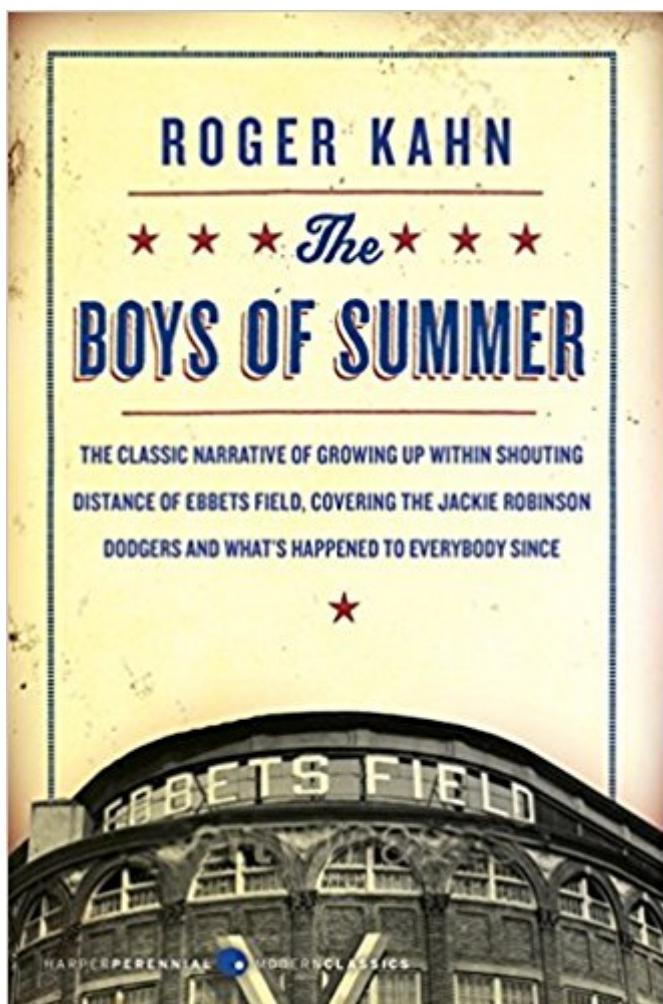


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# The Boys Of Summer (Harperperennial Modern Classics)



## Synopsis

This is a book about young men who learned to play baseball during the 1930s and 1940s, and then went on to play for one of the most exciting major-league ball clubs ever fielded, the team that broke the color barrier with Jackie Robinson. It is a book by and about a sportswriter who grew up near Ebbets Field, and who had the good fortune in the 1950s to cover the Dodgers for the Herald Tribune. This is a book about what happened to Jackie, Carl Erskine, Pee Wee Reese, and the others when their glory days were behind them. In short, it is a book about America, about fathers and sons, prejudice and courage, triumph and disaster, and told with warmth, humor, wit, candor, and love.

## Book Information

Series: Harperperennial Modern Classics

Paperback: 512 pages

Publisher: Harper Perennial Modern Classics; Reissue edition (May 9, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060883960

ISBN-13: 978-0060883966

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 160 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #41,081 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #32 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Baseball #364 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > United States #1267 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Contemporary

## Customer Reviews

"At a point in life when one is through with boyhood, but has not yet discovered how to be a man, it was my fortune to travel with the most marvelously appealing of teams." Sentimental because it holds such promise, and bittersweet because that promise is past, the first sentence of this masterpiece of sporting literature, first published in the early '70s, sets its tone. What follows only gets better, deeper, more sentimental, and more bittersweet. The team, of course, is the mid-20th-century Brooklyn Dodgers, the team of Robinson and Snyder and Hodges and Reese, a team of great triumph and historical import composed of men whose fragile lives were filled with dignity and pathos. Roger Kahn, who covered that team for the New York Herald Tribune, makes understandable humans of his heroes as he chronicles the dreams and exploits of their young lives,

beautifully intertwining them with his own, then recounts how so many of those sweet dreams curdled as the body of these once shining stars grew rusty with age and battered by experience. It is the rare sports book that cannot be contained by the limitations of its genre; it is equal parts journalism, memoir, social history, and poetry. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Roger Kahn has achieved the near impossible in his "The Boys of Summer" by writing two splendid books in one, neither of which, strangely enough, is a sports book although baseball is the central theme of both. To Mr. Kahn, 'people' is the name of the game, and it's a game he plays with brilliance, insight and thoughtfulness. To say that I 'enjoyed' the book is to say that winning a World Championship is 'interesting', owing a derby winner 'nice', and starring in the Super Bowl 'fun'."-- Bill Veeck"Kahn's book is marvelous...a splendid historical work. It is about youthful dreams in small American towns and big cities decades ago, and how some of these dreams were fulfilled, and about what happened to those dreamers after reality and old age arrived. It is also a book about ourselves, those of us who shared and identified with the dreams and glories of our heroes."-- Gay Talese"What most people look for in a book is a good story. Roger Kahn gives us about fifteen of them woven into one coherent narrative that is moving and funny and sentimental (about people and things that merit sentiment) and cynical (about those that don't)."-- Ring Lardner, Jr. "To writer Roger Kahn, the old Brooklyn Dodgers National League baseball team is a forever a priceless violin and he is the bow which must play upon it. This isn't a book; it's a love affair between a man, his team, and an era."-- "Christian Science Monitor""A work of high purpose and poetic accomplishment. The finest American book on sports. I commend it without qualification."-- James Michener"The "Boys of Summer" is a book of life . . . beautifully and above all . . . respectfully observed."-- Paul Hogan"A work of high purpose and poetic accomplishment. The finest American book on sports. I commend it without qualification."--James Michener"The best team the majors ever saw, a team so extraordinary that Marianne Moore wrote poems to it--the Brooklyn Dodgers of the 1950s...A moving elegy!"--"New York Times"Not just another book about baseball or a boy growing up to like baseball, but a book about pain and defeat and endurance, about how men anywhere must live."--Peter Prescott, "Newsweek

