



Los Borgia

Mario Puzo , Carol Gino , Agustin Vergara , Agustin De Vergara (Translation)

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The Barnes & Noble Review

After a visit to the Vatican in 1983, Mario Puzo, bestselling author of *The Godfather* and *Omerta* , "was so enchanted by the look, the feel and food of Italy, so taken by its history," Carol Gino explains, "that he wanted to write a novel about it." Nearly 20 years in the making, *The Family* is that novel.

Set in Rome in the last years of the 15th century, Puzo's final book (completed by Gino, his companion for many years) is an absorbing, highly entertaining, fictional account of the rise and rule -- and eventual fall -- of that notorious first family of dysfunction during the Renaissance, the Borgias. Fast-paced and well researched, *The Family* -- in its effort to make such scandalous characters as the Borgias more human -- may well be the most ambitious novel of Puzo's career.

Cardinal Roderigo Borgia is charismatic and handsome, a born leader and a perfidious man of the cloth who ascends to the papacy as Pope Alexander VI in 1492, when Italian city-states are competing for land and the Vatican is competing for souls. He is also the loving father of four children, two of whom become pawns in their father's implacable drive for power. Cesare, Roderigo's oldest son, grows from an insecure cardinal to a fierce military leader; and Lucrezia, Roderigo's beautiful, seductive daughter -- and her father's favorite (not to mention her brother's incestuous bedmate) -- becomes the marriage link that unites nations and divides hearts. Throughout Roderigo's wheeling and dealing, the Renaissance is in full swing as religion competes against humanism and the Church seeks autonomous control of what will one day become a united Italy. As in E. L. Doctrow's *Ragtime* and Glen David Gold's *Carter Beats the Devil*, historical figures pepper the narrative. Michelangelo, Machiavelli, Leonardo da Vinci (whose military inventions help Cesare kick some serious tail), and Ferdinand and Isabella all make guest appearances, though at times they seem more like window dressing than actual characters.

While this blood-is-thicker-than-water tale is more summative than explorative (you don't really get into the heads of the Borgias as well as you do the Corleones), Puzo still knows how to tell a good story. *The Family* is an energetic novel, filled with enthusiasm and affection for the subject matter and the characters. Puzo's swan song may not be his finest work, but it is a robust, passionate love letter to a land, a history, and a culture that defined him as a writer and a man. (*Stephen Bloom*)

Los Borgia Details

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From Reader Review Los Borgia for online ebook

Damian Reyes says

Fenomenale

Sandra Cabanes says

Este libro ha sido todo un descubrimiento, cuando lo empecé no creía que fuese a gustarme tanto y que me tuviera tan enganchada. Desde hacía tiempo me apetecía leer algo sobre mi compatriota Rodrigo Borgia (quien nació en la misma ciudad que yo), y todos sus hijos. Conocía algunos detalles de su historia, pero con esta lectura he descubierto cosas que me han sorprendido y que han hecho que tenga una perspectiva distinta de esta famosa familia. Durante todo el libro hay un continuo debate que surge en los personajes sobre el bien y el mal, sobre la religión, sobre los pecados y la familia. No es una lectura para personas a quienes les aburran las cuestiones políticas y militares, hay mucha estrategia prácticamente en cada capítulo (aun así, es bastante amena).

De todos los personajes, es muy interesante ver el cambio que sufre Lucrecia desde el inicio hasta el final (aunque en el fondo siga siendo la misma cría consentida de su adolescencia). Se ve muy claramente como con cada paso que su padre decidía sobre su vida no hacía más que romperla cada vez en pedazos más pequeños.

(view spoiler)

Pronto estará la reseña en el blog: <https://tintaliteratura.blogspot.com.es>

Joy says

With the start of the new Showtime series The Borgias, I had to read one of the few remaining books on the Borgias that I own but hadn't read. Mario Puzo was fascinated by the Borgias all his life, and this was his chance to show his own interpretations of each Borgia personality, usually different from the standard views. His descriptions didn't give me the feeling of being there or knowing the characters; Puzo looked at the characters from an over-all viewpoint for decades, and didn't seem able to immerse himself in the minute.

