



This Could Be Your Future

Ross Fardon

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This Could Be Your Future is a frequently thrilling and illuminating memoir on mining, adventure, and indigenous peoples.

A memoir from one of Australia's leaders in the mining industry proves fascinating reading for those interested in the continent, detailing both a hardscrabble childhood and industry innovation into adulthood. *This Could Be Your Future*, by Ross Fardon, is a diverse and often revelatory text that ought to appeal to a wide range of people.

The early portions of Fardon's memoir contain all the excitement of a Western, and are sprinkled with enlivening doses of environmentally appreciative observations that recall the work of John Muir, if from a miner's perspective. The descendant of hard-working Australian prospectors, Fardon came of age in Australia's wilds, raised amongst Aborigines and on principles of hard work and respect for others. He survived overturned buggies and lean economic years, pursuing education even when by correspondence and finding himself, eventually, at Harvard. An accomplished geologist who had a near-miss with the ministry, the author writes on a variety of topics with intelligence and care.

While the early portions of the memoir fade into a more matter-of-fact exploration of his career in mining, adventure and danger still periodically crop up. Fardon's work takes him to a wide variety of locales, not only in Australia—where he must combat bureaucracy and indigenous land claims to make his mark—but from China and Israel to Papua New Guinea and Latin America. Fardon works to express strong respect for local populations, whilst still asserting that a lack of motivation, and not postcolonial strains, are to blame for most breakdowns in the third world.

Such claims crop up periodically, becoming familiar amongst Fardon's pet notions. He frequently expresses frustration with leftist ideas, openly preferences action and experience over theory, and has no patience for most media. Sections regarding climate change may prove particularly provocative reading, though with his geologist's credentials, Fardon's perspectives are not easy to combat.

Fardon's work shines most where he discusses his family and childhood, though sections regarding business are also instructive reading. The memoir is appreciable for its topical range, as well as for the credibility that Fardon maintains throughout. Undoubtedly, audiences will come away from the text having learned something—about Australian politics, about outback life during the war years, about human relations, and, always, about geology. *This Could Be Your Future* is a frequently thrilling and illuminating read. This is one of four books and twenty-three essays the author says he's publishing together "as one systematic view of life."

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (August 5, 2015)

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