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Crisis In Candyland: Melting The Chocolate Shell Of The Mars Family Empire

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Synopsis

Exposing the hidden story beneath the sugar coating in the Mars candy company, the truth about a bizarre family dynasty that rules with an iron fist includes ruthless management, incredible penny-pinching, and managers bailing out by the dozens. IP.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Part tabloid fare, part pop history, this patchwork portrait of the giant Mars candy company?Milky Way, Snickers, Three Musketeers, M&Ms?and its fabulously wealthy, intensely secretive founding family takes a bite out of the firm’s reputation by washing some dirty linen in public: "Not even partitions separate the fifty-odd headquarters associates, who must keep their voices down when talking on the telephone to avoid complete babel.... Few desks have computers, for writing memos is against corporate policy." After interviewing former employees, family friends and competitors at Hershey, Nestle and so on, Pottker (Dear Ann and Dear Abby) tells how polio-stricken Midwest schoolboy Frank Mars, spellbound, watched his mother’s candy-making magic, then failed at three businesses as an adult before launching the Milky Way candy bar in 1923 and an eventual worldwide food conglomerate. This business saga has a tyrannical crown prince who waited too long in the wings and died young, leaving his sons pitted against one another for company control; a profligate stepmother; a self-indulgent daughter; and a wealth of profit-making ideas, including the promotion of certain sweets as good for the teeth. He who snickers last... Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

In her latest work, Pottker (Dear Ann, Dear Abby: An Unauthorized Biography of Ann Landers and Abigail Van Buren, LJ 10/15/87) looks at the history and current-day practices of Mars, Inc., one of America's largest private companies. She sees a secretive and tight-fisted organization run by the eccentric and overly cautious brothers Forrest J. Mars Jr. and John F. Mars. As a result, Pottker had to rely on public documents and interviews with former employees in constructing her account, which serves as both a popular history of the company and an expose of the Mars family. Her book, the first on the subject, provides a good popular history of the company and insight into the candy-making industry but fails to deliver the intrigue its title promises. Pottker has uncovered examples of the family's ineffective leadership and dysfunctionality, but they do not seem to amount to a crisis. Recommended only where there is interest.?Mark McCullough, Heterick Lib., Ohio Northern Univ., AdaCopyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I must confess that I read this book because I loveMilky Ways. I've tried chocolate in Germany, Austria,Italy, and Denmark, but I have found nothing that equalsthe Milky Way.I still love Milky Ways, but, after readingthis book, I am not so enchanted with the family that created this wonderful product. Indeed, the creatures from Mars are very strange according to Jan Pottker, who specializes in writing about famous people.Pottker traces the history of the family that brought usMilky Way and a handful of the other most popular chocolatecandies (Snickers, M&Ms) of all time. Along the way, we learn about the sour business that is chocolate making.Pottker's story begins with Frank Mars, who, as a child stricken with polio, loved to watch his mother make candy. After a slew of hard times and many failures, he invented the Milky Way in 1923, and he began to make his fortune.But it was his son, Forrest Mars, who built the company into a major player in the world of chocolate candy. Pottker depicts Forrest as an exacting, brutal, miserly, and strangely religious man who probably ruined his children's psyche. His own character was forged out of much conflict with, and neglect from, Frank Mars. Forrest retired from the company in 1973, and then headed to Henderson, Nevada to make Ethel M candies, named so in honor of his mother.Forrest's two sons, Forrest Jr. and John managed to overtakeHershey as the biggest candy maker in America by the 1970s.Their sister, Jackie, moved from a life of leisure to helping them run the company.The children of these three siblings are given dim prospects for equaling or surpassing the success of past generations.The book has everything needed in a good novel. Sex, money, and power. And for good measure, Pottker throws in more power. Yes, the whole company seems to be one big power kick. It is difficult, of course, to verify a lot of Pottker's information. Authors that purport to bring us

information from nebulous sources are always selling their own credibility to readers. One repeated slip is the reference (pp. 8, 117, 228) to the disgraced president of American University as Richard Berezden instead of Richard BERENDZEN. Figures about sales and assets are rarely documented precisely. This is surprising, giventhat the author has a Ph.D. from Columbia University, accordingto her book cover.Those interested in a relatively better documented book on the Mars family may also want to read JoÃƒÆ'Ã Â«l Glen Brenner's The Emperors of Chocolate (2000), which focuses on the battle between Hershey and Mars for the world's sweet tooth. Brenner is not as good at telling a coherent and sequential story as Pottker, and Brenner repeats some of the more amusing anecdotes about the Mars family found in Pottker's book (though Brenner never refers to Pottker). But Brenner, at least, does attempt to provide a semblance of more precise documentation.In sum, Crisis in Candyland is a good read (and to be read with much caution) for those interested in what to me are the makers of the best chocolate bar of all time (the Milky Way).

Author seems to have something personal going on. Not very deep probe of Mars family. Most I had read elsewhere. Not current...update would have been enlightening. But....noooo.

if you are interested in the real "Willy Wonka" chocolate factory story, this is the book.History of the M&M Mars / Hershey interwined relationship, includes info about other candy companies as well.easy read.

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