Most noticeable is what looks like a whitewash of Cesare. The most interesting character arc is Jofre's. The most scandalous story line is Pope Alexander's method of guaranteeing Lucrezia's loyalty to their family before her first marriage. The most unbelievable is Puzo's theory that the Borgias' official in charge of ceremonies, whose detailed diaries of Borgia court life are such meat to historians, was filling his volumes with slanderous lies.

The most astonishing thing is that after a whole series of popes who conducted their papacies with flagrant criminality, half of Europe still fought to support the institution of papal dominance and infallibility. Truth is stranger than fiction.

Katie Scarlett O Hara says

Ne znam zašto, ali ovog puta nisam bila toliko oduševljena Porodicom kao dok sam je ?itala prethodnih nekoliko puta. Delovalo mi je kao da pisac nije previše ulazio u suštinu likova, ve? da je više vršio hronologiju njihovih života, trude?i se da obuhvati apsolutno sve, a onda se nekako usput izgubila povezanost sa likovima, koje do kraja više posmatramo kao glumce u nekoj pozorišnoj predstavi, ?ije se scene brzo smenjuju.

Justine says

Mario Puzo describes the Borgias as the original mafia family. I have long made it known that Alexander VI is my favorite pope* due to sheer badassery and a reminder of the heyday that was the papacy of yore.

I am torn about a reviewing system that compares books like The Family with The Hunger games and Cloud Atlas. What I'm trying to say is that while books in all three categories are rated on the same five point scale, they really aren't, as Puzo will never (in my opinion) be comparable to Mitchell. That being said, for bestseller contemporary fiction** he's near the top end of the chain (suck it Dan Brown). Puzo has created some of the most iconic characters and his portrayal of the Borgia family is about as epic as his writing gets.

What I love about his take on Renaissance history is the inexorable logic that motivates his characters. You read this and actually think that Alexander VI could have justified his rule like Puzo describes and that Cesare, Lucrezia, Juan, and Jofre's lives may have actually been pretty similar to this story. Puzo has the gift of taking figures who have passed into historical legend and giving them a voice and viewpoint that is not anachronistic, but is still entirely understandable. It makes reading about them dirty and delicious.

I know that this isn't meant to be highfalutin but for what it is, The Family is a pretty fun read (especially for badass pope junky like me).

*though my favorite Pope name would obviously be Boniface.

**purposeful eschewal of the word literature.

Caroline says

I don't like to speak ill of the dead, so I'll try to make this as short, sweet, and honest as possible.

Mario Puzo clearly enjoyed the Borgia clan almost as much as I do. He clearly put a lot of time and effort into this book. He clearly put a lot of love into "The Family". However, he encounters two very problematic issues.

Firstly, he was completely off-base in his interpretation of the Borgias, and thus he fails to make them

effective and interesting characters. Even when he's supposed to be flawed, Alexander Sextus is presented as this glorious man we're supposed to believe in constantly. Or maybe we're supposed to hate him? I don't know. Compared to Jeremy Irons' and Neil Jordan's interpretation of Alexander as a man who alternates humanly between bumbling and scheming, this person is weird and annoying, and... almost a bit of a try-hard?

Then there's Lucrezia, who Puzo viewed as a "good girl" (her tendency towards incest notwithstanding). And nothing else. Really. She just spent a lot of time being a damsel and standing in as this angel for Cesare and Rodrigo, and... yes. No. Stop. Her adultery was either not mentioned or glossed over, unless it was with Cesare. (Which did not happen in reality, but whatever.)

Cesare is presented as a failed hero. Puzo tries so hard to make him easy to relate to and heroic that he forgot that history says that this man had a serious problem. Cesare Borgia was borderline sociopathic; he loved no one but his sister. He was calculating and cruel, and that is exactly why he was successful. Puzo makes him more of a bad boy than a monster. He's afraid to "go there".

And I won't spend much time on this, but--the second problem is that Puzo is a mediocre if not bad writer in terms of prose. This is just... very clunky. Very awkward. It's clear to me that whatever he wrote for "The Godfather"--my favorite movie--worked better as a screenplay.

The sentimentality and effort is appreciated; however, this book is ultimately a failure.

Draven says

This book was on its way to being a 4 or even 5 star book for me when I first began and while I still enjoyed The Family overall, by the end, I could not shake a distinct sense of dissatisfaction.

