



S'Mother: The Story of a Man, His Mom, and the Thousands of Altogether Insane Letters She's Mailed Him

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And you think your mom is too involved? Meet the mother of all mothers.

Adam Chester is the son of a very loving mom, who for almost 30 years has peppered his life with unsolicited advice, news updates, and opinions in the form of thousands of inappropriate, embarrassing, and utterly crazy letters. *S'Mother* is a hilarious memoir based on this correspondence showing the pathological extremes maternal instincts can take. Why is a grown woman so frantic that her adult son screw on his windows to keep out killer bees? And are adult trick-or-treaters really that much of a threat? Adam saved his mom's letters as proof this all happened and reproduces many of them in the book. And now, with time, perspective, and plenty of therapy, he acknowledges and accepts the comedy of it all and is proud to share his story with you, if for no other reason than to make you feel better about your own mother.

Praise for *S'Mother*:

"When your mother continues to advise you on everything under the sun and then some more than thirty years after you've flown the proverbial coop, you're gonna feel a bit smothered. When the advice comes in the form of letters that at best are embarrassing and at worst downright insane, well, you've either gotta capitalize on it or go insane yourself. Thankfully, the Miami Beach-born Adam Chester chose the former, and his book *S'Mother* (Abrams Image) is a most peculiarly endearing way to celebrate Mother's Day."

-NBC Miami

S'Mother: The Story of a Man, His Mom, and the Thousands of Altogether Insane Letters She's Mailed Him Details

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Author : Adam Chester

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From Reader Review S'Mother: The Story of a Man, His Mom, and the Thousands of Altogether Insane Letters She's Mailed Him for online ebook

Noe says

Over the course of a few decades, Adam Chester has received countless letters from his mother while away trying to establish his independence as an individual, enough letters to fill a book, write a memoir, and include many different illustrated examples of his mother's odd, oddly specific and sometimes psychotic letters.

This book is a hilarious memoir of Chester's (often quite embarrassing) experiences dealing with his mother both before (in the forward section) and after moving away from home for University and a Career as a musician. I do feel for him, Having a mother like that. Sure she's overprotective and slightly insane I'm guessing from her letters.

Of course not all of Ms. Chester's letters are intrusive, odd, or crazy, some of them seem perfectly sane and characteristic of a worried mother. I do wonder if Adam's mother eventually got some form of therapy. Surely she cares and is trying her best to look out for her son the best she knows how. I would be embarrassed myself if my mother did or said some of the things Adam's mother has said/done.

I did notice similarities between Ms. Chester and my own mother, but never to such an extreme as what's shown in here. I do feel like reading through this makes me feel a bit better for the type of mother I have, and be thankful that she isn't the letter-writing type.

This is a fun and entertaining page-turner that I'm sure will give you some insight into the life of someone who claims to have a 'crazy mother' and can back it up with written proof. I plan to finish the rest of this book tonight and possibly edit my review more then.

Robin Bonne says

I have never hated an author as much as I hate Adam. He grew up with a single mother who loved him unconditionally and took an interest in his life and yet he is blinded by his own sad male privilege whining. He writes as if the fact that she cared about him was some sort of abuse which leads to the conclusion that he has probably never has any truly hard struggles in life and has no idea what a hard childhood looks like. The only thing his mother did wrong was raising a spoiled, ungrateful brat.

Miranda Reads says

I sided with the mother

The title emphasizes *thousands* of insane letters but we don't even see fifty.

False Advertising.

Most of the book consists of Adam Chester **passive-aggressively** digging at his mother's concerns and fears or him name-dropping his accomplishments. I'm sure that getting so many letters over his life time certainly **warranted lots of annoyance** but as an audience we are not given enough time to grow as exasperated as he obviously has.

Of the letters we're given **her letters sounded sweet**, if a bit obsessive and a smidge batty but not as terrible as he makes her out to be.

There were a few **memorable letters addressed to Adam's dog**, letting the little pooch know she's thinking of him and that Adam should pick up a few toys as a gift from her to the dog. I love the roundabout way she manipulates Adam into giving the puppies a treat.

Audiobook Comments:

--Adam's mother narrated her portion of the book. She was a queen.

--Also, knowing that she read it made some of the meaner comments from her son less bad (because I assume she must've approved of the book enough to narrate).

--I still felt uncomfortable every time he would "elaborate" (aka make fun of) her letters.

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Michelle J. says

This is the story of Adam and his mom. Oh, and the insane letters she has sent him for most of his life. I love that he kept them, because now the rest of us can celebrate our comparatively normal mothers. I found myself laughing out loud a lot while reading, and just as often I was shaking my head in disbelief while asking myself, "what?" and "why?"

We follow Adam to college and around the country, as he intersperses his history and tales with mom stories and the ever-interesting letters. Often, these notes do not relate at all to the events in Adam's life, and they are strangely repetitive and worrisome. (I had to run out and get myself an updated tetanus shot, as well as remind myself to stay away from UNCLE MICHAEL.) It helps that Adam has done some neat things, and that he has a really cool job (Elton's body and piano double? Really? Wow!).

