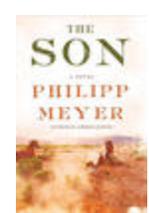


## Meyer, Philipp. The Son

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### Meyer, Philipp. The Son



In 2009, Philipp Meyer was named one of the 20 best writers under 40 by the *New Yorker* after publishing his book, *American Rust*. I think it is safe to say that his most recent book, *The Son*, will secure his place on that list. The story focuses on the McCullough dynasty, who have held power in Texas since the 1800s, actively shaping the social, economic and physical landscape of the state since the wild frontier days.

The narrative jumps back and forth through the imagined personal diaries and memories of three generations of the McCulloughs. First is Eli, one of the earliest white males born in the newly found Texas who becomes the sole survivor of his family after a brutal Comanche raid. Eventually, he goes from captive to full-fledged tribe member, taking the Comanche culture as his own until he is suddenly thrust back into white society, forever wrestling with his identity as he builds the foundations for his successful family.

Second is Peter, Eli's son, who morally opposes the violent anti-Mexican racism in the community but cannot find the courage to turn those feelings into action. He desperately wants to shed the brutal legacy of his well-loved father but Peter's only act of true rebellion is falling in love with a Mexican neighbor, gaining him the title and legacy of "The Great Disappointment."

Third is Jeanne Anne, Peter's granddaughter, who takes over the family business at a young age and vaults it to a new level of prosperity during the 1950's. Although successful as a woman in a male dominated oil industry, she cannot find validation, leaving her alone and without an heir. She is perhaps the last in the great line of the McCulloughs.

Although epic in scope, the story is grounded by the ambitions and roots of one family, experiencing their endless desire to conquer along with the consequences those desires bring. Even though the reader is witness to the innermost thoughts of Eli, Peter and Jeanne Anne, they remain complex, frail and flawed. In that way, this is not a romantic story of the American West, but rather an extremely compelling and authentic portrait of a family who was part of the fierce creation of the West as we know it today.

meyer and the son

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