In the beginning, the book fulfilled all it promised the reader it would be. It was lush with grandeur and decadence. The characters were intricate and detailed, with the specific sort of nuances only Mario Puzo could provide, the nuances that made a reader invest in a character, love them, in spite of all their garish sins, something quite necessary when relating a tale about the infamous Borgia family. However, as strong as it started, it just as quickly devolved.

Puzo passed away before he could complete his work and The Family was completed by Carol Gino. While I'm loathe to blame the dual authorship for the book's inconsistencies, for Gino deserves a thank you for completing the work so that we could experience Puzo's final vision, I honestly feel that the dual voices were in the end the problem. While I don't know for certain where Puzo left off before his passing, around the midway point, the story began to dissolve into one exaggerated scheme after another. Pivotal characters suddenly disappeared for long periods of time, while secondary characters suddenly became the masterminds behind the entire plot.

It's as if, in the face of uncertainty regarding the final destination of the story, it was decided that it was best to do more rather than less, exploit every possible sin and crime laid against this family historically, even if it didn't make complete sense with where the story started. All nuance and character depth was sacrificed in the name of shock value and by the end of the book, there wasn't time left in the characters' lives historically, to do their story justice.

A disappointing end to a beginning with so much spectacular potential.

Michaela says

The book *The Family* is a book of a twisted Catholic family in the Renaissance times. The family is lead by Pope Alexander VI, along with his children Lucrezia, Cesare, Jofre, and Juan. When the children were younger they were taken away from their mother, to go and study in the church, with their father. Through the years each child developed certain important skills, that they would be able to use later in life. While growing up, the children face some tough choices. Especially Cesare and Lucrezia. Lucrezia is forced into a marriage, as an alliance between two families. Cesare is torn between his father's wishes of him staying in the church and him wanting to be a warrior. The story is all about the struggle that each of the children and the Pope go through to stay in power. Though they are a Catholic family, they don't exactly follow the Catholic rules. There is a lot of betrayal and cheating, not only with allies, but within the family as well. Overall, this book was an ok book to read. It was not a book that I would choose to read again. I think the reason why I didn't enjoy this book was because of the odd way that the family lived. For some reason I couldn't get by the fact of the children, Lucrezia and Cesare, had a love affair. I think that I wouldn't have minded this book as much if it was maybe in a different time, and wasn't so weird at some points.

Maca Mamone says

La familia Borgia siempre me ha llamado la atención, desde que vi la serie *The Borgias* me quedé fascinada con la época renacentista y con los miembros de esta familia. Este libro me ha maravillado aún más, por supuesto nos brinda más detalles del contexto histórico, pero además nos mete en la mente de cada uno de los personajes, genialmente contruidos, y nos permite conocer sus sentimientos y pensamientos más retorcidos, complejos y contradictorios, como los de todos nosotros. Creo que Puzo, en esta novela, humaniza mucho a la familia Borgia, a Alejandro, que es presentado ante todo como un padre de familia que ama a sus hijos, pero sobre todo a Lucrecia y César, que a pesar de todo, fueron hijos sometidos a las decisiones de su padre desde muy pequeños. En fin, recomiendo esta novela a todos aquellos que tengan interés en conocer un poco más de los Borgia, o a quienes les interese la época renacentista ya que en el libro aparecen grandes personajes como Leonardo Da Vinci, Miguel Ángel, Maquiavelo, entre otros.

Elizabeth Sulzby says

I noticed a number of other reviewers thought this book was not as good as his other books. I found it fully as good (I read his pre-*Godfather* plus *Godfather* books) but I was reading it for a different purpose. After reading *The Dark History of Christianity* and an account of the Vatican papers, I was interested in the Borgias. Since SHOTime has started the cable series *The Borgias* there are many fictional or historical accounts of this family which included two popes. Puzo's book begins when Rodrigo's daughter Lucrezia is around 12, he has become pope, taking the name Alexander VI, and he has "parked" the mother of Lucretzia, Cesare, Juan, and (perhaps) Jofre in exchange for the younger, Guilia Farnese. It ends with Lucretzia surviving the deaths(in order) of Juan, Alexander, and Jofre. Puzo's book accepts the rumor of incest between Lucretzia and Cesare but places the blame on Alexander. It also questions the relationship between "sin" and "goodness" throughout the book. It gives great detail to the role of the Papal army, headed first by Juan while Cesare is named a Cardinal by his father. After Juan's death, Cesare resigns as a Cardinal

and heads the highly successful Papal forces, until his father's death. After Cesare dies, his ashes are collected by Lucretzia and ceremoniously scattered on the waters of a lake that had been part of their childhood.

