

In the Shadow of the Moon

By Author, Amy Cherrix

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As the United States and the Soviet Union marveled at their progress in the Space Race, few knew about the two brilliant men responsible.

A man attempts to find people willing to nurture his love for rocket science, and another finds freedom through Stalin's drive for a Soviet-made ballistic missile. For Wernher von Braun, he'd join the Nazi Party in hopes of gaining enough resources for his rocketing dream. When Berlin falls, von Braun escapes to the United States where he must bury his Nazi past. For Sergei Korolov, he'd been a part of Stalin's Great Purge and finally freed for his brilliant reputation as a scientist. However, Korolov encounters many obstacles in his effort to help bring the Soviet Union on the same level as the rich United States.

I really enjoyed the whole back-and-forth style of the book. Through von Braun's story, you realize how this one man and his team reflect America's ideals despite their affiliation with Nazi Germany. I felt more for Korolov. Despite him knowing that it'd been Stalin who'd sent him to the dreadful Gulag camp, Korolov takes his new role as a lucky second chance to prove himself to the Man of Steel. Wernher von Braun's story brings in the question of which is more important: human morality or human progress? Would you associate yourself with something horrific to achieve your dreams?

I would recommend this to anybody over 11. There is nothing too graphic other than the description of the slave labor for the V-2 rocket. A little background on World War II and the Space Race might help before reading, but the book has adequate context given already. My only real complaint is that this book felt like it was missing something. These two stories are both compelling, but I would not mind more.

Recommended Titles:

The Spy and the Traitor by Ben Macintyre

The Professor and the Madman by Simon Winchester

Bag Man by Rachel Maddow