



Sons of Camelot: The Fate of an American Dynasty

Laurence Leamer , Lawrence leamer

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One of Bobby Kennedy's first acts after JFK's assassination was to write a letter to his eldest son, reminding him of the obligations of his name. Bobby sent the letter to eleven-year-old Joe, but the message was meant for all his sons and nephews.

Sons of Camelot is the compelling story of that message and how it shaped each Kennedy son and grandson in the aftermath of President John F. Kennedy's death. Based on five years of rigorous research and unprecedented cooperation from both the Kennedy's and the Shrivvers, *Sons of Camelot* examines the lives characterized by overwhelming drama -- from the most spectacular mishaps, excesses, and tragedies to the remarkable accomplishments that have led to better lives for Americans and others around the world.

The third volume in Laurence Leamer's bestselling history of America's first family, *Sons of Camelot* chronicles the spellbinding journey of a message sent from a father to his son ... from a president to his people.

Sons of Camelot: The Fate of an American Dynasty Details

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From Reader Review Sons of Camelot: The Fate of an American Dynasty for online ebook

Maggie says

A good read. Was nice to hear about the other Kennedy children.

Christine says

Informative, interesting book on The Kennedy men.Sad lives.

Poietes says

I have always been a Kennedy buff. Leamer's book is a refreshing look at the younger generation of Kennedy's--their strengths, foibles, failures, successes, lives, and deaths.

Justin says

Very good information on Kennedy Family. Interested in JFK's kids, the "Curse"? This is the perfect book for you. Long however, and takes a while to finish. Good read, but important to have prior knowledge on some political events in 60's/70's. Helps with the comprehension.

Lynn says

I bought this book years ago and decided to finally read it since Chris Kennedy is running for Governor of Illinois. He lost the primary.

This is a very well written book about the Kennedy family which goes into great detail about the good and bad aspects of their lives. It is not gossipy or salacious like other books have been. As a matter of fact, the author interviewed most of the people he wrote about: all the Shriver children; the 5 surviving sons of Robert Kennedy; Ted Kennedy; and many of JFK Jr.s close friends, among others. These interviews give credibility to the information in the book.

Being a Kennedy is not as glamorous as it sounds from the outside. This family, especially the Robert Kennedy branch, was a hot mess at times, dealing with addictions of many kinds, lack of discipline, arrogance, self importance, extreme risk taking, just to name a few. Ethel Kennedy basically absconded her responsibilities as a mother, and her sons ran wild. When she couldn't control them, she threw them out of the house. Drugs were everywhere. It was a wonder that they survived their teens. (Obviously David Kennedy did not survive much past his teens.) As adults, the RFK boys faced a lot of difficulties with bad marriages, more drugs and other scandals. Some sought help and turned their lives around, some came to disastrous ends.

The Shriver kids come off much better, being raised under the very firm hand of Eunice and Sarge. They weren't perfect, but they had a much better start in life.

A lot of the book is about Ted Kennedy and all his troubles, of which there are many. Nothing is sugarcoated. His drinking, his womanizing, his marriage to Joan, his failure as a role model to his brothers' children, his Senate career, Chappaquidick, the trial of his nephew William Smith: it's all here.

A lot of the book is also about JFK Jr. Jackie did a great job raising her children (unlike her sister in law) and John turned out well. He struggled with his fame sometimes, and looked for ways to escape it. Sometimes he was careless in estimating how dangerous an adventure might be. He and some of his cousins took too many risks at times. His marriage was troubled, which was sad to learn.

My biggest disappointment with this book starts with the title: The Sons of Camelot.

Why not The Children of Camelot? Or The Heirs of Camelot?

Why just the boys? There are a lot of Kennedy daughters and they are given short shrift. Maria Shriver, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Caroline Kennedy, Rory Kennedy, Kara Kennedy just to name a few, are only mentioned in reference to their father or brothers or husband. How sexist! The author perpetuates the same misogyny that the Kennedy men have always practiced: women don't matter. They are just an adjunct to men. This book would have been so much better if it had included the young Kennedy women.

That said, it's still a good book for those who have any interest in the Kennedy family. Although I gave a lot of information above, I can't say that any of it is a spoiler, since it is all pretty much in the public record. I would recommend this book.

Dru says

This was a really good book! I've always wanted to know more about the Kennedy family, especially since I grew up hearing about them considering I'm from MA. Not only that, but I'll have friends or families gushing over the younger Kennedys, saying they went on a date or something. The air of elitiness surrounds them, so it was refreshing reading this book. I've always heard about the Kennedy curse, but didn't know the details about different things that went on in the family's lives. It was... surreal, as if their lives literally were made for the movies, a Hollywoodized life.