I read a recent book on The Borgias which kept the incest idea secret until nearly the end of Cesare's life and had a "mistress" bear his child who has had only a few contacts with him (two intercours and a few letters) but with Lucretzia's support. It was strange, far less believable, and its fictional lead character was ridiculous. I heartily recommend The Family, Puzo's book, to people interested in the cable series and wanting background on the Borgias but not wanting to dig for the recorded history.

Mizuki says

But della Rovere frowned and said, "Heed my warning, Guido Feltra. He's full of the devil, this son of the church." (page. 34)

By the way, when I read this book, I kept missing the *Cantarella* manga series by You Higuri, which takes a fantasy approach when dealing with the Borgia Family and its many schemes. Plus the Cesare Borgia and Don Michelotto in the manga are total hot guys, Lucrezia Borgia is such a darling in this narration. XD
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cantarella>...

If you are interested in reading about the court intrigues, assassination and warfare in the Italian Renaissance period, *The Family*, the last novel by Mario Puzo (finished by his long time girlfriend after his death) would be much to your taste.

The Borgia Family has long been dubbed as 'the original crime family' and who else is more suitable to write about them than the master author of Mafia, Mr. Puzo himself? For most of the time I'm satisfied with what Mr. Puzo had to offer: the power plays within The Holy Mother Church, a badass Pope who dealt out death, assassination and other nasty treatments to his foes (and he had many!), the good old Pope's active and colorful sex life with his handful of mistresses (and these women were pretty capable and charming themselves), the rivalry among the Pope's four children, the warfare among the Italian states (lot of battles, alliances and vendetta!) and last but certainly not least, the infamous incest! (and those siblings are full-blooded siblings in the story, mind you.)

Alright, I was shell shocked by Mr. Puzo's plot twist about (view spoiler).

There are a good plenty of shocking events in this novel and I like how Mr. Puzo laid out for us the complicated family saga through a long period of time (roughly 30+ years) so effectively and always filled his story with a faint sense of irony and humor. I also like how these members of the infamous Borgia Family act and think like *people* with their own wits, sense of loyalty, definition of justice and flaws instead of being demonized into a bunch of '*they are evil!*' cardboard cutouts.

Among the crew, Pope Alexander VI and his second son Cesare Borgia were the central characters and I have to admit our good old Pope was the most charming one here (he is so freaking badass that he is at the

same level with Don Corleone!) In Mr. Puzo's opinion, Cesare was '*a patriot who decided to become a hero*' and he did have his many impressive victories during his life time to show for his talents although I don't think his character manage to stand out as much as his father.

As to Lucrezia Borgia, the young woman who suffered the most from her family's bad reputation and scandals, I do like how her personality is formed and how she learnt her life-lessons through the story's progress.

This novel certainly motivates me to learn more about the history of the intriguing Borgia Family, will look more into it later.

Morana Mazor says

Odlična knjiga o obitelji Borgia. Mario Puzo desetak je godina istraživao i sakupljao građu za ovaj roman, ipak nije ga uspio dovršiti pa je to učinila njegova partnerica Carol Gino. Radnja prati period "vladavine" Rodriga Borgia tj. pape Aleksandra VI i njegove obitelji koji su svi, na neki način, značajno utjecali na politiku svoga vremena, renesansne Italije. Sinovi Juan, Cesare i Jofre; kćerka Lucrezia svi su oni bili, na neki način "pijuni" kojima je otac upravljao kako bi proširio svoju moć i puno dalje od granica Italije. Uz tadašnji način života, odlično su opisani i privatni životi likova; njihovi (politički dogovoreni) brakovi, međusobni odnosi kao i njihova razmišljanja o životu i vremenu u kojem žive. A vrijeme je to i velikih povijesnih osoba poput Machiavellia, Leonarda da Vincija, Michelangela i sr. koji se također pojavljuju u knjizi. Vjerujem da je većina ljubitelja žanra već pročitala Obitelj, a, ako niste, onda to svakako učinite.

