot (and I mean a lot) of credit for starting trends in the music and music video industries in addition to hard rock and metal fashions of the 1980s-90s, among many other things. At least he does so with a little bit of humility as he looks back upon his life.

Overall, an interesting read for those of us who grew up during the reign of Twisted Sister and the radio and cultural domination of hard rock and heavy metal. It didn't quite live up to my expectations, though.

Tanya says

I got Shut Up and Give Me the Mic because I like a few Twisted Sister songs and I like Dee Snider's movie Strangeland. The fact that I found it at the Dollar Tree didn't hurt. I wanted to learn more about how Twisted Sister got their start, which I did, but parts of the book were ~~kinda~~ really boring. I had to make myself keep reading at some points. It's refreshing to read about a rocker who didn't do crack, didn't drink a bottle of gin every night or sleep with every groupie available. That part was cool, but he had/has a huge ego (which he'll mention repeatedly). It also ends sort of abruptly.

The book covers Dee's career with local New York bands until he eventually ends up in Twisted Sister and everything took off from there. He met his wife, TS got a following and they got a record deal. Dee explains how things like royalties, making/promoting albums and tours really work and how much money the band actually gets, which is good information for anyone in a band. He also mentions all of the milestones he missed with his first son: most of his wife's pregnancy, his son's first steps, his first words, etc, because he was out on the road. You can tell how much he really loves his family and I liked that part.

After living the high life for so many years and then having the last Twisted Sister album and tour fail miserably and making some less than wise business decisions, Dee had to file for bankruptcy two different times. He lost just about everything except for his family and his wife's hot pink jeep. Trying to pull himself back out of the hole was a humbling experience and it seemed to really open his eyes. Then the book just ended! He mentions that to learn about what it was like for him to make Strangeland you'll have to read his next book, but I don't want to!

Teressa says

Loved it! As a child of the 80s, I loved Twisted Sister. This bio was interesting and entertaining. Dee Snider and Twisted Sister worked so hard and never seemed to get the breaks to make it really big.

Steve Coscia says

You don't have to be a Twisted Sister fan (I am not) to enjoy this book. I found Dee's ups and downs (and he has been way up and way down) easy to relate to and his perseverance throughout is inspiring. This memoir is written plainly and there are many edge-of-your-seat episodes that keep the pages turning. Dee's "life rules" and descriptive writing style kept me engaged. I read this book in one sitting. Very enjoyable. This is a real good book, and not just because Dee Snider grew up a few miles from me on Long Island or that we played in the same nightclubs.

A Reader's Heaven says

Dee Snider, former lead singer of 80's juggernaut rock band Twisted Sister, has written one of the better rock bio's I have read since *The Heroin Diaries: A Year In The Life Of A Shattered Rock Star*.

Dee covers everything from his early years and bands, getting the gig with TS and the eventual demise of the band. He speaks about the hardships getting to where he truly believes he belongs and the terrible failure that followed the bands' successes. He is brutally honest about those people who were around him: band members, managers, record label, distributors...you name it - Dee was angry!

The one thing that stood about it all was Dee's love of "it" - his family. His wife, Suzette, who went through it all and supported him deserves a similar medal to that of Sharon Osbourne: while Sharon had to deal with Ozzy's drugs and alcohol binging, Suzette Snider had to deal with a man in denial, depression and failure. Dee's love for her - and the support she gave him - shines through this whole book.

Loved nearly every page of it!

Paul
ARH

Anna says

Dee Snider is a rare animal: a rock musician who is drug and alcohol free and always has been. He has company in that respect in Gene Simmons and Ted Nugent, but Dee manages to do it without being a nutjob (Nugent) or a womanizing creep (both). He managed to avoid substance abuse without picking up another vice. He met his wife at 21 and hasn't strayed since, and she and his children are everything to him and have sustained him through the leanest times of his life. Snider makes clear that while he was driven to be a performer, he found little joy in it, and hated the accompanying lifestyle. Keeping his nose clean didn't save him from the fall however, because a series of bad choices, mismanagement, and his inflated ego ended Twisted Sister's worldwide fame after just two albums. Most of the book covers the time period leading up to that fame, his childhood and the near decade spent as a wildly successful regional band prior to getting a record deal, and the collapse of it all. Snider makes it clear that this is only volume one of the story and he

will tell of the rebuilding of his career in a later book. Dee's self-deprecating humor makes this a fun read, and I particularly enjoyed the section on the PMRC hearings. The whole thing was just so ridiculous especially in light of today's popular entertainment. Were they really so afraid of men in makeup and a little Wile E Coyote video violence?

Kramer Thompson says

An engaging and funny autobiography, particularly focusing on Dee's time in Twisted Sister. Dee is a good writer, not shying away from giving his personal opinion on much of what went on in Twisted Sister. The one major complaint I have coming out of it is that I don't understand how or if Dee really did win over Suzette. He regularly mentions that their relationship is the highlight of his life, but that in the beginning she had no interest in him and he just managed to win her over, and that now they have an amazing relationship. Well it isn't clear at all that they do have such a relationship. All we hear is that she doesn't want to date him or marry him or move in with him etc. So that was a bit weird. But I'll take Dee's word for it, I guess.

