

[PDF] Theodore Roosevelt: A Strenuous Life

Kathleen Dalton - pdf download free book



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Description:

Biographers have often treated Theodore Roosevelt as "a larger-than-life monument carved in stone, unchanging, far from being flesh and blood, and quite imperturbable." So writes Kathleen Dalton, who gives us a fully fleshed, quite down-to-earth TR in this vigorous, sometimes critical biography of the 26th president.

Roosevelt carefully crafted an image of himself as a self-made man. Fair enough, Dalton suggests, though he had a big head start in coming from one of New York's wealthiest and best-connected families. More than shaping his body to overcome weakness, his spirit to overcome fear, he had to

overcome the prejudices of his time and class in order to be truly fit for leadership, and even as president he wrestled with a few contradictions (opposing, for instance, a woman's right to divorce, but endorsing public flogging of spousal abusers). He was not always successful, Dalton writes, but he emerged in the end as a great champion of civil rights and of the middle and working classes, very much ahead of his time.

There's a lot of interest in Theodore Roosevelt these days--and for good reason, given the recent international turmoil and financial tumble, which, some would argue, beg for TR's patented big-stick and trust-busting treatment. Dalton's *Theodore Roosevelt* offers a satisfying portrait of a constantly fascinating subject. --*Gregory McNamee* --This text refers to the edition.

From Publishers Weekly Dalton, a history instructor at Phillips Academy, Andover, seems determined to cut TR down to size and drain his life of color in this dry, questionably reasoned biography. She complains that other books about Roosevelt "are often rich with dramatic adventure and colorful scenes, just as the Bull Moose would have wanted." With this in mind, she sets herself apart from established TR biographers, who she believes have been duped into perpetuating the autobiographical canards of their self-mythologizing subject. Thus Dalton devotes vast chunks of prose to debunking many of the most popular Theodore Roosevelt images common from books by such writers as Edmund Morris and David McCullough. Unfortunately, the shaky foundation Dalton offers instead seems incapable of carrying so full a load as the life of Theodore Roosevelt. In the final analysis, Dalton offers an unsatisfying, one-dimensional definition of TR's complex psychology. She sees him as little more than an overgrown and preposterous boy: a boy who always gets into trouble, a boy who never asks for or follows advice, a boy who needs constant supervision. By the end of the book, it seems a wonder that Dalton's self-centered and fractious TR ever achieved the White House, wrote books that became classics, won the Nobel Peace Prize, set aside millions of acres for conservation, or loomed large on any stage other than that of his own imagination. 32 pages of photos not seen by PW.

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