CA says

Estoy convencida que no importa lo que Puzo escriba me va a encantar porque disfruto mucho de su forma de escribir. La cosa es que, si bien disfrute de esa parte de la historia, la familia Borgia nunca me a llamado la atención, por lo que disfrutaba lo que estaba escrito, pero no estaba realmente interesada en nada de lo que sucedía.

Había alianzas y estrategias, personajes eran asesinados, pero a mí me daba lo mismo porque no estaba particularmente interesada por ninguno de ellos. Su final también fue muy apresurado y no se siente como el final.

Yair Zumaeta Acero says

Los Borgia (Título original: "The Family"), escrito por Mario Puzo, el mismo que en 1969 escribiese su obra maestra "El Padrino", intenta narrar – de manera más ficticia que histórica – las aventuras y desventuras de la más infame familia del Renacimiento europeo. Una novela histórica que tiene como fundamento la leyenda negra que se tejió sobre los Borgia por sus enemigos desde el mismísimo siglo XV hasta nuestros días, y que infortunadamente presenta una enorme cantidad de gazapos históricos, amén de la inverosimilitud de muchos de los eventos que allí se narran. Adicional a estos errores, la narrativa empieza de forma trepidante pero decae rápidamente, haciéndose lenta y repetitiva hasta desembocar en un desenlace

soporífero, con personajes planos, aburridos y sin profundidad, lo que viene a ser un enorme desperdicio considerando el calibre de los protagonistas históricos (Rodrigo, César, Lucrezia y Juan Borgia). Todo este desastre puede explicarse teniendo en cuenta que Puzo murió antes de terminar el libro, culminado por su compañera sentimental Carol Gino, quien en mi opinión, sólo contribuye a diluir la historia en una mezcla de exageraciones y absurdos que confluyen en una narrativa caótica y de muy pobre resultado.

“Los Borgia” sólo confirma mi antipatía por las novelas históricas, por lo que recomiendo en su lugar, leer algún ensayo histórico de los muchos que se encuentran sobre los Borgia, donde ciertamente la interesante realidad de dicha familia, supera con creces a la ficción mal construida.

Andrew Breslin says

I've read most of Mario Puzo's books, and this does not, in my opinion, compare favorably with the others. It's not bad, but, unlike *The Godfather*, it didn't fill me with ambitions to become a ruthless gangster, or, in this case, a scheming Pope.

Not that we can really judge Puzo too harshly. He died before finishing this, and I can personally attest to how hard it is to finish writing a book even if you are still alive. I can only imagine it's even tougher when you're dead.

He worked on it for years, decades, in fact, and his girlfriend finished it after he died. Kudos to her for wrapping it up, and an impressive job she did, but it still reads just a little bit like something a great writer worked on for years and was never able to finish and whose girlfriend finished after he died. Sort of.

Which, again, is not bad but we're grading on a pretty steep curve. Puzo was the undisputed master of, for lack of a better genre description, fiction featuring diabolical Italians. This did keep me turning the pages, and prompted some interest in that era and the Borgias. But it didn't haunt me, move me, inspire me. It's great to see dramatization of the fact that the Catholic Church was once even more corrupt than it is now, but modern-day gangsters are, to me, a little more exciting.

I think it's because they have guns. The Borgias did most of their killing with poison. Effective, yes, but not as dramatic.

Farith says

My uncle gave me this book as a present -an old, used and wrinkled copy. I've tried dozens of times to read this but I couldn't. I just can't get into it. I felt the writing really antique, and the plot didn't catch my attention. Also, every time I tried to read it, I started to sneeze because of the dust of the pages.

Sorry uncle Omar!

Talia says

What do I think about this book?

I love it!

I fell in love with it for the very first time I read it, back when I was 17. I cried, I sighed, I got mad, I gasped... I love it so much I had the Spanish version and the English one (now I have none since I lost the first one, God only knows where and when, and I lent the other one to a friend of mine, whom I haven't seen in two years, therefore he hasn't returned it to me. Yet. So now I'm Borgia-less)... I digress

What do I love about The Family?

