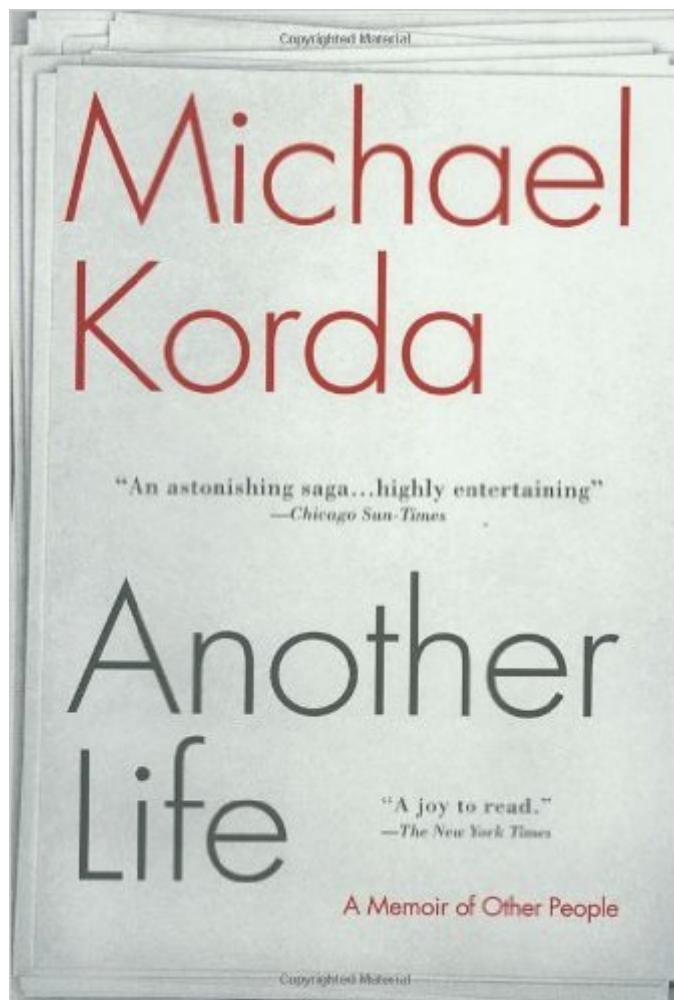


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Another Life: A Memoir Of Other People



Synopsis

From world leaders to Mafia dons, from Hollywood stars to the literary world's most eccentric writers, the notable and notorious alike have entrusted their life's work to Simon & Schuster's preeminent editor, Michael Korda. In this masterful memoir, Korda reveals the unforgettable cast of characters and outrageous anecdotes behind four decades of blockbuster publishing, bringing us face-to-face with dozens of larger-than-life figures: Richard Nixon, who maintained his "presidential" persona long after his public life was over; Joan Crawford, whose autobiography reflected a life she would have liked to have lived but did not; Joseph Bonanno, the retired Mafia don who'd do anything to keep from being killed by the reviewers. And in a revelatory account that reads as compulsively as fiction, *Another Life* paints a vivid picture of publishing's glitterati, including Jacqueline Susann, who liberated women's fiction--and terrorized a publishing house, and Tennessee Williams, who nourished his genius on four-course vodka lunches. A veritable Who's Who of stage, screen, and letters, *Another Life* is the deft interweaving of publishing at its most fascinating--and storytelling at its finest.

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Customer Reviews

Two television shows -- Brian Lamb's *Booknotes*, and Kitty Kelley's reception honoring Michael Korda (her editor and the author of this book)-- convinced me to read *Another Life*, and the decision was most rewarding. Korda had told Lamb that the common trait shared by best-selling authors -- regardless of style or genre -- is the ability to tell stories. Who would know better than someone who

has been an editor at Simon & Schuster for 41 years? A voracious reader who has worked with hundreds of writers (one wonders just how many manuscripts he has absorbed during his career), Korda is a clever writer himself. Another Life is basically a string of hilarious anecdotes involving authors (not all of them household names) whose work he has edited. Excerpts from this book have appeared in The New Yorker (Korda's memories of legendary playwright Tennessee Williams and his ventures into other forms of writing ran in the magazine just this year), and Another Life can be enjoyed as a collection of magazine-length pieces. Writers as diverse as Jacqueline Susann, Richard Nixon, Joan Crawford, Truman Capote, Harold Robbins and Graham Greene (among dozens and dozens of others) are discussed, and Korda also intermixes an ample sprinkling of stories about his co-workers at S&S and his competitors at other publishing houses. Another Life not only lived up to my lofty expectations, it exceeded them. Highly recommended to anyone interested in how books come to fruition.

Those who love the story of writing and how stories are made will love this book. Those who work closely with authors to help them develop their work will appreciate it even more. Korda gives us a rare inside look at how publishers publish. He shares with us how he got into the business, how he climbed the S&S ladder, and how he came to run the editorial department of one of the most successful houses in publishing history. He tells us hilarious and eye-opening stories of Tennessee Williams and Jacqueline Susann and Harold Robbins. We learn just how much work editors put into creating bestsellers. We find out who the authors are and who the writers are. If you're like me, you'll read these stories as you would a bowl of candy. You'll eat and eat until you're scratching at the bottom of the bowl for more. I don't recommend this book without reservation, however. Michael Korda, the famous editor, could have used even a junior editor to help him dig out his story. At times, the book thuds along, caught up in Korda's telling of the history of publishing in the United States. His asides into the money side of the business -- how publishing developed from a cottage industry into a mere cog in larger multinational entertainment companies -- is numbing. Still, I soaked in these parts of his story to get to the good parts. Korda is not a great writer, though he worked with many, and has a wonderful story to tell. Skip past the dull moments if you like, but most definitely read this book.

What a wonderful tour guide Korda turns out to be in this ultimate insider's look at trade publishing in the last half of the American Century. He's smart, self-deprecating, generous and altogether enthusiastic about his life's work and times. Almost every page of this book features an anecdote

about a publishing legend. The publishing behind-the-scenes stuff is fascinating. If you've wondered where the more romantic notions people have about authors and their editors come from, this book will explain much. Korda is like a very entertaining teacher, and beneath the fun lies an inspiring, dedicated, hard-working, dues-paying professional. I would think this is a must read for anybody interested in publishing today.

This is one of my all time favorite books. I just reread it for the third time and each time I've learned something new or understood something at another level. The book is far more than a memoir, although Korda does tell about his adventures in the Hungarian Revolution, how he came to the United States from England and how he got into the publishing business. He also tells how he came to write some of his own best sellers like CHARMED LIVES and QUEENIE. But the heart of this book is other people--well known writers, movie stars and political superstars like Ronald Regan and Richard Nixon--people who wrote books that Korda edited over the years. (The story of Korda's dinner at Nixon's home is worth the price of the book) Korda makes each one of these figures, whether its Harold Robbins or R.F. Delderfeld or Jacqueline Susann or Joan Crawford or Jesse Jackson come to life in just a few pages by identifying the telling details that made each one of these individuals memorable. But the book is even more. Its also a history of the American publishing industry from the mid-1950s to the turn of the century. Korda writes authoritatively about the corporate growth and infighting at Simon and Schuster, where he was an editor for most of the second half of the 20th century, as well as the industry in general. He details how a Tsunami of Bigness overwhelmed houses like Random House Little Brown, Alfred Knopf and others, taking American publishing from a cottage industry to a mega-business where the people making the key decisions on which books to publish never bother to read the books, choosing instead to focus solely on projected sales numbers. Korda ties all of this together with an engaging writing style and I would highly recommend his work to anyone interested in books, celebrities or the history of the American publishing industry.

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