I received this book as a gift in a Secret Santa who only knew I was a Dodger fan. The first half of the book is more akin to an autobiography of the author which I found a bit tedious. When the author does indeed get into the story of the Brooklyn Dodgers, and later to the player interviews the book

becomes a joyous and quick read that leaves you wishing for more. I've been a Dodger fan since the 70's and after reading this book I really do wish I was alive to see The Boys of Summer play.

Since I grew up during those Dodger years of "magic" baseball AND I had a friend (in Philly) who was a rabid Dodger fan while the rest of us rooted hopelessly for the Phillies, this book led me back to those days when players played for pittances and the great American shame was finally challenged in the persons of Jackie Robinson and Branch Rickey. Mr. Kahn was a guy on the inside as a reporter and on the outside as a fan. His reminiscences enhanced by re-contacting the same team members who made up the Dodger "glory days" in Ebbets field are a tribute to all of us whose star shines brightly all too shortly and then back to the dust heap of everyday life -- since when they retired there was no real pension fund nor aid for the various physical and sometimes mental injuries sustained during the MLB competition over those years. This short span of time led up to the 1954 US Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation. The character of these players worked within this highly charged era in baseball and the United States history of slavery, horrendous killing bigotry and barriers to the voting booth. At that time, few of them realized what changes were then happening and that were actors in this unrealized drama...until some years after it all happened. In the end, the tale tells more than baseball...it extends baseball's democracy to all but it was a long hard fight and this is its legacy.

I recently finished this book and I want to read it again ! I have been a Dodger fan since 1959 when they beat the Chicago White Sox for the World Series title. This book has many different themes, the realities of corporate life, father-son as well as other family relationships, the realities of change, and racism. This is also a book about a different America. You see a self reliant, hard working but more divided America. Although there are multiple themes the, book never strays far from its focus on baseball. How do I view baseball after reading this book ? Baseball as Roger Kahn describes it is a confrontational, collisional, and athletic sport. At times I felt that I was "stepping into" the book. On another note, I was a little surprised that Kahn did not talk more about the famous nickname of the Dodgers " The Bums". I think that if you want to relieve the glory days of American baseball the book is for you.

This is a very touching book because the author loved the baseball team he had the privilege to travel with and to write about, and he loved his father who fostered this love for the Brooklyn Dodgers in the 1940s and early 1950s. Roger Kahn writes with heart, with enthusiasm and with the

utmost respect. It is a long time now since the Dodgers were in Brooklyn but each time I read about that era I get a lump in my throat. I loved Doris Kearns Goodwin's book *Wait Till Next Year* about the same years, the same Dodgers, and what could have been (but wasn't, of course) the same father. I don't know if fathers still pass down the love of a sport to their children because sports are so different now, but it sure made a difference to these two Dodger lovers back in the day. This is touted as the best sports book ever, and it is certainly one of the very best that I have ever read, but as other reviewers have said here, the book is about more than baseball, it is about a disparate group of men, and boys, coming together to play a game and to learn about themselves and life and love and loss and the social changes in the aftermath of World War 2. It is delightful and fun to read, and it rings of truth and packs a punch.

Starts out with an interesting glimpse of life in Brooklyn in the 30's and an autobiography of Roger Kahn. Once Kahn gets to the part about covering the Dodgers for a newspaper, the story gets more interesting, but that's just a fairly brief part of the book. The rest of the book covers what happened to the main players after they left the game. I enjoyed that much more, as well as some history of the franchise. Overall a good book for baseball fans.

I had heard favorable things about this book for years, so when World Series time rolled around, it was a logical choice for my semi-annual "baseball book" reading. It simply lived up to all my expectations. Khan, who reported on the Brooklyn Dodgers in the mid-1950s knowingly discussed the team organization, its players, and the newspapers who reported on them. In a touching epilogue, Khan interviewed key players years after their retirements to expand on the more mundane and human sides of these personalities. In short, if you're a baseball fan of any age, this book is a must-read.

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