



All in the Family

Edwin O'CONNOR

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Set in Ireland, Italy and the corrupt old city of "The Last Hurrah" and told by an observant and sympathetic narrator (Jack Kinsella), cousin to a conspicuous Irish-American family whose name means power, influence and fabulous riches...all these, the achievement of one man. Jack's Uncle Jimmy is a tough, irascible little tycoon whose pride in his sons is matched only by his determination to get them what he wants: high political office! Aided by old Jimmy Kinsella's full resources, not least his willingness to twist any arm in the nation, his sons erupt into politics: Charles is to take the mayoralty, then the governorship, Phil is to act as campaign manager. And Jack, who once served as secretary to Frank Skeffington (of the "Last Hurrah"), is asked to join in. He refuses. Though their boyhood loyalty persists, it dates from the time when the warmth and spirit of his cousins' family life consoled Jack for the mysterious death of his mother & brother. (The radiance of his early years is evoked in the first chapter, a flashback which was published to wide acclaim in the "Atlantic".) Now, as a novelist, Jack is a solitary man - so much so that his exquisite wife, in her loneliness, has drifted away from him. When she returns, their slow, tactful, tender reconciliation so preoccupies Jack that he is unaware of the rift that has opened among the Kinsellas, that happiest, that most triumphant of families. The earthquake threatens not Charles & Philip, but an entire clan, a family legend, and a rocketing political career. The Kinsellas' answer is ruthless, brilliant, surprising - and tragic. In contrast, the quieter but dominant theme of the book - the fulfillment of Jack's lifelong needs - finds a harmonious resolution as the book ends, on a note that reawakens the sunlit sweetness of the opening pages. Quite a Good Book! (Taken off the cover, in lack of any other reviews)



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