



# Jack 1939

Francine Mathews

**Jack 1939** Francine Mathews  
**Charming. Reckless. Brilliant. Deadly.**

**A young Jack Kennedy travels to Europe on a secret mission for Franklin Roosevelt as the world braces for war.**

It's the spring of 1939, and the prospect of war in Europe looms large. The United States has no intelligence service. In Washington, D.C., President Franklin Roosevelt may run for an unprecedented third term and needs someone he can trust to find out what the Nazis are up to. His choice: John F. Kennedy.

It's a surprising selection. At twenty-two, Jack Kennedy is the attractive but unpromising second son of Joseph P. Kennedy, Roosevelt's ambassador to Britain (and occasional political adversary). But when Jack decides to travel through Europe to gather research for his Harvard senior thesis, Roosevelt takes the opportunity to use him as his personal spy. The president's goal: to stop the flow of German money that has been flooding the United States to buy the 1940 election—an election that Adolf Hitler intends Roosevelt to lose.

In a deft mosaic of fact and fiction, Francine Mathews has written a gripping espionage tale that explores what might have happened when a young Jack Kennedy is let loose in Europe as the world careens toward war. A potent combination of history and storytelling, *Jack 1939* is a sexy, entertaining read.

## Jack 1939 Details

Date : Published July 5th 2012 by Riverhead Books

ISBN : 9781594487194

Author : Francine Mathews

Format : Hardcover 368 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Thriller, Mystery, Spy Thriller, Espionage, War, World War II

 [Download Jack 1939 ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Jack 1939 ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online Jack 1939 Francine Mathews**

## From Reader Review Jack 1939 for online ebook

### Gordon Paisley says

Really wish I could have given it 4.5 stars.

Disclosure: I received a complimentary advance copy of this book with the expectation that I would provide an honest review.

I enjoy historical fiction and I am always intrigued by the idea of a story where an author undertakes to fill in the gaps of history with her idea of what might have happened. The author has researched Kennedy's itinerary in the spring and summer of 1939 and re-created in this book.

Jack 1939 is about John Kennedy's senior thesis research trip to Europe. The fictionalized part of this trip is that just before he heads out, President Roosevelt asks him to act as a spy for him to investigate a scheme whereby the German government is trying secretly to buy the 1940 US presidential election to ensure Roosevelt is not elected. This is an interesting premise and it is this tory that fits into the gaps and cracks of Kennedy's actual itinerary that year.

Along the way, Kennedy meets a number of people from a number of backgrounds and finds himself being pursued by a Gestapo hit man. Many of these people are real, although their interactions with Kennedy are fictionalized. In all this, the plot doesn't feel forced or unnatural.

While I am not necessarily a fan of Kennedy, that did not get in the way of my enjoyment of this book. It offered an interesting glimpse into the inner workings of one of the families of American royalty, without getting bogged down in it. After about 80 pages, it was not essential that Jack Kennedy be the protagonist. The story is very readable and the dialogue is natural, and doesn't feel as though the author is trying to deify Kennedy or really anyone else.

This book presents an interesting insight into Europe in pre- World War 2 times. This is one of my favorite periods in history because it is so complex and nuanced. The book captures a lot of this feel very well.

---

### Lauren says

The tagline for this book is: "Charming. Reckless. Brilliant. Deadly."

Mine would be: "Fun for a bit, but got too silly for me."

The premise is this: The year is 1939. FDR chooses young John "Jack" Kennedy -- fresh from Harvard -- to be his spy in Europe. Though outlandish and unrealistic, it's not completely farfetched... Not completely. Kennedy's family was politically prominent. His father held the significant post of U.S. Ambassador to England at the time. And a young Jack Kennedy certainly makes a compelling character -- sickly, but young, handsome, and charismatic. And of course the Kennedy family makes fascinating fodder, especially when given the license of fiction. But at some point it felt like Mathews had spent too much time on Kennedy family Wikipedia pages or too much time poring over the same books that I couldn't get enough of when I was 13. I knew I had had enough of "Jack 1939" when the Kennedy siblings cleared away the furniture in the drawing room of their London mansion to make room for a quick game of touch football. Ah, the Kennedys

and their games of touch football... Speaking of New England aristocracy, see review for "Seating Arrangements"...

