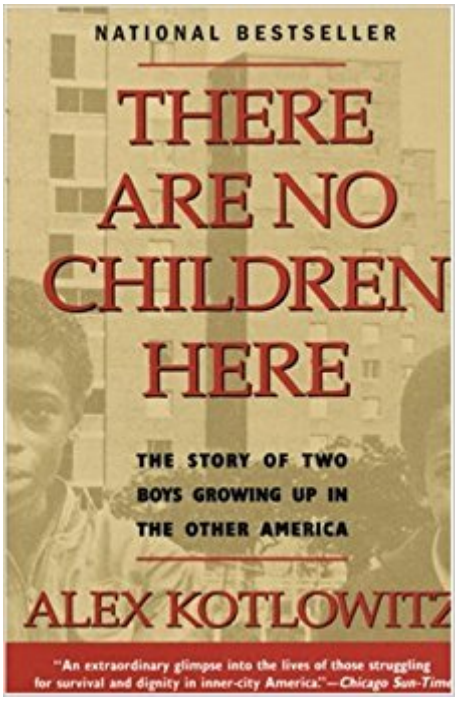
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There Are No Children Here: The Story Of Two Boys Growing Up In The Other America



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Synopsis

This is the moving and powerful account of twoÃ Â Ã Â remarkable boys struggling to survive in Chicago'sÃ Â Ã Â Henry Horner Homes, a public housing complexÃ Â Ã Â disfigured by crime and neglect.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There Are No Children Here, the true story of brothers Lafeyette and Pharoah Rivers, ages 11 and 9 at the start, brings home the horror of trying to make it in a violence-ridden public housing project. The boys live in a gang-plagued war zone on Chicago's West Side, literally learning how to dodge bullets the way kids in the suburbs learn to chase baseballs. "If I grow up, I'd like to be a bus driver," says Lafeyette at one point. That's if, not when--spoken with the complete innocence of a child. The book's title comes from a comment made by the brothers' mother as she and author Alex Kotlowitz contemplate the challenges of living in such a hostile environment: "There are no children here," she says. "They've seen too much to be children." This book humanizes the problem of inner-city pathology, makes readers care about Lafeyette and Pharoah more than they may expect to, and offers a sliver of hope buried deep within a world of chaos.

The devastating story of brothers Lafayette and Pharoah Rivers, children of the Chicago ghetto, is powerfully told here by Kotlowitz, a Wall Street Journal reporter who first met the boys in 1985 when they were 10 and seven, respectively. Their family includes a mother, a frequently absent father, an

older brother and younger triplets. We witness the horrors of growing up in an ill-maintained housing project tyrannized by drug gangs and where murders and shootings frequently occur. Lafayette tries to cope by stifling his emotions and turning himself into an automaton, while Pharoah first attempts to regress into early childhood and then finds a way out by excelling at school. Kotlowitz's affecting report does not have a "neat and tidy ending. . . . It is, instead, about a beginning, the dawning of two lives." These are lives at a crossroads, not totally without hope of triumphing over their origin. (Apr .Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

A fine portrait of a Chicago family surviving but taking wounds from poverty, bureaucracy, violence, bigotry, some wounds arguably self-inflicted but many otherwise. Alex Kotlowitz focuses with genuine friendship on two young brothers and their mom, of an extended family living cramped in criminally mis-managed public housing projects. I haven't read anything else that documents in such close quarter this life I haven't known -- though it was but a few miles from my home, and I'm sure time passing since publication of There Are No Children Here has changed little for people in seemingly permanent financial distress of what LaJoe Rivers and her sons Lafayette and Pharoah experienced.

This book is about a family living in the Henry Horner housing project in Chicago during a couple years in the 80's, primarily dealing with two boys, Lafayette, who's 11 at the beginning of the book and his younger brother Pharoah, who's 9. They live with their mother LaJoe, their siblings and various relatives who come and go, sometimes including their father.It's a rough neighborhood and they have to contend with drug dealers, over crowded schools, random gunfire, poor housing, hostility from the police, amongst other problems. The kids are used to ducking for cover when they hear a gunfight break out outside their apartment. They have a bathtub that never stops running and an oven that doesn't always work. They have friends who are murdered.It's a tough place to grow up but the author gives us their positive moments. Pharoah is an aspiring spelling bee competitor and has a personal refuge in a grassy neighborhood a few blocks away. Lafayette befriends an amateur local dj and helps his mother take care of the household.This is an amazing book. It reminded me of great 19th century authors like Dickens. It's that good. Recommended with no qualifications whatsoever.

I found this to be a telling account of one of America's most shameful faces: allowing our fellow citizens to live under such squalid conditions with no hope in sight. The author depicts realistically

the story of one African American family in Chicago with a devoted mother, an impaired and absent father, and kids of indomitable spirit who are buffered by factors not of their own making.Unfortunately, Ronald Reagan’s image of welfare mothers driving Cadillacs persist today, perhaps even more so than when he spoke of it in the 80’s. But this book explains the realities of good people in horrible circumstances, doing the best they can for their kids and the kids struggling to survive, never mind thrive, in incredibly bad circumstances.I only hope that conditions have improved since this book was written...but I strongly suspect they haven’t. Until we help people in these circumstances, America in its own right, will be a third world country, regrettably.

This was an outstanding book, especially, when read critically and analytically. I recommend diving into this book with this question in mind, "How do we fix it?" By "it," I mean the racial and ethnic problem in America that is clearly depicted within the "projects." More directly, ask yourself what problems do you see and how as a society and as an individual can we solve them. When reading with this question in mind, many ideas will develop and become clustered in your mind. With all the varying problems (drugs, the criminal justice system, gangs, lack of role models, etc) that are seen within the book, it may seem impossible to answer this question, however, as a society we must try. I recommend this book because it offers a great plot in addition to its educational value.

I couldn’t put this book down. In it, Alex Kotlowitz describes his time living in one of the most dangerous crime ridden neighborhoods in Chicago, almost as anthropologist studying what it’s like to grow up in a poor segregated community. The writing isn’t A+, but it’s never dry. Highly recommended for anyone.

This book takes you on a bit of a vicarious journey that explores tough choices, disappointment and death in the individual yet collective lives of an impoverished family in Chicago’s Horner Homes. By the time i finished the book, I felt that some of my perceptions of impoverished life had changed in that when you see how the system and street-level bureaucrats inadvertently and sometimes purposely use systematic elements such as authority and ill-conceived procedures to hold families down; you begin to realize that while all who live in poverty aren’t saints that many of them are trying, despite the system, to get out.Overall, if you really want to know what we are up against as community developers and administrators in impoverished urban American, READ THIS BOOK! I am glad I added it to my library.

This is not about the book. I just opened the book to find that it was messed up during printing. The first pages are in upside down with many missing pages from 20-53, when the pages turn right side up. I missed my return window. ÃƒÂ Ã Å¸Ã â„¢Ã Â•

I flew through this book...it is extremely well written and the author does a wonderful job of letting you get to know the Rivers family. It is a heartbreaking and eye opening into a world that I can only imagine, yet one that everyone needs to realize exists. These children are exposed to things that no adult should even experience and it's a wonder that any of them can find the courage to go on to bigger and better things. I found myself thinking about times when I have judged parents and kids based upon their actions or appearance and am ashamed of myself. I will never truly know their incredible struggles, but this book gives a tiny glimpse into their world and for that I am grateful.

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