I received an ARC from NetGalley and read it on my kindle, and some of the formatting was off. This did not affect my enjoyment of the book too much, but it was jarring and it kept me from seeing the pictures! I really wanted to see the snapshots of the actual letters that are included here. Some of the postcards and newspaper clippings sent by Adam's mom were not transcribed, so I couldn't follow the jokes afterwards. It wasn't a huge problem, but I felt like I missed some great stuff!

Overall, a light and fun read that will have you calling your own mother to thank her, as well as send you looking (if you're old enough) for those old letters of your own.

Scott Collins says

I thought this book would be a bit more like S*it My Dad Said which I really enjoyed. Alas, it was not. After about half the book I was starting to feel a bit uncomfortable with how much he was raking his mom over the coals. Strange? Overbearing? Crazy sometimes? Yes. Deserving of being ridiculed in a book that didn't make me laugh so much as cringe whenever I read his comments? No. It had potential but missed the mark. Probably a lot better if you just stick with reading her notes and skip his.

Cathleen says

I had hoped this would be a funny yet warm reflection on a wildly strange mother-son dynamic, and it starts out that way. It's not a long book, but after a while, some of the jokes begin to take a mean-spirited edge. Since Adam's mother agreed to voice the audiobook with her son, it's easy to think that she sees the absurdity and that they can laugh at the memories together. The longer some of this goes on, however, the more it becomes clear that Mom has indications of some serious issues, and Adam feels free to make her the butt of the joke. (Besides, the fact that he kept all the letters speaks to issues of his own.) I acknowledge it's just supposed to be fun, but I felt increasingly uncomfortable.

audiobook note: My response may well be affected by listening to the two read their own parts. Adam can be over-the-top, and some of his reactions are nothing less than harsh. He thinks he's being funny, and sometimes he succeeds -- but when he oversteps, it's cringe-inducing.

Amy L. Campbell says

Note: Review copy provided by Netgalley.

What should have been a funny, lighthearted glimpse at an eccentric and overbearing mother turned out to be a very angry and appalling expose on a woman who probably has some serious mental health issues. The letters were strange and even borderline funny, but Adam Chester's voice is so angry and belittling of his mother that it is difficult to find any charm or humor in his mother's letters or his interpretation thereof. While the first chapter or so was okay, we start to see a lot of what will be the downfall of this book once Chester starts complaining that his mother moved into his dorm after he had a fairly serious car accident that resulted in the removal of bone fragments from his hip. While this is obviously an inappropriate response from his mother, holding in that anger and frustrating for 30 years is a far cry from being healthy itself.

Adam Chester's mother may be insane, but she's not the only one with issues here. And as Chester states himself he sometimes refuses correspondence with his mother which may have exacerbated the problem. This author needs some serious distance from this topic and I feel like I am less of a person for having read this.

Kinga says

If you thought your mother was crazy, meet Adam's mother. She singlehandedly undid all the hard work of generations of Jewish women who wanted to erase the stereotype of an overbearing, smothering Jewish mother.

Adam spent most of his life trying to run away from her, but where she couldn't reach him personally, her letters would. Adam saved them all (for reasons unknown to him) and now, after watching the success one can enjoy cashing in on their parent's craziness (vide: *Shit My Dad Says*), decided to publish them. As he says in the beginning:

"For my mother, her letters are therapy. For me, her letters document my reason for therapy."

While Adam's narrative is a bit too chatty and uncoordinated for my delicate literary tastes, his mother is precise and lapidary:

"On the 19th of this month, I will send you \$100. Use it to buy groceries for the week. Try not to put chemicals in your system, like Prozac. If your grandfather were here (on your father's side), he'd tell you not to put that in your body."

She is the master of motherly haiku:

"Adam,
Grapes are very good for having bowel movements. I didn't see any grapes in your house.
Love,
Mom"

While she cares very little for trivial events in her son's life, like, say, his engagement, or him getting a job with Elton John, she is always there to point out the important stuff, like the inadequacy of his thin coat in New York weather or the dangers of eating sushi.

Sure, she drove him crazy. Sure, this book is funnier to read than to live. But don't be mistaken, Adam and his mom make one of a kind duo, and she certainly likes the limelight this book has put her in. Most likely because through this book she can expand her motherly instincts on thousands of unsuspecting readers.

I couldn't help but to like it. Hell, she does remind me of my own loving mother who calls me from Poland just to tell me I should eat algae to help me with my thyroid (which I have NO problems with!).

But as Wikipedia says:

"The Jewish mother stereotype, then, has origins in the American Jewish community, with predecessors coming from Eastern Europe. In Israel, where the geographical background of Jews is more diverse, the same stereotypical mother is known as the Polish mother."

Nicole Falls says

Hilarious compilation of letters from an overbearing mother.

L says

It was kind of funny but also seemed a little mean-spirited.

Emily Rhoads says

This book made me laugh out loud so hard that I woke my husband up as I was up late one night reading it. I'm glad Adam's mom is not my mom, though I think anyone reading this can see a little bit of their mother's own craziness (and possibly a bit of your own craziness) in the letters of his (mostly) well-meaning mother.