Anyway, the book was what I feared it would be: an alluring premise, but a book that was neither good literary fiction nor good genre fiction (espionage, thriller). If you like the former, read "Seating Arrangements." If you like the latter, stick to your usual fare of Tom Clancy. I'm sure his plotting is defter.

---

### **Patrice Hoffman says**

\*I won this book through a goodreads giveaway. It is an uncorrected proof edition.

I wasn't sure what to expect when reading this book. I thought maybe John F. Kennedy would be some sort of secret 007 with a bunch of fancy gadgets. Luckily, this wasn't that book. It was accurate to the time and to the equipment of the time.

A summary of the book is that Jack Kennedy is recruited by Pres. Roosevelt to be a spy for him. Kennedy's cover is that he's researching for his senior thesis. The president's goal is to find out who's paying for the election of 1940 that Hitler wants him to lose. Jack agrees to be his spy since the US had no intelligence agency yet.

I don't pretend to be an historian or someone who knows a lot about JFK. But this book weaves fact and fiction so well that I could actually believe JFK was a secret spy before his senior year at Harvard. The author writes this Jack Kennedy to be a pretty cool and interesting person. He's battleing an illness he doesn't even know the name of and still feels a duty to his country and his Pres. to complete his assignment. He's not a brat as some would coming from such a priveleged family and he's actually pretty likeable.

The killer in this book is ruthless and pretty much expected for this genre. And the atmosphere in Europe during 1939 is already tense but the killer adds to that suspense. And there's the quinessential love interest who has a starring role in the book as well. I'm happy that the romance wasn't too sappy but it's very important for Jack.

This book is written well and I didn't find my self bored with it at all. It is a quick read. I am a fan of historical fiction thrillers and this definitely fit the bill. This is the first book I've read by this author and I would be interested in finding out what other works she's done.

---

### **Cathy Cole says**

First Line: "...patient's 6000 cell count at intake," Dr. George Taylor wrote, "has dropped to 3500."

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt has secretly decided to run for an unprecedeted third term in office. He knows that Europe is on the brink of another world war, and he believes more in his own abilities to carry the United States through than he does in any of his likely successors. But he does need someone he can trust to find out what the Nazis are up to. Since the United States does not have an intelligence service (spies), Roosevelt chooses his own-- twenty-two-year-old John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

The young Jack Kennedy is in ill health more often than not, and of all the Kennedy children, he's considered to be the least promising, the black sheep. But he's also the son of Roosevelt's ambassador to Great Britain, he's a well-traveled young man with a diplomatic passport, and he knows many people. Roosevelt sees something in Jack, something that reminds him of himself. Jack agrees to Roosevelt's proposal, and in the spring of 1939, he's off to Europe aboard the Queen Mary, ostensibly to gather material for his senior thesis at Harvard. Only Roosevelt, Jack, and the president's most trusted bodyguard know that Jack is looking for the people responsible for a flood of German money into the United States-- a monetary tsunami intended to buy the 1940 presidential election... an election that Hitler is determined Roosevelt will lose.

Former CIA intelligence analyst Francine Mathews has crafted a terrific blend of fact and fiction that drew me in from the very first page. I loved how Roosevelt skillfully tapdances around the slimy, secretive J. Edgar Hoover, who spends most of his time trying to compile blackmail-worthy dossiers on all the powerful people in the country. When the action is in Europe, time and time again the British pop up with some needed help, showing us all that they know plenty about the spy business.

But of course, the focus of the book is on the young Jack Kennedy. His constant, mysterious illnesses have made him unafraid of death and determined to live fully during the time he has got. He knows how to think on his feet, how to observe, and he learns very quickly. He falls in love with a beautiful woman during the Atlantic crossing aboard the Queen Mary, and he shadows Diana Playfair from place to place until they finally hook up to get the information that Roosevelt needs. And when the information begins to fall into place, Jack learns that his father, Joseph P. Kennedy, is right in the middle of things. Which is going to be more important to Jack-- his mission for Roosevelt or his family's integrity?

I found Jack's love interest, Diana Playfair, too cold and brittle to ever really care about, so that part of the story palled a bit for me. Besides the scenes in which Roosevelt shone, the best often showed Jack interacting with his brothers and sisters. At times it seemed that Mathews' portrayal of Rose Kennedy and Jack's elder brother Joe was too one-sided, but I have read a lot about the family, and everything that's said about all the Kennedys in Jack 1939 is pretty accurate. I think Rose and Joe Jr. were painted with the saint brush after their deaths: Joe the Golden Boy, killed too young and not allowed to fulfill his promise, and Rose, the bereaved mother who lost two sons so tragically in the 1960s.

