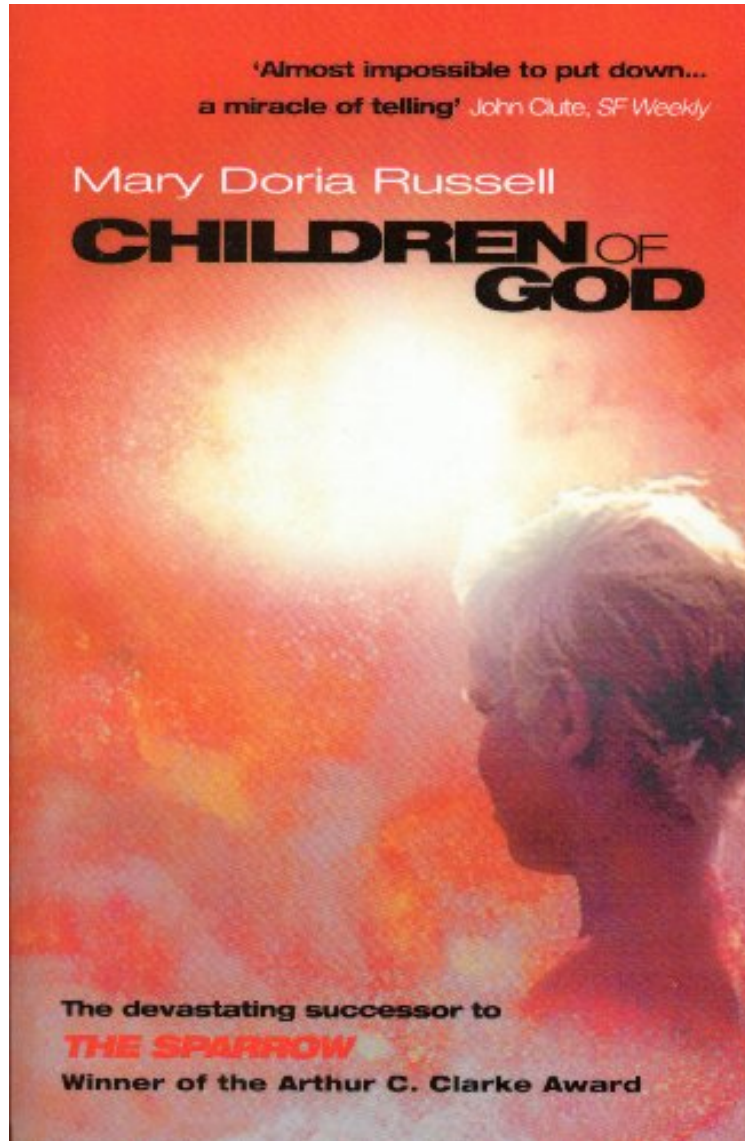


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## Children Of God

Von Mary Doria Russell

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**Von Mary Doria Russell : Children Of God** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Children Of God:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. The Sparrow has landed...Von FrKurt MessickThe book `Children of God' is the sequel to Mary Doria Russell's award winning first novel, `The Sparrow'. In this we take up once again with Father Emilio Sandoz, the only survivor of a doomed expedition to a nearby planet, set in the not-to-distant future. (Please see reviews of `The Sparrow' for a little

