



The Patriarch: The Remarkable Life and Turbulent Times of Joseph P. Kennedy

David Nasaw

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2013 Pulitzer Prize Finalist
New York Times Ten Best Books of 2012

“Riveting...*The Patriarch* is a book hard to put down.” – Christopher Buckley, *The New York Times* Book Review

In this magisterial new work *The Patriarch*, the celebrated historian David Nasaw tells the full story of Joseph P. Kennedy, the founder of the twentieth century's most famous political dynasty. Nasaw—the only biographer granted unrestricted access to the Joseph P. Kennedy papers in the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library—tracks Kennedy's astonishing passage from East Boston outsider to supreme Washington insider. Kennedy's seemingly limitless ambition drove his career to the pinnacles of success as a banker, World War I shipyard manager, Hollywood studio head, broker, Wall Street operator, New Deal presidential adviser, and founding chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission. His astounding fall from grace into ignominy did not come until the years leading up to and following America's entry into the Second World War, when the antiwar position he took as the first Irish American ambassador to London made him the subject of White House ire and popular distaste.

The Patriarch is a story not only of one of the twentieth century's wealthiest and most powerful Americans, but also of the family he raised and the children who completed the journey he had begun. Of the many roles Kennedy held, that of father was most dear to him. The tragedies that befell his family marked his final years with unspeakable suffering.

The Patriarch looks beyond the popularly held portrait of Kennedy to answer the many questions about his life, times, and legacy that have continued to haunt the historical record. Was Joseph P. Kennedy an appeaser and isolationist, an anti-Semite and a Nazi sympathizer, a stock swindler, a bootlegger, and a colleague of mobsters? What was the nature of his relationship with his wife, Rose? Why did he have his daughter Rosemary lobotomized? Why did he oppose the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the Korean War, and American assistance to the French in Vietnam? What was his relationship to J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI? Did he push his second son into politics and then buy his elections for him?

In this pioneering biography, Nasaw draws on never-before-published materials from archives on three continents and interviews with Kennedy family members and friends to tell the life story of a man who participated in the major events of his times: the booms and busts, the Depression and the New Deal, two world wars and a cold war, and the birth of the New Frontier. In studying Kennedy's life, we relive with him the history of the American Century.

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