

Booklist - Starred Review

The Looking Glass Brother.

von Ziegesar, Peter (author).

Adult Books - Nonfiction - History - U.S. History

<http://booklistonline.com/The-Looking-Glass-Brother-Peter-von-Ziegesar/pid=6058097>

June 2013. 320p. St. Martin's, hardcover, \$25.99 (9780312592981); St. Martin's, e-book, \$12.99 (9781429989909). 920.07.

*STARRED REVIEW. First published June 1, 2013 (Booklist).

The first time Peter von Ziegesar met Peter von Ziegesar, he told his father, “Those are the eyes of a killer. You’re going to have real trouble with this kid later on.” Little Peter, an adorable musical prodigy, didn’t commit murder, but he did become violent as schizophrenia hijacked his life. Arts writer and filmmaker von Ziegesar—Big Peter—had been out of touch with his wandering stepbrother for decades when Little Peter surfaced in New York City just before Big Peter’s first child was born. As Big Peter tried to figure out how to help recalcitrant and homeless Little Peter, he began facing his own fraught past as an “anorexic slacker” in a large, complex, “blended” family. He tells arresting tales of life at Peacock Point, the elaborate Long Island estate established by his wealthy great-grandfather, a close associate of J. P. Morgan’s, where multiple generations dwelt with various degrees of eccentricity, mischief, and suicidal despair. He also traces Little Peter’s trail to prison, rehab, and the “Homeless Hilton” beneath West Side Drive. Von Ziegesar’s cinematic eye and exceptional fluency in diverse perspectives make him an adventurously empathic biographer and audaciously candid memoirist in this piercing, thought-provoking portrait of a many-branched American family and a “looking glass” brother who reflects so many of life’s most plangent mysteries. — Donna Seaman

This title has been recommended for young adult readers:

YA/Mature Readers: Sensitive teens will be gripped by von Ziegesar’s memories of his struggle with a divided family, trouble in school, drugs, and the search for a calling, along with the harrowing story of his stepbrother. —Donna Seaman