

Have you ever heard of a person who left you wondering, How could someone be so twisted? So evil? Prompted by clues in her sister's diary after her mysterious death, author Barbara Oakley takes the reader inside the head of the kinds of malevolent people you know, perhaps all too well, but could never understand. Starting with psychology as a frame of reference, Oakley uses cutting-edge images of the working brain to provide startling support for the idea that evil people act the way they do mainly as the result of a dysfunction. In fact, some deceitful, manipulative, and even sadistic behavior appears to be programmed genetically—suggesting that some people really are born to be bad. Oakley links the latest findings of molecular research to a wide array of seemingly unrelated historical and current phenomena, from the harems of the Ottomans and the chummy jokes of Uncle Joe Stalin, to the remarkable memory of investor Warren Buffet. Throughout, she never loses sight of the personal cost of evil genes as she unravels the mystery surrounding her sister's enigmatic life—and death. *Evil Genes* is a tour-de-force of popular science writing that brilliantly melds scientific research with intriguing family history and puts both a human and scientific face to evil.

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