



The Last Brother

Joe McGinniss

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In *The Last Brother*, McGinniss brings to life the childhood, the brief triumph & the long downward slide of the last Kennedy brother, exposing the chilling reality behind the glittering facade of America's 1st Dysfunctional Family, as well as the terrible cost of Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy's dark ambitions for his children--even the last & least of them. His book focuses in particular on the extraordinary 60s, a decade that began in glory for the family with Jack's ascension to the presidency, & ended--after the murders of Jack & Bobby, the tragedy at Chappaquidick & their father's death--with Teddy, the last brother, standing alone in the rubble of Camelot. While *The Last Brother* is both shocking & newsworthy, Teddy Kennedy emerges as a curiously tragic figure, the victim of his own family, forever "the fat, awkward little boy" who was ignored by his siblings, his father & his mother, then propelled, unwilling & unprepared, into the public limelight. Searing, yet strangely moving & even sympathetic, *The Last Brother* presents a detailed, tragic portrait of a man at war with himself, doomed to live in the giant shadow of his brothers, trapped in the glorious but hollow Kennedy myth, longing--but unable--to escape.

The Last Brother Details

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Author : Joe McGinniss

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From Reader Review The Last Brother for online ebook

k'ar'th'ik' says

great book

Tim Barchak says

I have read many books on the Kennedys over the years. This biography of Teddy Kennedy by Joe McGinniss is a special one. Perhaps more than any other book on this amazing family, it describes what an unpleasant, indeed tragic, fate it was to be born into this family.

For those growing up Catholic in the 1960s, the Kennedys were held up as an example of what could be achieved with a competitive spirit, family loyalty, and faith. As one grew older and more facts slowly came out (about Jack in particular) the glamour of the Kennedys and Camelot faded. This book puts it all together with great story telling. What emerges in the end is the fact that the uncompromising obsession of Joe and Rose Kennedy to raise up a family of Irish-American Catholic royalty, led to the tragic destruction of many lives including, Teddy, the title character.

John Taylor says

Incredibly detailed read, which bogged the book down at times. However, "The Last Brother" was a very informative and fascinating look into Ted Kennedy's life, as well as the Kennedy family.

Gabby says

Joseph P Kennedy, father of brothers Joseph, John, Robert, and Edward believed: "It's not what you are that counts, but only what people think you are."

That sums up what the myths surrounding the Kennedy family are all about. Created by the Kennedys and furthered by an adoring media, Americans came to elevate the Kennedys to the status of royalty for over 3 decades. It is from this point of view that Joe McGinniss has written *The Last Brother: The Rise and Fall of Teddy Kennedy*. McGinniss states in his *Author's Note* at the end of his book that he wanted to write an account that took into consideration what it felt like to be Edward Kennedy; or to have some understanding and empathy for what it was like to deal with the pressure of being the fat little brother who wasn't up to competing with his older, more accomplished siblings. For the most part, I think McGinniss did what he set out to do in that regard; but, there were times when McGinniss came dangerously close to suggesting we have sympathy for Edward Kennedy.

McGinniss begins his book with the assassination of President John F Kennedy. He illustrates from this grim example how little Teddy Kennedy knew of his family's plans for the future and what exactly those plans

entailed. The father of the Kennedy clan, Joseph P Kennedy, was the mastermind behind a plan to bring the Kennedy name to power in the US as a dynasty unto themselves. Through his fortune he was able to manipulate or outright buy any outcome he wanted in any given situation. Joseph Jr, Jack, and Bobby each understood and were primed for their specific roles in the plan. Having come along almost as an afterthought to the family, Teddy was given no specific outline of his role, and from childhood on he more or less flew by the seat of his pants. When his brother Jack was assassinated, he had no idea what to do, where to be, nor any idea how to perform. He was unprepared to serve his family in any capacity at all much less become an example to his country of how royalty behaves under fire.

The material presented as fact in McGinniss' book is a matter of public record, and the bibliography McGinniss lists at the end of the book is extensive. He did his research. What gets somewhat murky is assuming McGinniss knows what Ted Kennedy thought which motivated him to behave as he did through the many crises in his life. And it is within some of those passages that it seemed to me there was occasionally too much of a plea for sympathy to Kennedy. Empathy I may be able to grasp, but sympathy? Not in any lifetime.

The picture that emerges of Teddy Kennedy as viewed through the facts, in my opinion, remains one of an irresponsible, cowardly, indecisive, dissipated, philandering boy/man who came far too close to becoming President of the United States based on the myth surrounding his family name rather than the facts of his life. For that reason, I'd recommend reading this book just to see the process by which something like this can happen. One would hope the lesson learned would be to never allow a man like Ted Kennedy or a family like his to so invade the national interests of our country again because there are no messiahs in the political spectrum or any other spectrum for that matter. Unfortunately, it appears that lesson was not learned and it continues to happen all over again.

Shane says

One of the best books I have ever read. Its just amazing what you could get away with back before 24 hour news channels. Funny how the old man paid such a high price to have his family in the lime light and his boys running for the highest office in the land.