1.- Mario Puzo did an amazing work writing the story of the Borgias. I know this family was all about crime and lies, but by the way Puzo tells their story you cannot but love them. Seriously.

2.- Cesar Borgia.

If there's someone who can make me bite my lip and sigh, that is Cesar. He is the most amazing male character I've ever read about. He is not good nor bad. Yes, he kills people and enjoys it, but he also suffers because of his father and he also knows the meaning of love. He is brave, yet he is weak. He is... *sighs* ... let's just say you must read it so you can fall in love with him.

3- Puzo tried to show people a different side of this family. He made incest into a love story. He turned crime into a way to defend someone's pride and reputation. He made Cesar Borgia into a hero (a troubled one) He used syphilis, rape and murder in such a magnificent way that I did not feel disgusted by any of this.

4.- This book is about politics, religion, power, incest, murders, love, strategies and intelligence.

These are my three favorite characters.

Rodrigo Borgia- Alejandro VI. This character is manipulative and cruel yet he seems to have a fond heart when it comes to his little daughter. He has done things no father would and he is aware he is going to hell (well, if he is not, then he is fooling himself because he is, in fact, going to hell)

Cesar Borgia. *sighs again* As I said before, this is the most wonderful character ever. He has also done terrible things but only for his father's and family's sake.

Lucrecia Borgia. She is intelligent, loving, caring, yada yada. She is a real martyr in this book; she has done everything his father had demanded her to do and she is way different from the rest of her family, but still she loves them and worries about them.

Lucrecia and Cesar...

I'm not going to say anything about these two except that I love them.

I know I didn't say what the plot is about, but people shouldn't really ask since The Borgias are a famous family, after all it is Pope Alejandro VI's family we are talking about and everybody knows about them (I hope) So I'm just going to say this book is different from all the other books about them and that there is drama. A lot of drama, but not the kind of drama that gets you sick, but the kind of drama that keeps you reading until you reach the last page, then you say Wow and think about Cesar and cry a thousand times because he... perishes. (Again, there's no spoilers here, since we all know Cesar Borgia dies...)

Well, you should read it : D

Natalie says

Puzo me uvijek asocira na mafijozne o kojima je pisao pod nazivom Corleone ali da mi netko nije prišapnuo da se ovdje radi o obitelji Borgias, ja bih opet brijala da je to neki nastavak onih prvih likova. Kako sam

tražila da mi dođe pod ruku neka priča koja će mi otčepiti krizu ili me primiriti na par sati, meni osobno ime Borgia je dovoljno da probam.

Pročitala sam ju u dan i pol i nemam pojma kaj sam radila u nedjelju, osim da sam se udubila u svijet kakav je bio u 15. stoljeću u Italiji. Rana renesansa vrijeme je Leonarda da Vinci, Michelangela te Rodriga Borgia i njegove obitelji. Ovaj primjerak o obitelji Borgia mi je najbolji, vrlo interesantan i osjeti se detaljniji i dublji opisi o životima Borgia. Koga zanima svakako preporuka.

Val says

This book makes you want to know everything about the Borgias. It is really well narrated, and the story becomes so intriguing that it is impossible to stop reading. Just as The Godfather, the head of the family (Rodrigo Borgia, later Pope Alexandre VI) is an ambitious and powerful man, who doesn't have any doubts to get rid of anybody who dares to stand on his way. But, after all, he is a family man. He loves his children, specially Lucretia and Giovanni, who seems to be his weak point. Anyway it doesn't stop him from arranging Lucretia's marriages to whom he considered the best alliances to make, and forcing her to obey him. Cesar Borgia, in my opinion, is one of those characters you will hardly forget. He loves and hates with the same intensity. He is an innate warrior and fights for the chance to choose his own destiny over his father's plans for him.

The story is based in true facts with a fictional surrounding, and it reveals a great deal of corruption in the Vatican of the Renaissance. It can be a story of betrayal, violence, corruption and crime, but above all, it is a story of love. Love in every gruesome and twisted way, but love after all.

?????? says

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