While I'm speaking of the Kennedys, one scene that did not ring true for me at all was the scene at the end where Jack lays down the law to his father, Joe. No way, no how would that scene ever happen. However, this scene and the character of the icy Diana Playfair were not enough to ruin my enjoyment of this book.

This was a fun read from beginning to end, and I enjoyed Mathews' skillful blend of history and the storytelling art. Seeing a young JFK spying his way around a Europe on the edge of war, as a young man falling in love, learning how to use cyphers and radios, being followed by a psychotic Nazi killer, and getting himself out of one close call only to fall right into another... I read this book in a little over a day, and when I came up for air, I had a big smile on my face.

---

### **Beth says**

Interesting premise to write fiction within a story of JFK's actual 22nd year traveling around Europe. His trip on the Queen Mary and the places he went are historically documented. The author is a person who knows

her history and who has also worked for the CIA. It takes this kind of person to put together this kind of spy mystery.

Portraying Jack as a lover of a married man seems true but the woman as described does not. I could believe the dastardlyness of the man called the "Spider" because we do read about such killer in the news.

More than anything, the constant reference to Jack's stomach emptying out and his illness seemed to contradict the hero of a President we came to know. I needed to look up Jack's sickness to see what it was. The "New York Times" Nov 17,2002 in an article by Lawrence Altman and Todd Purdum wrote about JFK's hidden illness, pain and pills:

"Since his death, biographers have pieced together details of illnesses, including persistent digestive problems and Addison's disease, a life-threatening lack of adrenal function..... Newly disclosed medical files ... including X-rays and prescription records, show that he took painkillers, antianxiety agents, stimulants and sleeping pills, as well as hormones to keep him alive, with extra doses in times of stress."

---

## **Grady says**

### **A Terrific Blend of Fact and Fictionalized History**

Francine Matthews after twenty some novels knows her craft. She also writes under the name Stephanie Barron and has gained a large following for her series of novels centered on Jane Austen mysteries. Another factor that makes her the obvious choice of server of this excellent novel is the fact that she served as an analyst for the CIA. Blend these ingredients an out comes this intensely entertaining novel JACK 1939 a story whose central characters included not only the JFK at age 22 years, but also Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Neville Chamberlain, J. Edgar Hoover, Adolph Hitler and a battery of newly created but equally credible character that help propel this intriguing thriller along. Matthews manages to sharpen out information about these critical figures in a straightforward manner that adds to our appreciation of famous people about whom there are still rarely known facts. She opens her book with a long look at the 22 year old John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the sickly and clearly secondary son of the wealthy Joseph and Rose Kennedy as he is hospitalized at the Mayo Clinic for complications of agranulocytosis and a chronic gastrointestinal disease requiring subcutaneous patches of DOCA (desoxycorticosterone acetate) to be placed by JFK under a cut flap in his leg - further evidence that JFK was man who simply did not know defeat.

The novel deals with FDR's conviction that Hitler is sending money into the USA to underwrite a campaign to prevent FDR from gaining a third term as President: FDR is wary of Hitler's desire for world dominance and will stop at nothing to prevent that from including the USA. He needs a spy to undermine the espionage in Europe and is convinced that the bright, eager, free thinking JFK is the man, despite a medical report that states JFK is 'Believed to be dying at age seventeen-misdiagnosed with leukemia - possible blood or liver disorder - damaged vertebrae while playing football at Harvard - spends several weeks each year at Mayo Clinic, with additional tests at Brigham Hospital - medical consensus: unlikely to thrive.' A series of murders occur all suggesting the presence of Hitler's influence in the US and FDR decides that JFK is the only man whom he can trust to uncover the data behind the realities of the impending WW II. So JFK is sent to Europe

via the Queen Mary, meets several women aboard (JFK's proclivity to female companionship is well known), and finally arrives in Europe under the guise of completing his Harvard Senior thesis where the story blossoms into a gut-wrenching tale of espionage that involves all the events that are leading to the inception of WW II.

