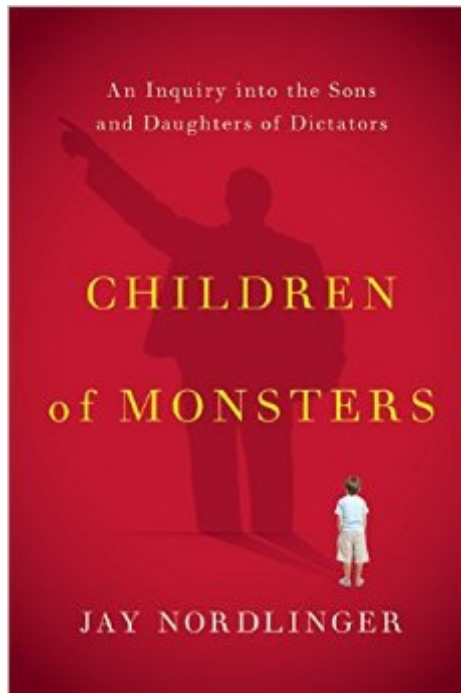


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Children Of Monsters: An Inquiry Into The Sons And Daughters Of Dictators



Synopsis

What's it like to be the son or daughter of a dictator? A monster on the Stalin level? What's it like to bear a name synonymous with oppression, terror, and evil? Jay Nordlinger set out to answer that question, and does so in this book. He surveys 20 dictators in all. They are the worst of the worst: Stalin, Mao, Idi Amin, Pol Pot, Saddam Hussein, and so on. The book is not about them, really, though of course they figure in it. It's about their children. Some of them are absolute loyalists. They admire, revere, or worship their father. Some of them actually succeed their father as dictator—as in North Korea, Syria, and Haiti. Some of them have doubts. A couple of them become full-blown dissenters, even defectors. A few of the daughters have the experience of having their husband killed by their father. Most of these children are rocked by war, prison, exile, or other upheaval. Obviously, the children have things in common. But they are also individuals, making of life what they can. The main thing they have in common is this: They have been dealt a very, very unusual hand. What would you do, if you were the offspring of an infamous dictator, who lords it over your country? An early reader of this book said, "There's an opera on every page": a drama, a tragedy (or even a comedy). Another reader said he had read the chapter on Bokassa "with my eyes on stalks." Meet these characters for yourself. Marvel, shudder, and ponder.

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Customer Reviews

This was a really interesting book looking at the dictators of the 20th and 21st century with emphasis on their children and how they turned out. I found it fascinating that most if not all of the

dictators and their children fall into the maxim "absolute power corrupts absolutely". Very rarely did any of the children "escape" the corruption, greed or sins of their fathers. I was also saddened to see how many of the totalitarian despots escaped justice and were actually aided by other corrupt regimes. Most of the children excuse and even speak with pride of their despotic fathers. A sort of Stockholm syndrome for kids I guess. I highly recommend this book not just for the fascinating stories and histories but also as a teachable book on the corruption of political systems like Communism and Fascism. It really hits home to the importance of individual liberties and constitutional rights.

Really fantastic piece of work. Nordlinger offers a fascinating ride through the 'Heart of Darkness' of the world's worst dictators and how their children have coped with the realities of what they've done. No surprisingly, you have your enablers and your realists among them.

A completely compelling look into the private lives of dictators we have come to know as monstrous, and how their actions affected their children. It's filled with fun facts - like Stalin sniping that his son "couldn't even shoot straight" or that Mussolini's granddaughter posed for Playboy. Even if you're not a typical history buff, this book is full of nuggets you'll want to share with your friends for days or weeks to come.

I read this book because of the author, Jay Nordlinger. He does not write uninteresting stuff. I first ran across his work in National Review. This caused me to establish an email folder where I store writings he shares through blogs and emails. Anything he writes will be from a fresh approach and will incorporate a subtle and somewhat cutting sense of humor. An author that writes of the Nobel Peace Prize also writing a book with a title like Child of monsters at first inspired me to download the free sample from . Then I couldn't resist buying the book. Nordlinger begins by writing that this is not a book about the original monsters, the dictators themselves. While they must be mentioned, they are dead. The offspring are important for a few reasons. Where are they now? What are they doing? Do their current activities serve as a possible springboard for the resurgence of policies of the original dictators? Have the children decided to live in as much as obscurity as possible? Are the children defensive about their parents lingering reputation? Are they trying to make amends or apologies for their parents? All of these questions are addressed by Nordlinger. Not necessarily answered, but addressed with researched information from primary and secondary sources. The 20 chapter titles are each the name of a dictator. The index with hyperlinked page

numbers allows the reader to explore the overlaps in the lives of several of the dictators such as Hitler-Mussolini, Hitler-Franco, and Hitler-Stalin. A thoroughly fast-paced and enjoyable (despite the topic) read, I found that after finishing it, I had abandoned my usual practice of highlighting what I considered important points. That is why I liked the inclusion of an index.

Jay Nordlinger the senior editor of National Review spoke of this book on his recent interview with Brian Lamb on C-Span's Q and A program. His remarks on this book were so interesting I had to order the book from ! Two dictators and their children are briefly given a chapter each in this slim volume of 251 pages. The children of the following dictators are described by Nordlinger. The dictators are Hitler (a Frenchman claimed his mother was impregnated by Hitler during World War I); Mussolini; Franco; Stalin; Tojo; Mao; Kim; Hoxha; Ceausescu; Duvalier; Castro; Qaddafi; Assad; Saddam; Khomeini; Mobutu; Bokassa; Amin; Mengistu and Pol Pot. The author believes that Mao was cold and cruel not caring for any of his children. Stalin was a cruel and cold man who did not treat his three children with respect and love. His daughter defected to the West. The book's concept is intriguing and Nordlinger has done his research.

What if Hitler was your dad? What if your good, loving parent was your father, and he was Joseph Stalin? Why is the desire to kill one's son-in-law so widespread? Jay Nordlinger examines the offspring of 20 20th century dictators. They cover over a century of history, and span the globe. The stories are quite diverse, but also have much commonality. What struck me was how much these people might (or might not) have in common with the children of notorious criminals, the children of Hollywood celebrities, and the children of political families.

Unexpectedly full of humor and emotions. Expectedly well researched and insightful. The book is a quick read and quite entertaining. You're not going to get a dissertation-level depth paper but this is better. The author identifies trends and similarities among the children of monsters and brings life (sometimes to those who don't deserve it) to many individuals we've only seen through the optics of western media.

This book certainly did track down the children of the 20th century's worst tyrants and update the reader on what has happened to them since their families lost power. In that regard it delivered, but I think I was hoping the author would have developed some insights about what makes most of these children defend their monstrous parent/s while a few manage to break with them. I realize that

limited access to most of these people, even if still living, probably makes that task impossible for any author, but I was a little disappointed that the "where, what, when, who and how" questions were answered, but not the "why."

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