Overall, a fun read!

Dr. Detroit says

Stardom? I once tried to figure it out and my nose started bleeding. I took this as a sign to stop.

Dee Snider evidently never figured it out either, surrounding himself during Twisted Sister's heyday and beyond with a team of handlers, trainers, therapists, linguists, donors, spokesmen, media consultants, speechwriters, image makers, spin doctors, crisis teams, spiritual gurus, food tasters, pollsters, pundits, wags, wonks, interstate bagmen, unindicted co-conspirators, miscellaneous hangers-on and three bimbos who look like the Mandrell sisters. Of course I'm exaggerating, but he burned through enough long green to pay off all of the above and more.

Outside of "Be Chrool to Your Scuel" and "I Am (I'm Me)," I've never been the world's biggest Twisted Sister fan but I've always considered Snider a man amongst insects, standing tall and singing into the light, still suffering from rock-singer-as-gang-leader syndrome but cogent enough to spell "irony," "gimmick," AND "humor" throughout what has to be one of the most brutally honest, compelling, and entertaining bios I've ever had the pleasure of reading. But fer Christ's sake Dee, you can't shoulder the blame for everything. That's too much heat for any one man to handle.

I may be caught up in the moment, but this has to be Snider's finest hour. Besides standing up to those hopeless PMRC no-lifers back in the 80's that is. For that he deserves to be carried on a throne around Baldwin for the rest of his life.

Unqualifyingly recommended.

Kaye Bleek says

I've had this book in my collection for a while and finally picked it up a few days ago.

I was a huge Twisted in the 1980's, I still am, so to read all about how Dee Schneider went from nothing to everything and back again, was extremely interesting.

His honesty and humour in writing the book are refreshing, with none of the "this is how people told me I was as I took drugs or drank too much to remember " because he is a straight guy who never did these things, worshipped his family and looked out for those who needed help starting up in the industry. He never forgot any of the help anyone gave him, and even now, years later, he's still going.

If you want an insight into how 80's metal really started, with hard work and tenacity, read this book

wendy says

he would've gotten 5 stars but he pretty much stopped at widowmaker! he's done A LOT in the past 20 years that should have been included here. i had a feeling he was going to say we would have to wait for part 2 and sure enough...he did.

Jeff McCormack says

Great book. I have loved the band Twisted Sister since Discovering them around 1982 - I used to listen to their "You Can't Stop Rock N Roll" album to death in the day, before they were MTV monsters, before the huge hits of 1983. I have loved them ever since, including Dee's other musical ventures. I saw Dee and the SMF band live on Long Island while living there, back in the mid-90s.

It took me a while to get around to reading this book, and I had help fund and have watching the recent documentary on the band, so decided it was time to read this. It fills in lots of gaps from the documentary, of course more from Dee's side of things, but connecting many dots, which is nice.

I found it an easy read, very well written, and if you are a fan of the band, it becomes a real page turner. Lots of details, and lots of self-inflicted pain is seen, which made me feel bad for the band and Dee specifically, and a few stabs at other band members as expected. I couldn't help but wonder how the other band members took what he said at time, especially given the fact the band continued to tour for a few years after the book came out.

The early struggles of the band, and the over and over again bad timing and bad circumstances they ran into have to touch you. The struggles just seemed unbelievable at times, and at times made me want to track Dee down and give him a big hug of encouragement. And now knowing the circumstances behind the scenes of each album gives me an added appreciation of music I already was fond of, and I have been spinning their music a lot during this reading process.

The band is over now after the death of drummer A.J. Pero, so reading this book was like closer of the story of a great band, one that (according to the book) was very instrumental in what later became known (or rudely called) the "hair" band era of the 80's.

Sebastian Bach says

This book was great. The way it is written, the grammar, attention to detail, humor, the stories, it's all perfect. Dee is truthful and pulls no punches in telling the tale of the incredible highs and lows of his life. At the end, he reiterates what is truly important in life; which is love. He has always had love, and nothing is more important in this world. As he so succinctly states in this awesome book!

Benjamin Kahn says

What you'd expect from Dee Snider. An interesting, well-written look at Twisted Sister's rise and fall. Dee Snider is an engaging narrator, and he does a good job of being self-reflective and self-deprecating, taking blame where he has fallen short and dishing out blame when deserving to others. I was never a huge Twisted Sister fan - I considered picking up their album several times in high school, but there was always another album that I wanted more. But I've always been a fan of Snider when I've seen him through the years, and this book does him justice.

I appreciated that although Snider laid some of the blame for Twisted Sister's decline and fall on record label decisions, he took his fair share of the blame. He talks about mistakes and bad decisions he made, and talks about how his ego got in the way. It's easier to be sympathetic when someone is willing to share the blame for how things went. I can't help but compare it to Anthrax's Scott Ian's autobiography, where he blames everything on record label decisions. Or Sammy Hagar, who's autobiography left me thinking "what a jerk." Snider comes off like a nice, self-reflective guy with his head screwed on right and his priorities straight.