Readers who desire pure history novels will likely be critical of some of the ways Matthews manipulated facts, but for the reader who loves to identify with famous historic figures as they create a fictitious story in the hands of a novelist with the gifts of Francine Matthews, this book will be certain to appeal.

Grady Harp

---

### **Nathan says**

I'm not sure what's with historical fiction authors' attachment to JFK recently. Don't want to seem brash but I think they are looking back with rose-tinted glasses. Francine Mathew's new novel follows JFK through Europe before the start of WW2 working as a spy for Roosevelt under the guise of researching his senior thesis, in order to track down a money laundering scheme by the Nazis to influence the next US election with a more pacifist-minded candidate.

I'm a fan of historical fiction, but am usually wary of the over-simplification of events. Mathews, in trying to not only incorporate a setting but an actual person, is trying to bend the restrictions too much, the story is highly implausible. Indecisiveness pervades. Jack at first is tasked with following a money-laundering scheme, but later completely moves on to instead focus on stealing the enigma encoding machine. At times Jack is described as overly weak from illness, a skeletal and morose figure. Yet throughout he also has a hard-drinking and socializing persona, quick to a fight and nimble on the run. When he accomplishes one of the two missions he's following, the reader never hears the conclusion of events; instead the story moves to the other mission.

JFK is awful at spying. Every piece of information that moves the plot forward is not gleaned by JFK, but given to him by an associate in conversation. JFK serves more as a middle-man, Mathews could have done much better by removing him from the story entirely. The pace picks up in the last thirty pages or so when everything comes together, but if the reader steps back and thinks about how little was accomplished on this "mission", he/she will realize what a waste of time it all was for JFK, and the reader.

I would instead recommend Follett's Century Trilogy (about to read book two, which focuses on WW2), or Kanon's Istanbul Passage.

---

### **Joe Cummings says**

I never thought that someone from my generation could write a novel about JFK. He was/is too much a part of our lives. Stephen King sort of did with *11/22/63*, but that was more about preventing the assassination than about Kennedy himself.

Just as everyone the my parent's generation (aka the Greatest Generation) can remember where they were on

Pearl Harbor day, everyone in my generation (aka the Baby Boomers) remember where they were when they heard the news from Dallas. For us, Kennedy was the greatest member (with the possible exception of our parents) of the Greatest Generation. It seemed appropriate that the first Baby Boomer president Bill Clinton had as a youth traveled to the White House as a youth and shook the hand of his idol John Fitzgerald Kennedy. It seemed right; it seemed like kismet. JFK was our hero.

Author Francine Mathews, ironically enough, was born 1963 at the end of the Baby Boom and thus escaped the onus of memory. Her 2012 novel *Jack 1939* recasts summer of JFK's junior year at Harvard when he traveled around Europe collecting information for his senior thesis. The result of his research and thesis became Kennedy's first book-*Why England Slept*. In this spy novel, young Jack is also the secret eyes and ears of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

So what sort of spy is young Jack on the spectrum that runs from Ian Fleming's James Bond to John le Carré's George Smiley? Read the book. Ironically, both the movie *Doctor No* and the novel *The Spy Who Came In From The Cold* were released in 1963. Perhaps Kennedy had enjoyed both of them.

Many authors in this genre practice a sort of product placement to make their stories more real and authentic. While Mathews followed this practice, she realized that a novel about JFK life was more than expensive whiskeys, Savile Row suits and Gitanes cigarettes. So wisely in her novel, Mathews' "product placement" is the great men of America and Western Europe like FDR and Winston Churchill who were a part of the real JFK's life.

This novel was well researched and well written. I like to think JFK would have enjoyed it I hope you like it, too.

---

## R. Honey says

\*\*\*\*\* STARS

JACK 1939 = 007!

If Roosevelt and Dashiell Hammett were alive they would say "darn good spy yarn". This is actually what this novel is.

In winter, 1939 Jack, second and so far unremarkable also ran son of Joseph Kennedy, ambassador to England is summoned by

President Roosevelt just before he is to sail for England on the Queen Mary in early 1939. He is going to see his

Family in London but also plans to tour Europe for his Harvard senior thesis. Which later became *Why England Slept*.

Using this plot device the author has Jack meeting other such notables as Col. Gubbins part of the Baker Street Irregulars

the MI6 in infancy. Also Reinhardt Heydrich, Winston Churchill, and some actual state department officials of the time.