more detail about that.) Most of the characters from the first novel have died (in this novel we discover how a few of the missing people from the first expedition met their fates), and due to the effects of near-light-speed travel, many decades have passed on earth while Father Emilio is still relatively young. There are political crises on earth, including a crisis in the church, and there seems to be an urgent need for yet another expedition to Rakhat. In the interim, there have been several attempted journeys, all of which have failed. The church hierarchy decides that the only 'successful' trip was that of Father Emilio, and thus decides (largely without his consent) to send him off again. At the same time, Rakhat has undergone a dramatic change, brought about in part by the arrival of the strangers, but also due to the political schemings of members of the dominant race, the Jana'ata. The Runa, always larger in population, begin to realise their oppressive situation, aided by renegade Jana'ata, and a civil war breaks loose. Into this situation the human expedition re-enters the scene on Rakhat. This story completes many of the unfinished details from 'The Sparrow'. By filling in the blanks while also carrying the narrative forward, Russell's rather dark picture of the nature of God in the universe (as enacted by the creatures on earth and elsewhere) becomes a little lighter, a little more just, a little less doomed. There is, however, no answer to the personal injustices, to Father Emilio's abuse both at the hands of the Jana'ata and the Jesuit order. Russell's development of the characters, both human and alien, deepens and broadens in this second novel; her imaginative history of the alien cultures is quite stunning, and her treatment of the strengths and weakness in human character insightful. Read 'The Sparrow' and 'Children of God' back-to-back if at all possible.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. "Children of God", sequel to "The Sparrow", doesn't fly  
Von Ein Kunde  
Mary Doria Russell's first book, "The Sparrow", was an extremely readable work about the moral dilemmas encountered by a doomed Jesuit-sponsored mission to a distant planet in the year 2020, as told in flashbacks from the vantage point of 2060. It could be read as a retelling of the missionary-native encounters during the Jesuit missionary efforts in the 17th and 18th centuries in French Canada and in the Orient. But it was more. On a philosophical and religious plane, it addressed the question of whether there is a God, or whether He is just an illusion we humans invent. And further, if God exists, why does He allow those who believe in Him so much to suffer so greatly. Add to this the apparently knowledgeable discussion of biological and cultural anthropology and of linguistics which the author weaved into her story and into her plot, and you had a terrific read. Unfortunately, the sequel, "Children of God" is a letdown. The first book reached a catharsis by being very well plotted, having an array of interesting characters, and an ongoing discussion of heavy philosophical issues which were well weaved into the story line. We wanted to know what happened to the priest protagonist to make him so disillusioned. And we found out, and it was powerful. The sequel has some moments, but has too much copycatted material from the original, stereotypical characters, and absurd plot lines -- the space trip which returns the priest to the planet has all of these faults -- to make for an interesting novel. Also, the resolution at the end of the sequel has none of the power of the original: if bad things happen, well, offer them up. In short, this sequel doesn't fly.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Not Quite As Good As The Sparrow  
Von Ein Kunde  
CHILDREN OF GOD was a mixed book. The human-focused parts of the story lacked some of what made THE SPARROW great, but the Rakhatian parts were much better than those in the original. On the Earth (human) parts of the story: I have several problems with the human-focused parts of this story. First of all, there is the revival of Sofia. It was stated rather explicitly that she was dead in the first novel. Her revival stretches the plausibility of the novel. Secondly, the Camorra subplot present in this sequel was rather annoying. The Camorra characters Franz, Carlo, and Nico were all rather one-sided, and unnecessary. I don't believe that it was necessary for Russel to include these heavy-handed 'bad-guys' - they are very two-dimensional. In addition, the Jesuit characters in this novel aren't very well-fleshed out, either. Indeed, the contemplative and religious mood of the first book is somewhat replaced by action in this novel. Finally, Emilio Sandoz seems to have lost what made him an attractive and interesting character in the first book. He has become merely a bitter, sarcastic man, self-pitying and focused on his own pain, whereas, in the first book, he was more complex. In THE SPARROW, Sandoz was given depth and dimensionality. In CHILDREN OF GOD, Sandoz has lost that depth and become a shallow character, a change which I found most disappointing. However, on the bright side, the Rakhatian parts of the story were much better. I found that I understood the actions of the Runa and the Jana'ata much better after reading CHILDREN OF GOD. In addition, Hlavin Kitheri is shown in a more detailed, realistic way. Previously, he was shown as a sadistic, cruel villain - the man who destroyed Emilio Sandoz. However, here, he is shown as a complex, mixed man, a genius and a rapist, a pampered third son and a revolutionary leader. In addition, I found the character of Supaari VaGayjur similarly expanded upon. My main regret about the Rakhatian part of the story is that it was not treated with more extensively. So, in the end, this book was mixed. The human story, I found, had lost some of its appeal and depth, but the story of Rakhat had become more absorbing and dimensional.

**Kurzbeschreibung** From the acclaimed author of *The Sparrow* comes a new, extraordinarily imaginative SF novel which continues the powerful, moving story of Emilio Sandoz, the charismatic Jesuit priest who led the well-intentioned but catastrophic mission to the distant planet of Rakhat, and journeyed to the furthest reaches of the human

soul. Now, in *Children of God*, Father Emilio Sanchoz returns and - against his will - is forced to continue his quest for the meaning, if any, of God's plan. Dazzlingly imaginative, philosophically provocative and immeasurably entertaining, *Children of God* is a must-read for fans of *The Sparrow*, and a startlingly fresh adventure for newcomers to Mary Doria Russell's special literary magic.

Mary Doria Russell's first novel, the award-winning *The Sparrow*, proved that any stock of theme can be renewed by hard thought and good writing. The first human expedition to the alien world of Rakhat ends in complex disaster; the only known survivor, the Jesuit linguist Emilio Sandoz, is brought back raped, mutilated and an emotional wreck--only by telling his story of complex cultural misunderstandings does he even gradually regain his sanity, if not his faith. Rakhat is a world with two intelligent species, not one--and the gifted biologists and musicians whose radio messages attracted Earth's attention not only enslave, but eat, the likable efficient peasants that humans first contacted. Sandoz is shanghaied back, by a coalition of the Church and the Mafia, only to find the situation even more complicated--he was not, after all, the only survivor. Sophie, infuriated by massacres, has started a revolution - and when prey determine to be rid of their predators, revolution becomes genocide. This is a powerful novel of religion, politics and bad choices--it is a sequel which intelligently undercuts and revises assumptions its predecessor imposed on us; like its predecessor, it is one of the key sf novels of the 90s. --Roz Kaveney

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