I DO NOT recommend this book for reading on the Kindle. The device is not conducive to the formatting of the book, as he has several scans of the letters from his mom.

Also, have you had your tetanus shot lately? I hear you're supposed to have one every ten years.

Aimee says

I expected a funny, quirky book about an over-stepping & over-involved mother, instead this was a spite-filled, angry story by a bratty adult son. His mother is definitely kooky & inappropriate. She's obsessed with the safety & well-being of her son (oh, the HORROR). She's broke, yet she sends him \$50, \$100 for pocket money. She repeatedly names him the beneficiary of her insurance policies. After reading this & his mocking responses, I really hope she found a more worthy recipient - like a charity or a DOG.

His mom has issues, but the author came across as the truly unstable, disturbed party here. He's a spoiled, jerky brat. I'm glad I found this book cheap, second-hand so as not to contribute a dime to his profits / royalties from it. Yuck.

Baley Petersen says

>>Original post: <http://thereadersbookblog.blogspot.co...>

As a person with a slightly crazed mother, I was drawn to Adam Chester's book, S'Mother, which is basically just a collection of his mother's crazed letters. What's that? Humor? Crazy Mother? Count me in! Adam Chester is, like myself, the only child of a single parent. We are a special group of people who know the realities of overprotective mothers and the complete inability to shrug off some of mom's nuttiness onto someone else. We are often victims of complete and utter public humiliation. We are frequently leaned upon, forcing us into responsibilities beyond our age. We are undoubtedly loved in the very best ways that our cuckoo mothers are able. Chester just happens to have kept all of the panicked little notes and letters that his mother sent him, so that we now have them here in a lovely collection of neuroses.

S'Mother begins with an introduction to Adam's Mother in a seemingly harmless tale about the day she brought his sweater to him at school. Except Adam's Mother isn't like any normal mother. Adam's Mother marches herself into the boys locker room while Adam is in gym class and embarrasses him in front of the entire Junior High by handing over his sweater and loudly stating "You forgot to bring your sweater. It's going to rain today!" I mean really, Junior High? Into the locker room? The woman has no boundaries. And so begins the saga of an overprotective mother constantly intruding on her son's life--mostly with regards to her Will, should she suddenly pass away.

Here's my hesitation. The letters are sort of funny, in an oddball kind of way. Chester's narration is kind of funny. There are a few formatting things that distracted me (for example, not everything in parentheses needs to be italicized), but that was minor. So why didn't I laugh? I kind of expected to find some truly humiliating stories that would make me laugh out loud. Or at least chuckle a little. I was certainly captivated by the narrative, and I enjoyed the stories about Chester's life experiences (a bear hug from Barry White! Christmas cards from Elton John!), but the letters from his mother were just...letters from his mother. Sure she's a little wacky. Of course there's no need for an adult man to be reminded to wear a coat in the snow. But she's a little old lady with practically nothing else to do, given she has no husband or children. Her uber-involvement in his life is to be expected. Then again, considering my own mother-daughter situation, I may be biased???

I'd like to know what "normal" people think of this book. Is it funny if it isn't quite so familiar?

Rating: \$\$

ARC provided courtesy of Abrams

Jane says

This was meant to be a light and funny book made up of "crazy" letters received over the years by a man's mother. I listened to the audio version which actually helped the book as he had his mother read her letters and Adam read the portions that were describing his life and his reactions to the letters. His mother read it very straight. She didn't attempt any schtick and the format worked. At most, I only hoped for 3 stars from this kind of book. My thinking was, if it held my interest and gave me some laughs, that would suffice for keeping me company while I cleaned my house. While it did kind of hold my interest and I did actually laugh at times, there weren't quite as many laughs as I hoped. Also, the main reason for deducting a star was this. He continuously joked about his mom being "insane" but in truth I strongly suspect that his mom actually does some kind of mental illness, probably paranoid personality disorder and very likely OCD as well. I am not a psychologist but I am pretty familiar with OCD and her letters writing appears to be a compulsion based on a variety of fears that she obsesses about. Anyway, knowing this, it made me feel sad that he was making a mockery of his mother. His mom is actually very sweet and well intentioned. I am confident that she could really find relief with cognitive behavioral therapy. I understand that it is difficult to have someone close to you that has a mental illness and humor can be a great stress reliever so I don't blame the author. It just was frustrating listening to him make light of it all and knowing that his mom is not getting the right kind of help.

Leah Coffin says

Hey guys! Look how insane my mother is! See how insane she is? She writes me LETTERS! She flew out to see me in COLLEGE and hung out with my FRIENDS! I know some people's mothers abused them and neglected them and abandoned them and couldn't provide for them, but mine? She wrote me MILDLY CRAZY-SOUNDING LETTERS! A LOT of them! That means she's insane, right? RIGHT?

So yeah, I didn't really care for this particular book. The icing on the cake is that the author somehow coerced his own mother into reading out loud her own supposedly "insane" letters to him on the audiobook version, thereby making her complicit in his own hateful sendup of him. In conclusion, she must love him even more than he realizes, or she would have disowned him on the basis of the title alone.