He barely has time to take his hat off on the Queen Mary when he sees a beautiful, "older" woman that catches his eye.

She will become the love of his young life. He also

notices a very Aryan but sinister looking man in a camel hair coat paying close attention to him. Right way

we are "off to the races" with Jack running into many interesting and some sinister characters as he sails across the Atlantic and travels the continent doing Roosevelt's bidding and pursuing his own spy adventure he falls into. This novel contains meticulous research about her subjects; JFK and the world just prior to Hitler's invasion into Poland, the start of World War two. This will appeal the serious readers among us. There is enough of heart in your throat action and daring do in this book to appeal to those who usually favor thriller best sellers that are churned out each year. What I call drug store literature. This book would make an excellent gift for any male readers in your circle. As an interesting aside, there are more than a few references to The Partisan's Handbook which can still be purchased on Amazon!

---

### **Dana Stabenow says**

What if FDR sent a twenty-one year old JFK to Europe on the very eve of World War II itself in order to find out if and how Hitler is smuggling money into the US to influence the next election?

*"I've been turning it over in my mind, Jack--this trip of yours," the President was saying. "To the Nazis, you're just the American ambassador's son. But to me, you're a perfect spy. My independent thinker. Arriving in London with a fresh outlook and an unclouded mind. As far as the Nazis are concerned, you're clean as the driven snow. They know your dad and I don't always agree. They'll never expect you to be my man in Europe."*

Jack, who is as ill with some undiagnosable disease as he can be and not be dead, finds this proposal flattering and irresistible. If he's going to die at any moment any way, why not die being FDR's man in Europe?

So he boards the Queen Mary for England and nearly all the European capitals, closely pursued by the White Spider, a Nazi SS agent who is very quick with a very sharp knife, closely cultivated by German intelligence agent Willi Dobler, and intensely damned by every American ambassador in every European capital for the trouble he causes them, not excluding his own father. There is a beautiful older woman, Diana Playfair, another amateur spy with whom Jack has a passionate affair, whose ending will break your heart as painfully as it breaks Jack's.

One of the most enjoyable things in this book are all the walk-on parts by real people, beginning with Jack's family (Joes Sr. and Jr. don't come off all that well, and Rose, my god, Jack would have been better off with Dracula's bride as his mother) and including just about everyone else in the World War II Almanac.

Oh yes, J. Edgar Hoover is there, too, and up to his usual Machiavellian shennanigans. Fear not, FDR's got his number, and unbeknownst to Hoover, he's got Jack, too. A fun read.

---

### **Carol Storm says**

Explosive, heart-stopping suspense! Sizzling forbidden love! Heart breaking tragedy!

As a reader who doesn't really care for spy novels or espionage, I was blown away by JACK: 1939. The historical details were amazing and totally believable. Not only that, but the personal, family, and medical background of real-life President John F. Kennedy were not only meticulously researched and perfect, but they added to the suspense and danger on every page.

Summer 1939. War in Europe is inevitable. Jack Kennedy is recruited by Franklin D. Roosevelt to spy on the Nazis. Even here the psychological depth of the book is amazing. Roosevelt, paralyzed by polio, and JFK, crippled by a lifetime of poor health, are natural allies. But young Jack's loyalty to his father, and his legendary charm, and his formidable intellect, and his astonishing physical courage, may not be enough to save him. For standing in his path is the White Spider -- a terrifying serial killer who moonlights as an assassin for the Gestapo.

This book is a classic. I would recommend it to anyone who is interested in spy stories, World War II, the Nazis, the Holocaust, John F. Kennedy, the Kennedy family, or romantic suspense.

---

### **JoAnne Pulcino says**

JACK 1939

Francine Mathews

JACK 1939 is a brilliantly conceived and intriguing espionage thriller. Ms. Mathews has done a superb job of placing a 20th century iconic historical figure in an improbable fantasy that encourages you to believe that the man, the story and the situations could be true and makes the read truly fascinating.

War in Europe is imminent but a 22 year old John Fitzgerald Kennedy decides to travel through Europe to research his Harvard senior thesis. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt is determined to run for president for a third term, and enlists Jack for a secret mission. Hitler is pouring German money into trying to buy the election to make sure Roosevelt is not reelected. Jack's mission is to uncover where the money is coming from and from whom. The list of contributors has the potential to be a powder keg of political disaster.

