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The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism

By Doris Kearns Goodwin



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The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism By Doris Kearns Goodwin

One of the Best Books of the Year as chosen by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Economist*, *Time*, *USA TODAY*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and more. “A tale so gripping that one questions the need for fiction when real life is so plump with drama and intrigue” (Associated Press).

The gap between rich and poor has never been wider...legislative stalemate paralyzes the country...corporations resist federal regulations...spectacular mergers produce giant companies...the influence of money in politics deepens...bombs explode in crowded streets...small wars proliferate far from our shores...a dizzying array of inventions speeds the pace of daily life.

These unnervingly familiar headlines serve as the backdrop for Doris Kearns Goodwin’s highly anticipated *The Bully Pulpit*—a dynamic history of the first decade of the Progressive era, that tumultuous time when the nation was coming unseamed and reform was in the air.

The story is told through the intense friendship of Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft—a close relationship that strengthens both men before it ruptures in 1912, when they engage in a brutal fight for the presidential nomination that divides their wives, their children, and their closest friends, while crippling the progressive wing of the Republican Party, causing Democrat Woodrow Wilson to be elected, and changing the country’s history.

The Bully Pulpit is also the story of the muckraking press, which arouses the spirit of reform that helps Roosevelt push the government to shed its laissez-faire attitude toward robber barons, corrupt politicians, and corporate exploiters of our natural resources. The muckrakers are portrayed through the greatest group of journalists ever assembled at one magazine—Ida Tarbell, Ray Stannard Baker, Lincoln Steffens, and William Allen White—teamed under the mercurial genius of publisher S. S. McClure.

Goodwin’s narrative is founded upon a wealth of primary materials. The correspondence of more than four hundred letters between Roosevelt and Taft begins in their early thirties and ends only months before Roosevelt’s death. Edith Roosevelt and Nellie Taft kept diaries. The muckrakers wrote hundreds of letters to one another, kept journals, and wrote their memoirs. The letters of

Captain Archie Butt, who served as a personal aide to both Roosevelt and Taft, provide an intimate view of both men.

The Bully Pulpit, like Goodwin's brilliant chronicles of the Civil War and World War II, exquisitely demonstrates her distinctive ability to combine scholarly rigor with accessibility. It is a major work of history—an examination of leadership in a rare moment of activism and reform that brought the country closer to its founding ideals.

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Download and Read Free Online *The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism* By Doris Kearns Goodwin

Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

An Amazon Best Book of the Month, November 2013: In an era when cooperation between the national media and the US government seems laughable, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Doris Kearns Goodwin's timely 100-year look backward explores the origins of the type of muckraking journalism that helped make America a better country. Focusing on the presidencies of Theodore Roosevelt and his successor, William Howard Taft--one-time colleagues and friends who later became sworn foes--Goodwin chronicles the birth of an activist press, which occurred when five of the nation's best-ever journalists converged at McClure's magazine and helped usher in the Progressive era. At times slow and overly meticulous, with a lot of backstory and historical minutiae, this is nonetheless a lush, lively, and surprisingly urgent story--a series of entwined stories, actually, with headstrong and irascible characters who had me pining for journalism's earlier days. It's a big book that cries out for a weekend in a cabin, a book to get fully lost in, to hole up with and ignore the modern world, to experience the days when newsmen and women were our heroes. --*Neal Thompson*

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review In this hyperpartisan era, it is well to remember that a belief in an activist federal government that promoted both social and economic progress crossed party lines, as it did during the Progressive movement of the early twentieth century. Goodwin, the acclaimed historian, repeatedly emphasizes that fact in her massive and masterful study of the friendship, and then the enmity, of two presidents who played major roles in that movement. Roosevelt, unsurprisingly, is portrayed by Goodwin as egotistical, bombastic, and determined to take on powerful special interests. He saw his secretary of war, Taft, as a friend and disciple. When Taft, as president, seemed to abandon the path of reform, Roosevelt saw it as both a political and a personal betrayal. Taft, sadly remembered by many as our fattest president, receives nuanced, sympathetic, but not particularly favorable treatment here. But this is also an examination of some of the great journalists who exposed societal ills and promoted the reforms that aimed to address them. Many of these muckrakers, including Ida Tarbell and Lincoln Steffens, worked for McClure's magazine. This is a superb re-creation of a period when many politicians, journalists, and citizens of differing political affiliations viewed government as a force for public good. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** This author's new book has been greatly anticipated; much prepublication discussion has occurred; and reader interest will be intense. --Jay Freeman

Review

"If you find the grubby spectacle of today's Washington cause for shame and despair—and really, how could you not?—then I suggest you turn off the TV and board Doris Kearns Goodwin's latest time machine. ... [Goodwin puts] political intrigues and moral dilemmas and daily lives into rich and elegant language. Imagine 'The West Wing' scripted by Henry James." (*Bill Keller, The New York Times Book Review*)

"In her beautiful new account of the lives of Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, historian Doris Kearns Goodwin spins a tale so gripping that one questions the need for fiction when real life is so plump with drama and intrigue." (*Associated Press*)