Nitsina says

This excellent book describes how Joe Kennedy caused the good, and bad, things which happened to his family. There are stunning stories of his decision to have brain surgery on his retarded daughter (perhaps because he had molested her and did not want her to tell) and of his promise to the mafia to get Cuba, and its gambling profits back for the mafia in exchange for getting JFK elected (they did their part, he didn't, and MAYBE that's why JFK was killed.

Cleo Baker-roberts says

This book was recommended by a friend & I must admit I hesitated buying it because I thought it would be just another "Oh, the wonderful Kennedy family" tale.

After reading this very well-written account of the family, from very early beginnings to recent years, I now

realize I did my father an injustice when he used to speak disparagingly about the Kennedy's. He was particularly hard the patriarch, Joseph Sr.

Now I realize he was speaking from the perspective of someone who grew up at the same time the family began to pursue Joe, Sr's obsession regarding the Presidency of the United States. Though no longer available to him, father Joe was determined one of his sons would occupy the office!

Here's my recommendation: DO NOT READ THIS BOOK if you're hellbent on keeping an untarnished "Kennedy Camelot" image in your own mind/memory because Joe McGinnis doesn't hold punches when bringing the darkest family secrets to light (often his own first person accounts) ~ nor does he hold back when showing some empathy for various family members, particularly "The Last Brother"!

At times while reading of this family, I found myself experiencing a variety of emotions: anger, sympathy, happiness, relief, empathy & I also shook my head in disbelief at the situations various Kennedys found themselves in ~ most often the results of their own making!

One thing for sure: I doubt you'll ever look at the Kennedys in the same light as you may have before reading this book.

Well-written & almost a page-turner!

Charissfour says

McGinnis's biography of Edward M. Kennedy is a salacious read containing the things that make a bestseller: sex, incest, money, politics, power, compelling personalities. The problem, though, is, can you believe McGinnis? Although the bibliography lists 73 titles, there is not one footnote. There are juicy tidbits about members of the family. Joseph Kennedy progresses from a WW I draft dodger to U.S. Ambassador to the Court of St. James. He beds innumerable women, manipulates the stock market, becomes a Nazi sympathizer and anti-Semite. Rose is portrayed as the ultimate holder of Irish grudges: when her husband had his stroke she delayed calling a doctor while she played golf. A devout Catholic, she was actually happy about Joe's affairs because then she didn't have to sleep with him.

B. Cheng says

A good quick read if you're looking for the basics of the youngest Kennedy's life story up to Chappaquidick, but even in this book focused on Teddy, he takes a back seat to his brothers. At the same time, ending things in 1969 (especially considering the book came out in 1993), seems to tell only half the story, ending things on Kennedy's fall and not the slow rise that saw him turn into the elder statesman of the Senate.

Dusty Fontaine says

If you are a diehard Kennedy family fan, you will probably not like this book. Not that it shows them in a negative light, just that it tells many of the details of their personal lives. I usually tackle thinner books than this since I get bored fairly easy when reading larger ones. However, this book held my interest from beginning to end. Well done and highly recommended.

Carol Ann says

Good God, what a story. After reading this riveting book by Joe McGinniss, I will never decide someone is a spoiled alcohol dependent blowhard until I hear the entire story. Ted's parents, Joe Sr. and Rose, were ruthless. They drove their children relentlessly and arrogance was the by-product. If your parents are alive, telephone them and tell them you love them.

Lisa Carlson says

You don't have to read very far into this book to realize how gloriously the Kennedy clan thought of themselves. Joe Kennedy spent much of his married life cheating on his wife, Rose and taking care of his son's misdeeds. This book focuses on Teddy who was born much later in the line of children. He never was the favorite. It is surprising how much he lacked in self-confidence especially since he carried the Senate seat in Mass. for so many years. Teddy was also afraid of his father which makes for interesting reading as this family was about not expressing any real emotion. The image of the Kennedys has some sort of royalty was only a fairytale image and it's shocking to what lengths Joe Kennedy went to make his world perfect; even subjecting his vulnerable daughter to a forced life of isolation, confusion and no memory of who her family really was. The image of Camelot is forever stained and family tragedy has done more to unhinge this family than anything else.

Kevin Wheeler says

...almost done...such a sense of naivety regarding my former heros...the Kennedys...ugh!

T. Kennedy responds a week after the Chappaquiddick accident on national T.V. with little more than an mention of "the loss of a good friend" (video can be found on YouTube)

Washington Post says

Our 1993 review of "The Last Brother" may be the most vicious book review The Post ever published. Here's what Jonathan Yardley thought of it:

Not merely is "The Last Brother" a textbook example of shoddy journalistic and publishing ethics; it is also a genuinely, unrelievedly rotten book, one without a single redeeming virtue, an embarrassment that should bring nothing except shame to everyone associated with it.

"The Last Brother" is slimy, meretricious and cynical. It is, by a wide margin, the worst book I have reviewed in nearly three decades; quite simply, there is not an honest page in it.

Read his full review here: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/enterta...>

Fredrick Danysh says

Teddy Kennedy was the brother of assassinated President John Kennedy and presidential candidate Robert Kennedy. A long time member of the US Senate, Teddy was a liberal alcoholic and womanizer who traded on the disasters of his brothers' assassinations.