This is history and storytelling that is sexy, entertaining and creates a complicated plot with both well known and wonderful characters.

Highly recommended

---

### **Jeanette "Astute Crabbist" says**

I tried hard with this one, but it just wasn't striking the ol' ring-a-ding-ding for me...

I stayed with it all the way to the halfway mark, which is pretty generous on my part. Not only does it feel contrived, it seems to be a deliberate smearing of the Kennedy family. I'm well aware of Joe Senior's pecker-

dolloes, and his weird political ideas, and the manipulations that made him a wealthy man, but he had good qualities as well. He raised several fine sons who gave their all, and their lives, while working for social change, so he couldn't have been as odious as this author has made him out to be. And his wife Rose wasn't quite the hag she appears to be in this story. My Boston grandmother and great-grandmother knew Rose Kennedy and liked her. My grandmother was not one to mince her words if she disliked anything about anyone, so if Rose was that bad, I would have heard about it from my nana.

If you disagree with what I've said here, that's just fine with me, but please don't waste your time trying to stir up a debate with me about it. I have all I can do just keeping up here on Good Reads without spending more time on a book I didn't care for. Thanks.

---

### **Jaylia3 says**

Mostly wonderful

Could young JFK have been a pre-WWII spy for FDR? Author Francine Mathews has done her historical homework and created a mostly wonderful story that makes the possibility seem plausible. In 1939 the then 22-year-old John Kennedy was in fact roaming around the hot spots of Europe. His father Joe Kennedy was the American ambassador to Britain, and while the senior Kennedy supported Neville Chamberlin's policy of appeasing Hitler to avoid war, JFK's own writings indicate his thinking was more in line with Roosevelt's than his father's. The difference of opinion between father and son creates some of the dramatic tension in this book.

Though most of the book is a masterly and imaginative mix of history, suspense and intrigue, a few characters marred the story for me. JFK's love interest is a one dimensional parody of sophistication or elegance and more comic than convincing. Some of Kennedy's early interactions with her verge on sexual assault which makes for unappealing reading. Also, early parts of the book spend too much time on a cheesy semi-rouge Nazi villain instead of the more interesting larger Nazi schemes.

But in spite of those personal preferences issues Jack 1939 is still entertaining enough that I read it straight through. I enjoyed seeing a younger version of the future president, physically weak and battling illness but still charming and full of determination. For Mitford family fans, several of the sisters are mentioned in the narrative, and Debo even has a brief speaking part. In real life JFK's lively sister Kick was friends with Deborah, and later married the brother of Deborah Mitford's husband. They were all close enough that Deborah attended both JFK's inauguration and his funeral so it's only fitting that Debo makes an appearance here.

---

### **Tina says**

In 1939, the US had no spy service, no CIA, and had to rely on the intuition of its leaders along with unofficial reports on the actions of world leaders and governments for the nation's security. As Europe ground inexorably toward another war in 1939, President Roosevelt needed to get information quickly,

quietly, and completely outside State department channels. At the same time, Jack Kennedy, son of the US Ambassador to the Court of St. James (England) was planning to spend the summer and a semester touring Europe doing research for his senior thesis at Harvard.

Roosevelt asks Kennedy to act as his eyes and ears in Europe to find out what he can about Hitler's plans to take over Europe. He gives the young man a secret Morse Code radio (and a quick training course in how to use it) and sends him off with instructions to tell no one (particularly not his father) about his mission.

This could so easily have been a disastrous hollywood pulp novel throw away, but Mathews instead gives us a rip-roaring page-turner. She mixes well-researched facts into a credible but fictional scenario that keeps the reader's attention from start to finish. It's a quick read, not because it's shallow (it's NOT), but because the reader simply cannot put this down. There is romance, espionage, personal glimpses of the Kennedy family, a quick tour of major cities of Europe, a thorough explanation of Kennedy's now well-known health problems, and throughout it all, a clear sense of the urgency felt by the nations of the world who watched their paralyzed leadership as Hitler went unchallenged in his march toward world dominance. The author's suggestion about the dichotomy of Kennedy's beliefs vs those of his father is central to the plot. Kennedy's chase through European capitals, in pursuit of FDR's needed information is a thrilling read, as good as many mysteries on the shelves these days.

---