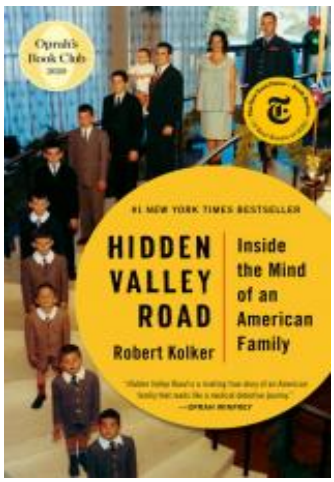
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Hidden Valley Road: Inside the Mind of an American Family

by Robert Kolker



About the Book

The heartrending story of a mid-century American family with 12 children, six of them diagnosed with schizophrenia, that became science's great hope in the quest to understand the disease.

Don and Mimi Galvin seemed to be living the American dream. After World War II, Don's work with the Air Force brought them to Colorado, where their 12 children perfectly spanned the baby boom: the oldest born in 1945, the youngest in 1965. In those years, there was an established script for a family like the Galvins --- aspiration, hard work, upward mobility, domestic harmony --- and they worked hard to play their parts. But behind the scenes was a different story: psychological breakdown, sudden shocking violence, hidden abuse. By the mid-1970s, six of the 10 Galvin boys, one after another, were diagnosed as schizophrenic. How could all this happen to one family?

What took place inside the house on Hidden Valley Road was so extraordinary that the Galvins became one of the first families to be studied by the National Institute of Mental Health. Their story offers a shadow history of the science of schizophrenia, from the era of institutionalization, lobotomy and the schizophrenogenic mother to the search for genetic markers for the disease, always amid profound disagreements about the nature of the illness itself. And unbeknownst to the Galvins, samples of their DNA informed decades of genetic research that continues today, offering paths to treatment, prediction and even eradication of the disease for future generations.

With clarity and compassion, bestselling and award-winning author Robert Kolker uncovers one family's unforgettable legacy of suffering, love and hope.

Discussion Guide

1. In HIDDEN VALLEY ROAD, each of the Galvin boys who are diagnosed with schizophrenia show different

symptoms. How does schizophrenia present differently in each of the Galvin boys?

2. How does the Galvin family adapt when the boys develop schizophrenia? Do any of the family members handle it better or worse than others?

3. At the time when the Galvin boys are being diagnosed with schizophrenia, studies in mental illness claim the parents are responsible. How do you think this affected how Don and Mimi handled the changes happening in their family?

4. How did growing up on an air force base positively or negatively affect the Galvin family?

5. How did this book change your perception of mental illness?

6. Discuss how the youngest Galvins, Lindsay and Margaret, both came to terms with their family?s struggle with schizophrenia in different ways.

7. Did your feelings change about any of the characters during the course of reading?

8. What was your impression of Mimi at the beginning of the book? Did it change by the end?

9. Tragedies have the power to shape families to bring them closer or pull them apart. How is the Galvin family shaped by their own tragedies?

10. As the Galvin children begin having children of their own, how does their upbringing on Hidden Valley Road affect how they raise their own children?

Author Bio

Robert Kolker is a contributing writer at *The New York Times Magazine* and the author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller HIDDEN VALLEY ROAD, named an Oprah?s Book Club pick, a *New York Times Book Review* Top 10 book of the year, a *GQ* Best Book of Literary Journalism of the 21st Century, and a *Kirkus Reviews* Best Nonfiction Book of the Century. His first book was LOST GIRLS, named a *New York Times* Notable Book and a *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of 2013. His latest book is THE VANISHING FAMILY: Love, Fate, and the Quest to End Dementia.

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