



All the Great Prizes: The Life of John Hay, from Lincoln to Roosevelt

John Taliaferro

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If Henry James or Edith Wharton had written a novel describing the accomplished and glamorous life and times of John Hay, it would have been thought implausible - a novelist's fancy. Nevertheless, John Taliaferro's brilliant biography captures the extraordinary life of Hay, one of the most amazing figures in American history, and restores him to his rightful place.

John Hay was both witness and author of many of the most significant chapters in American history - from the birth of the Republican Party, the Civil War, and the Spanish-American War, to the prelude to the First World War. Much of what we know about Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt comes to us through the observations Hay made while private secretary to one and secretary of state to the other. With *All the Great Prizes*, the first authoritative biography of Hay in 80 years, Taliaferro has turned the lens around, rendering a rich and fascinating portrait of this brilliant American and his many worlds.

Hay's friends are a who's who of the era: Mark Twain, Horace Greeley, Henry Adams, Henry James, and virtually every president, sovereign, author, artist, power broker, and robber baron of the Gilded Age. As an ambassador and statesman, he guided many of the country's major diplomatic initiatives at the turn of the 20th century: the Open Door with China, the creation of the Panama Canal, the establishment of America as a world leader.

Hay's peers esteemed him as "a perfectly cut stone" and "the greatest prime minister this republic has ever known". But for all his poise and polish, he had his secrets. His marriage to one of the wealthiest women in the country did not prevent him from pursuing the Madame X of Washington society, whose other secret suitor was Hay's best friend, Henry Adams.

With this superb work, Taliaferro brings us an epic tale.

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