Kathleen says

"Don't let my having only a couple hits fool you. Hit records are no reflection of songwriting ability or quality. Making a song a hit is a whole other process, in most ways beyond the control of the creator."

Lydia says

Shut Up and Give Me the Mic: A Twisted Memoir is everything a rock-n-roll memoir should be. It's a fast-paced, grandiose, detail-packed tell-all; in every possible way, ripped with a level of testosterone-injected, larger-than-life might that can only be delivered from one of the top showmen from 1980's "decade of decadence". And after that? *It's so much more!*

Once Dee starts, he doesn't stop. Not one to beat around the bush, he gets right to the heart of every chapter, every life experience, and tackles it with the same ferocity he unleashed upon legions of heavy metal fans during Twisted Sister's early years through to their breakthrough superstardom with 1984's *Stay Hungry*.

Dee recounts his childhood as an unpopular kid, his relationship with his overworked dad (inspiration for "Neidermeyer's" role in the Twisted videos *We're Not Gonna Take It* and *I Wanna Rock*), his blind ambition

(fueled by PMA--Positive Mental Attitude), and the long pot-holed road to international stardom. Along the way he lists his "Dee's Life Lessons" and sets himself apart from other rockers by noting that he didn't drink or do drugs, and conducted his on-the-road life hermit-like to preserve his energy and voice for the "Demolition Squad" shows Twisted Sister performed nightly on the East Coast--years before they finally struck commercial gold.

Dee writes,

"As for drugs, I've always known I have an obsessive personality, and if I started doing drugs, I wouldn't be able to control myself. Besides, I've never had a problem "letting myself go." I was always a crazy kid, and at first the people I knew who partied would say, "Snider, we want to see what you're like high." Then after spending a bit more time with me, they would say "On second thought, *we don't.*"

Am I anti-drugs-and-alcohol? Not really. I'm just anti-asshole. If you can party and remain who you are or become a looser, more fun version of who you are, God bless you. But if when you party, you become some shape-shifting, obnoxious asshole who doesn't know when to quit...you, I can live without."

If you are at all familiar with how Dee Snider talks, there's no doubting whether or not it's his voice. It's DS through and through.

"People often ask me what I think of current music, and for the past twenty-five years or so I've said the same thing: "Not enough middle finger." Since my heyday, I've liked lots of contemporary heavy music. I even liked grunge--the hair-metal slayer--but in the 1990s and 2000s--and even still today--there's just too much whining and complaining about how life sucks, and not enough middle finger."

Beyond just being a good, straightforward storyteller with amazing tempo and charming self-deprecation, in *Shut Up and Give Me the Mic* Dee offers us a history lesson: 80's rock-n-roll 101.

The amount of information stuffed in this book is staggering. Contained within are in-depth excerpts about record deal pitfalls, clashing personalities and jaw-dropping scenarios with label execs. With thousands of live shows under TS's belt there's plenty of stage hijinx and humor; like getting banned from all outdoor venues in NYC because poor New Jersey families were forced to listen to a long chorus of crowd-orchestrated "Fuck you's!" on a warm summer night ('unbeknownst to us sound carries *really* well over water'). In the process of asking his neighbor if he'll perform on the *Come Out and Play* album, Dee gets berated by Billy Joel for suggesting that metal is not really his thing; "*I was playing heavy metal when you were in fucking diapers!*" Who knew?

In a chapter that had me in stitches, Dee admits to torturing a much hated Tom Werman--producer on the *Stay Hungry* album--by shaking Werman's Porsche in the parking lot, thereby forcing Werman to run to the parking lot cursing, go about the arduous and methodical process of de-locking the car at its base, uncovering the car, opening the car, resetting the car alarm; just to hide in the alley and do it again once he knew Werman was comfortable in the studio. Sage relationship wisdom? Not a problem. Footnote: "*Hey, if you have to be whipped, let it be by pussy.*" The book is full of gems and wonderful, unexpected laugh out loud moments. I could actually describe far more without spoiling the book one bit.

I've been a Twisted Sister fan since I saw the video *You Can't Stop Rock 'n' Roll* on MTV in the early 80's. And I used to play *Stay Hungry* in awe of the non-radio-play songs. Like Sabbath, their music was dark, yet had a positive message at its core; and the songs were as strong and solid as any AC/DC number. They were a good, hardworking rock band. Watching Dee speak at the PMRC Senate hearings against censorship only further cemented my admiration and fandom.

Unapologetic in his criticisms of his peers at the time and those who sought to sabotage his work, yet completely grateful for all the good people in his life--first and foremost, his cherished family--Dee combines all the elements of hindsight, hope, humor, regret and deep gratitude to pen an enjoyable read. He's succeeded at a music career, scriptwriting, becoming a t.v. personality, *and* he wrote a book--praised as one of the best books about growing up--that became a college textbook in then-Soviet Union entitled, *Dee Snider's Teenage Survival Guide*. I'm telling you, I could go on and on and *still* not spoil this story!

A true professional, Dee doesn't disappoint with this enlightening and inspiring memoir. Thank you for being a true professional and properly conveying the spirit of a colorful era through your written word. Thank you for your empowering and unwavering commitment to rock-n-roll. - *SMFF*
