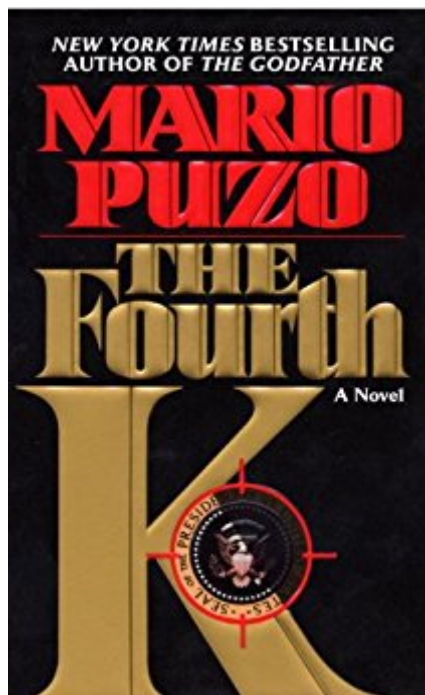


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The Fourth K



Synopsis

A PRESIDENTIAL DYNASTY. AN ARAB TERRORIST ATTACK. DEMOCRACY UNDER SIEGE.

Mario Puzo envisioned it all in his eerily prescient 1991 novel, *The Fourth K*. President Francis Xavier Kennedy is elected to office, in large part, thanks to the legacy of his forebears—good looks, privilege, wealth—and is the very embodiment of youthful optimism. Too soon, however, he is beaten down by the political process and, disabused of his ideals, he becomes a leader totally unlike what he has been before. When his daughter becomes a pawn in a brutal terrorist plot, Kennedy, who has obsessively kept alive the memory of his uncles' assassinations, activates all his power to retaliate in a series of violent measures. As the explosive events unfold, the world and those closest to him look on with both awe and horror. From the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

What a great imagination, well written and well paced. One of those rare books you (sort of) wish went on forever. Lots of plots and sub-plots but always easy to follow. It never drags. Read it if you

get the chance.

Thin effort on "how it could happen here" - not worth the time. Had a hard time being interested in the characters, and the plot is a series of thinly strung together improbable occurrences.

I started this because of Mario Puzo's name. I thought it to be the most ridiculous book ever and I had to finish it to see if it could get any worse. It did. Shame

I first read this when I was in high school. I enjoyed it very much then, and would re-read it many times over the the next nearly two decades. This book seems to be fairly polarizing, with a lot of people loving it and a lot of people hating it or at least being dismissive of it. It's not a perfect book, by any means, but I think the positives far outweigh the negatives. I think Puzo tends to "overwrite" in spots, a criticism that I've levied towards Stephen King as well. Spending pages to write something that could be condensed greatly. This is most evident when dealing with the chapters dealing with The Oracle and the chapters dealing with David Jatney. I just finished reading the book a few moments ago, the first time I've read it in about three years. A criticism I've seen is that characters show up and then disappear never to be heard from again. However that's not really true. There are characters that disappear for extended times, however with the exception of Cryder Cole, David Jatney's college friend who participated in the Assassination Games at BYU, everyone else in the book that is brought up plays a fairly major role in the book. And even Cole, it's revealed what happened to him. He was never a major character, he was simply an associate of Jatney, who has a major role in the climax of the novel. I think pretty much every character that is featured in the major storylines were very instrumental in the plot and the winding road that the novel follows. As much as I wasn't really that interested in reading the Oracle's story (after years of reading the book, perhaps) I recognize his importance to the overall narrative. Likewise, for the most part, I didn't care about David Jatney's story, however it's important because it gives you context and clarity for how he acts in the end. I think this is a fantastic read and really exemplifies the quote "Power Corrupts. Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely". You have a guy in Francis Xavier Kennedy who came into office a fairly idealistic, perhaps naive, politician, and evolves, due to tragedies outside of his control, into a monster, for lack of a better word. He leaves behind everything he ever believed in and eventually grows into a tyrannical dictator, all while believing he is doing the best thing for the country. The sad thing is it is not an unimaginable scenario. Power corrupts and erodes integrity, many times. The most iconic, and tragic character in this, for me anyway, was Christian Klee,

Kennedy's right hand man and the Attorney General of the USA. A powerful man who is not above doing anything and everything he can think of to protect Kennedy, who he views as a brother. This means stepping way over the bounds of reason and legality and morality, all with not a scintilla of remorse or regret. Everything he's doing is justified, in his mind. Even when he is confronted with his machinations in the end, he feels like he's been wronged, because in his mind he feels he was acting in the best interest of the country, and his friend, the President. This is a book I think everyone should read. Very interesting and intriguing political thriller. Not a perfect book, by any means, but it is a highly entertaining read, one that lends itself to multiple read.

The first time I read this book was in 1993 - borrowed from a friend, then I loved it so much that I bought the book and read it 2 more times. Probably the only book which I have read 3 times. This is one of the finest stories which tells the story of a President, Arabic and Italian radicals, An Airport worker by the name of Zonzi - who plan multiple terror attacks. You could almost relate to present day politics. Each one of the scenes still lingers in my mind 20 years on. It felt almost like a real story when the 9/11 happened, the ruthless Arabic terrorist by the name Yabril and an Italian who proclaims that 'God is the ultimate Terrorist'. This still remains one of the best novels which I have read till date.

Francis Xavier Kennedy, nephew of the slain JFK/RFK has ascended the presidency due, in no small part, to his family name, his political instincts, and his near-adolescent idealism. During Holy Week it seems as if the world is falling apart at the seams. The Pontiff has been assassinated, and FXK's daughter has been kidnapped by Muslim extremists and then executed in cold blood. FXK devises a response that he feels is commensurate with the crimes committed, and one that is befitting defending the honor of the most powerful nation on earth. There is one little snag; an imperial congress, motivated purely by greed, political opportunism, and a visceral hatred for the CINC, is poised to declare him non compos mentis and have him impeached. An incident of 9/11 proportions takes place in New York that changes the entire dynamic of this political opportunism/intrigue and FXK addresses an emergency session of a joint-session of Congress, and is spared the ignominy of being removed from office. Puzo's prescience here is uncanny; a nation in crisis after a terrorist event, a zealous President/Justice Department eager to preserve the Union, to the point of using draconian measures...it is all there, prophetically so. Eerie. Puzo spins a yarn like no other. His scenarios/character; development/plots, sub-plots are woven into an exciting, breathtaking tapestry that takes the reader on a roller-coaster ride; the thrill of a lifetime. There are

so many twists and turns it is likely to give a less engaged reader the literary equivalent of motion sickness. Dialogue is crisp, sometimes raw, and cynical. The stuff a political thriller is made of. Some have decried this work as being a little contrived, but Puzo has a knack for tying up all of the loose ends and leaving the reader satisfied after he/she has read the novel. A first-class piece of literature.

I read this book when it was first published in 1991, and re-read for the second time this year. In light of today's world, the drama doesn't seem that far fetched any longer... Which made the story even more disturbing.

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