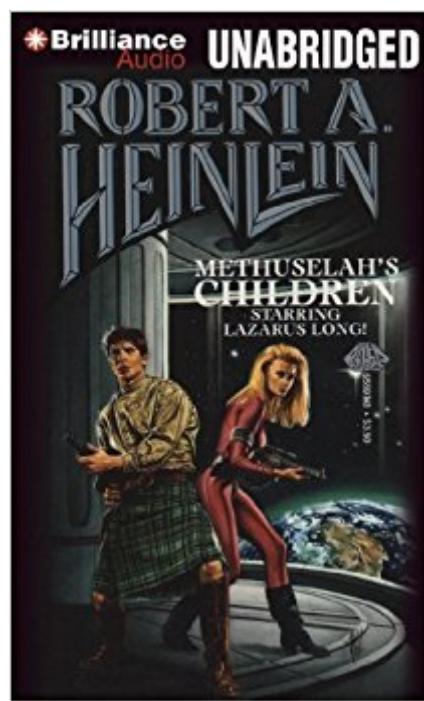


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Methuselah's Children



Synopsis

After the fall of the American Ayatollahs as foretold in Stranger in a Strange Land and chronicled in Revolt in 2100, the United States of America at last fulfills the promise inherent in its first Revolution: for the first time in human history there is a nation with Liberty and Justice for All. No one may seize or harm the person or property of another, or invade his privacy, or force him to do his bidding. Americans are fiercely proud of their re-won liberties and the blood it cost them; nothing could make them forswear those truths they hold self-evident. Nothing except the promise of immortalityâ |

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Methuselah's Children is a critical component of Heinlein's remarkably impressive body of work. Not only does it culminate the Future History series of stories, it also points the way toward a better understanding of Heinlein's later writings. Perhaps most importantly, this novel introduces us to Lazarus Long and other prominent members of the Howard family of long-timers. This story opens well after the fall of the First Prophet theocracy described in Revolt in 2100; democracy, liberty, and freedom once again mean something in America-at least until the populace learns of the existence of a large group of men and women with lifespans more than double the norm. Believing that the Howard families possess the secret of eternal life, the government takes action to seize all long-timers using any means necessary, including the abhorrent torture treatments made famous by the hated former theocracy. The embattled administrator of the country believes the Family trustee and representative Zach Barstow when he tells him that there is no secret to be had, that the

lifespans of the family are determined by heredity. To the great fortune of all 100,000 long-lifers, the remarkable Lazarus Long decides to return to the Family fold he once left behind out of sheer boredom. His leadership results in the Family escaping earth and making their way out into space in search of a new home planet. Their travels are extensive, and their contact with other intelligent beings is as fascinating as it is intriguing-both culturally and scientifically. Heinlein puts a lot of science into his description of the ship's interstellar voyage and the means by which the people plan to survive for a journey of many light years.

Selective breeding and carefully planned marriages with subtle financial encouragement from a secretive group called the Howard Foundation carried out over the last 150 years have resulted in a group of humans that have the extraordinary trait of extreme longevity - Lazarus Long, the patriarch of the Family, born Woodrow Wilson Smith, carries his two hundred plus years quite well! When pressed for his true age, he's either not telling or he won't admit that he truly doesn't know himself! In 2125, a series of events result in the global administration and the remainder of earth's population discovering the Family's existence. A frenzy of enraged jealousy erupts as a maddened, frustrated world seeks to discover the secret fountain of youth they are convinced the Family is guarding for their own use. Hounded by the threat of murder, torture, brainwashing and ultimate extinction by their shorter lived neighbours, the Family flees earth on an untested starship. The discovery of two planets and alien races that pose threats and challenges even more imposing than those from which they fled plus an overwhelming loneliness for the way of life they left so far behind lead them back to earth for a second try. In Methuselah's Children, Heinlein has crafted an exciting novel, a message, a screenplay and the movie script all at once. Descriptive passages, while compelling and very cleverly written are sparse and infrequent and the plot is almost exclusively driven by razor-sharp dialogue. Heinlein's method of conveying the story through his characters' mouths has got wit; it's got dialect; it's got humour and intelligence; it's got sensible science; it's got humanity and it's got credibility.

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