I didn't want to put this book down, but I had to for work, school and when I did, it was with regret that I didn't have more time!

Book Concierge says

The "biographies" of the sons and grandsons of Joseph P Kennedy. Not very good at all. I wound up skimming a lot of it. Not entertaining. Skipped around among all the Kennedy cousins. Photos focused on John F Kennedy Jr.

Erin says

In my ongoing challenge to read every book about The Kennedy's, I decided to read about about the 3rd generation of Kennedy's. The grandchildren of Rose & Joe. Sons of Camelot focuses mostly on the children of Robert & Ethel, Eunice & Sargent, and of course Jack & Jackie's son John. John Kennedy Jr being the brightest star of that generation he naturally gets the most ink. The most unexpected star of the book isn't a Son of Camelot but the last brother Ted. Who's life the author decided was pointless because he never became President. That's a sentiment the author shares about all the Sons of Camelot, they apparently are all disappointments because none of them became great politicians.

I also had a problem with how even when a member of the 3rd generation did something great(mostly The Shriver branch) he felt they were only doing "Good" because their mother was a Kennedy and they wanted attention, but he judged John Kennedy Jr for not doing enough "Good" because he was a Kennedy and it would get attention.

Side Note: Laurence Leamer really seemed to have a huge crush on Bobby Kennedy Jr. If I had read how handsome, smart, and great he is one more time, I was going to lose my mind.

None of the other branches of Camelot sons are even mentioned except we get a whole chapter on the William Kennedy Smith rape trial but even that chapter is mostly about Ted. The Lawford branch didn't even exist. The last chapters are the saddest because they cover the last year of John Jr's life and his "passionate" marriage to Carolyn Bessette. The author thinks it was a given that John would have run for Senate in New York and won. The Senate seat that Hilary Clinton ran for and won. How different would the political landscape be today had John lived and become the Senator from New York?

The Shriviers are my favorite branch. The sons stayed out of trouble(for the most part) and the humanitarian work they continue to do has had the most long-term impact. More importantly they seem like they are the most well adjusted of the bunch.

Overall I enjoyed reading about the kids of Camelot. Its hard to even imagine what it was like growing up in the shadows of these mythical men you know you can never live up to.

No rec.

Katherine Blocksdorf says

I didn't finish the book partly because I wasn't sufficiently interested in the subject matter and partly because I found the construction very disjointed. --Perhaps had I been more interested, I would have ploughed through.

Hal says

I have found books on the Kennedy's endlessly fascinating . More had probably been written on them than any other American family. Laurence Leamer's lengthy tome on the fate of the son's of patriarch Joseph P. Kennedy is no less entertaining and a balanced and fair look into to lives of these men. The Kennedy dynasty and its generations is based on the will of that patriarch along with the mythology and media worship that has kept it clearly in the spotlight for so many years. Joe, who created the fortune through what we would today label as white collar crime drove his sons with the blind ambition toward his ultimate goal of political

conquest. Jack of ultimately reached that pinnacle and would be the only one to do so. The book looks into the lives, accomplishments, and failures of the these sons and grandsons. The darker side of alcohol, drugs, and womanizing is a big part of the story as are some of the successes in causes such as the Special Olympics. What could have been and what might have been did not quite play out as fate along with a fair measure of risky behavior ultimately decided things.

Cathy Houston says

the information presented was interesting but the narrative jumped from one person to another in a very confusing manner esp. with the numerous same and similar names. You needed to stop go back and figure out which one of the numerous Kennedys he was talking about now

Diane Heath says

I have read several books both by and about the Kennedys. Laurence Leamer has always been able to give a balanced portrayal without whitewashing scandals or polishing the virtues.

Jessica says

i wasn't too crazy about this book, mainly because of the way it was set up. because i am not too familiar with the kennedy sons, it was hard for me to follow the stories of each (and there are MANY). pretty much each chapter focused on one of the sons, but in an erratic way -- one chapter for tim, then 2 for john, then 1 for michael, then back to tim for 2 chapters, etc. it was all very confusing.

however, i did like the particular focus on jfk jr., who i was interested in learning more about. also liked how the author did not sugarcoat his life because of who his father was.

Terri Miles says

I enjoyed this read. It seemed honest without being gossipy. I did get a bit tired of hearing so much about Ted Kennedy.

Nancy says

This was a fascinating book. Being a Kennedy was sometimes a blessing but more often a curse.
