

Beaten *Black and Blue* by critics

BLACK & BLUE

BY LINDSEY PARSONS

Backstreet's back. Alright! After a year and a half between record releases and a long absence from the pop scene, the Backstreet Boys have released their third US album.

Black and Blue hit shelves on November 21 to a frenzy of BSB loyalists and harsh reviews by critics. Entertainment Weekly commented, "...*Black and Blue* merely maintains a holding pattern, recycling their past and doing little to establish a firm future."

Time Weekly said, "If you're willing to accept sentiment in place of emotion, corniness in place of craft, and corporate marketing in place of your own free will, it can be intoxicating."

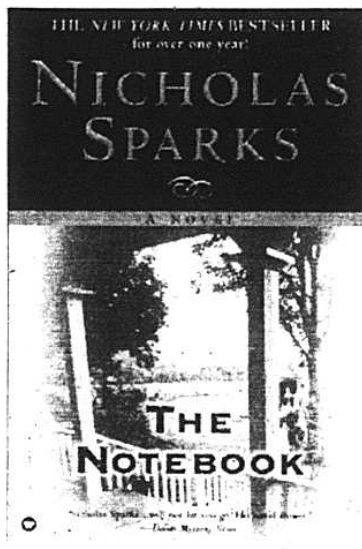
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Sparks's *The Notebook* captures the heart

BY CARISSA
SETTLER

Curling up to a fire with a book is always a good idea around the holidays. Letting all of your stress go, and relaxing always helps with the tremendous pressure the holidays bring. For this winter, I recommended Nicholas Sparks' *The Notebook*.

The book tells the epic love story of two people meant to be together from the first time their eyes meet. Throughout the book, Sparks unfolds the true love story of Noah



Callhoun and Allie Nelson.

The story begins with Noah sitting by the window of his room in a nursing home. Reflections of the life that he and Allie made for themselves fill in his mind.

When meeting, Noah and Allie spent one summer together and instantly fell in love.

They were then separated. Being on different sides of the tracks was the downfall. With parents who divided them into social classes, Noah and Allie could not be together.

Fourteen years pass. Restoring a plantation home in New Bern, North Carolina through the day, and sharing the most vivid memories of Allie with his hound dog Clem in to the late hours of the night, make Noah's days seem to drag by.

While dealing with the stress of planning a wedding, and fourteen years of memories of that special summer, Allie longs to find Noah one last time.

After arriving, memories from the summer they spent together were brought back to life. Noah had sparked the flame that had yet to burn with the man she intended to marry. One night of romance leads to a lifetime of love for Noah and Allie.

A letter from Noah to Allie explains it all.

When I look at you, I see your beauty and grace and know that you have grown stronger with every life you have lived. And I know I have spent every life before this one searching for you. Not someone like you, but you, for your soul and mine must always come together.

The Notebook is full of words that will capture your heart and hold on tight. True love does exist, and you will find it in Nicholas Sparks' *The Notebook*. I highly recommend this book, and after page one you will see why. It's incredible, and you won't be able to put it down.



Logan's: bigger and better

BY NIKKI WOOD

Dine in restaurants featuring full menus grow more and more popular each day.

Two of the most frequented establishments are Applebee's and Logan's Roadhouse.

Both businesses offer a wide variety of foods catering to almost every taste, but is one restaurant better than the other?

I set out to discover this.

First, I dined at Applebee's located on the Richmond bypass.

The prices of entrees ranged from \$5 to even \$12 or \$13. The entree's do not include salad.

I ordered the Nawlins Skillet, a dish consisting of grilled chicken, shrimp, green and red bell peppers, and onions. These are served on a bed of rice with cajun sauce.

I also ordered a cherry Coke to drink.

The server was on the verge of being rude, but she was prompt in bringing the drinks to the table.

The soda normally includes cherries floating in the glass, but

because the bar was out of them, it had none. The drink also tasted somewhat watered down.

I did not have to wait long for the food to arrive, and it was served sizzling hot, but the portions were very small.

It smelled delicious, but as I began to eat, I noticed there were very few pieces of actual meat, and the vegetables were too abundant.

The food did taste excellent, but I left the table still a bit hungry and I wasn't sure I had gotten my \$10 worth.

The following weekend I ate at Logan's Roadhouse at the Hamburg Pavilion in Lexington.

The prices on the menu were higher than those at Applebee's, ranging from about \$6 to \$16 for entrees. However, unlike Applebee's, bread and salad are included with the meal.

I ordered a chicken and sirloin combo platter with rice pilaf and a baked potato. Again, I requested cherry Coke to drink.

The server was kind and mannerly. She brought our drinks right away. The cherry Coke had several cherries in the glass and tasted perfect.

Next, she arrived with a large plate of salad and bread, and before I could finish it, she brought the largest plate of food I had seen in a long time.

The plate held a midsize slice of beef and a huge chicken breast on a mountain of pilaf, on a second plate were large rolls, and on the final plate rested an enormous baked potato.

The food was well prepared and supreme in flavor. The server frequently checked the table, but just enough to be helpful, not annoying. I left the restaurant quite satisfied. This meal cost about \$15.

In the end, although it does cost more, I found that Logan's Roadhouse is a better choice than Applebee's if you are looking for a good meal. Bon appetite!

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