"Doris Kearns Goodwin tells this tale with her usual literary skill and deep research. ... Goodwin not only sheds light on the birth of the modern political world but chronicles a remarkable friendship between two remarkable men." (*The Wall Street Journal*)

“This sophisticated, character-driven book tells two big stories. . . . This is a fascinating work, even a timely one. . . . It captures the way a political party can be destroyed by factionalism, and it shows the important role investigative journalists play in political life.” (*The Economist*)

“Goodwin’s evocative examination of the Progressive world is smart and engaging. . . . She presents a highly readable and detailed portrait of an era. *The Bully Pulpit* brings the early 20th century to life and firmly establishes the crucial importance of the press to Progressive politics.” (*The Washington Post*)

“Here is where Goodwin’s account soars. She captures with masterly precision the depth of the Roosevelt-Taft relationship, the slow dissolution and the growing disillusion, the awkward attempts at rapprochement, and then the final break....It is a story worth telling, and one well told.” (*The Boston Globe*)

“The interplay between personality and politics, temperament and leadership is one of the key themes animating Doris Kearns Goodwin’s telling books...The same is true of her sprawling new book, *The Bully Pulpit*, which gives us revealing portraits of Theodore Roosevelt and his close friend, handpicked successor and eventual bitter rival, William Howard Taft...She also uses her impressive narrative skills to give us a visceral sense of the world in which Roosevelt and Taft came of age...She creates emotionally detailed portraits of the two men’s families, provides an informed understanding of the political forces (conservative, moderate and insurgent) arrayed across the country at the time, and enlivens even highly familiar scenes like Teddy Roosevelt’s daring charge up San Juan Hill.” (Michiko Kakutani *The New York Times*)

“Goodwin spent eight years working on *The Bully Pulpit* and the effort shows, much to the reader’s benefit and delight. She keeps the story clipping along, chooses enlightening anecdotes...and has the narrative and historical acumen to weave her theme through 900 pages. At 70, let’s hope she has at least a couple more biographies in mind...For now, savor *The Bully Pulpit*. It is a command performance of popular history.” (*Christian Science Monitor*)

“Pulitzer Prize-winning author Doris Kearns Goodwin has scored again with ‘The Bully Pulpit,’ a thorough and well-written study of two presidents, as well as the journalists who covered them and exposed scandals in government and industry....Her genius in this huge volume (750 pages of text) is to take the three narratives and weave them into a comprehensive, readable study of the time*The Bully Pulpit* is a remarkable study of a tumultuous period in our history.” (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*)

“Swiftly moving account of a friendship that turned sour, broke a political party in two and involved an insistent, omnipresent press corps. . . . It’s no small achievement to have something new to say on Teddy Roosevelt’s presidency, but Goodwin succeeds admirably. A notable, psychologically charged study in leadership.” (*Kirkus Reviews*, *Starred Review*)

“By shining a light on a little-discussed President and a much-discussed one, Goodwin manages to make history very much alive and relevant. Better yet—the party politics are explicitly modern.” (*Publishers Weekly*, *Starred Review*)

“These fascinating times deserve a chronicler as wise and thorough as Goodwin. *The Bully Pulpit* is splendid reading.” (*Dallas Morning News*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jon McKibben:

Precisely why? Because this *The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism* is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap it but latter it will surprise you with the secret this inside. Reading this book next to it was fantastic author who have write the book in such awesome way makes the content on the inside easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning entirely. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This excellent book will give you a lot of rewards than the other book include such as help improving your expertise and your critical thinking approach. So , still want to hold up having that book? If I ended up you I will go to the guide store hurriedly.

Patricia Frazier:

The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism can be one of your starter books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in terminology, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The copy writer giving his/her effort to get every word into enjoyment arrangement in writing *The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism* but doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest and based confirm resource details that maybe you can be one among it. This great information may drawn you into brand new stage of crucial pondering.

Brian Rocha:

Your reading sixth sense will not betray an individual, why because this *The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism* guide written by well-known writer whose to say well how to make book that may be understand by anyone who read the book. Written with good manner for you, dripping every ideas and producing skill only for eliminate your own personal hunger then you still question *The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism* as good book not just by the cover but also with the content. This is one publication that can break don't judge book by its protect, so do you still needing yet another sixth sense to pick this particular!? Oh come on your studying sixth sense already alerted you so why you have to listening to one more sixth sense.

Jose Enriquez:

This *The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism* is great book for you because the content and that is full of information for you who have always deal with world and also have to make decision every minute. This particular book reveal it information accurately using great organize word or we can declare no rambling sentences in it. So if you are read that hurriedly you can have whole information in it. Doesn't mean it only offers you straight forward sentences but tricky core information with lovely delivering sentences. Having *The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism* in your hand like keeping the world in your arm, details in it is not ridiculous 1. We can say that no reserve that offer you world inside ten or fifteen moment right but this publication already do that. So , this is good reading book. Hi Mr. and Mrs. occupied do you still doubt that

will?

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