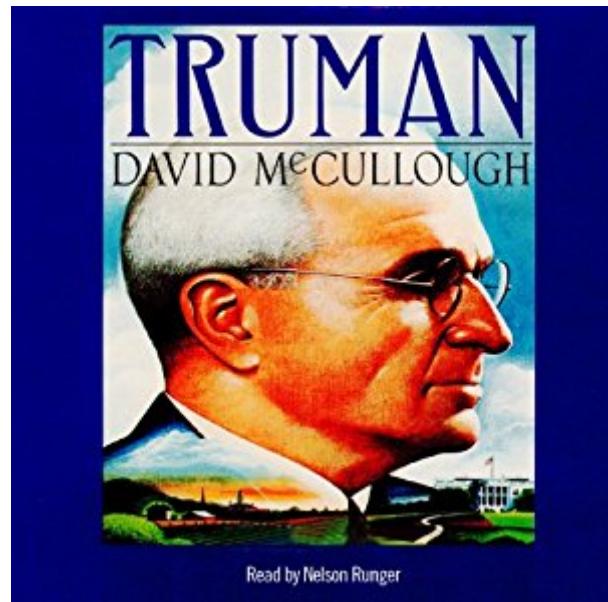


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# Truman



## **Synopsis**

Pulitzer Prize, Biography/Autobiography, 1993 Hailed by critics as an American masterpiece, David McCullough's sweeping biography of Harry S. Truman captured the heart of the nation. The life and times of the 33rd president of the United States, Truman provides a deeply moving look at an extraordinary, singular American. From Truman's small-town, turn-of-the-century boyhood and his transforming experience in the face of war in 1918, to his political beginnings in the powerful Pendergast machine and his rapid rise to prominence in the U.S. Senate, McCullough shows a man of uncommon vitality and strength of character. Here too is a telling account of Truman's momentous decision to use the atomic bomb and the weighty responsibilities that he was forced to confront on the dawning of a new age. Distinguished historian and Pulitzer-Prize-winning author David McCullough tells one of the greatest American stories in this stirring audio adaptation of Truman - a compelling, classic portrait of a life that shaped history.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

At first the size of this book can seem daunting. However, from the very first page I found it fascinating. For most of the 1,000 or so pages it read like a novel, a real page-turner. Because of the kind of time commitment necessary to read a book of this size, I read it in sections over a couple months, reading other things in between. Having lived through most of the significant events discussed in the book, I found them presented with accuracy. Mr. McCullough showed all sides of every significant conflict. The book gives a fascinating insight into the difficulties of public office and the setting of public policy. It also presents Harry S. Truman as a man of real integrity and one who

will, in the long run, undoubtedly go down as one of our great presidents. Throughout this book I was consistently impressed with Mr. McCullough's writing style. Anyone who can keep the pages turning for 1,000 pages of biography is an extremely skilled writer! I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in 20th century American history, but also to anyone interested in just plain good writing!

I read this book two years ago during a Christmas vacation. At first, I was intimidated by the sheer size of the book. However, I found that once I started reading it, I couldn't put it down! David McCullough is, perhaps, the best American historical biographer alive today. His writing is crisp, clean, and entertaining. I have to admit that before I started this book, I was pretty ignorant about who Harry S Truman was as a person, as well as the contributions that he made to the United States and to the world as President. I was absolutely STUNNED to learn how influential and accomplished Truman was during his presidency. Truman left a legacy of good works that still impact the world in which we live today. Like one earlier reviewer wrote, I too had always been looking for a hero, someone who came from humble beginnings and made a lasting impact on the world in which he lived. I found that hero in the pages of David McCullough's book. As I finished the last page of this book, I felt like both crying (because I was saying goodbye to a friend that I had grown to love), and cheering (because I had found my American Hero in Harry S Truman). This book should be a must-read for every American!

Into the press of circumstance and the irony of history strode the diminutive and bespectacled Harry S. Truman, who promptly grinned his way into becoming the single most surprising President of the 20th century. Written off as a party hack of the Missouri democratic machine until very late in his political career, Truman astounded everyone by picking up the shambles left in the wake of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's sudden death and turning in a deft and remarkable performance against the most formidable of odds. In this best-selling biography by noted author and historian David McCullough (*The Path Between The Seas*), one is treated to a massively informative and yet immensely readable treatment of Truman's life and times. The author uses a treasure-trove of newly available archives, personal interviews, and historical records to show how the unassuming man from Missouri who everyone under-appreciated became responsible for everything from the successful conclusion of WWII to the Marshall Plan to the formation of NATO to the Berlin Airlift rose to assume the Presidency in one of our nation's darkest moments. From his first halting steps as a young man rising out of poverty and a farm family background to become a sudden war hero who

led men bravely in combat, from his frequent missteps and failures as a post-war businessman to a first failed try for local political office, from his quick rise from county-level politics to become the darling and frequent benefactor of the quite colorful Pendergast political machine, this is the stuff of a momentous 20th century life, told as well as it can be by a master of historical biographies. Truman, who arose from a family beset by tragedy, missteps, and misfortune, was saddled before adulthood with the responsibilities and burdens that were so common for those coming of age early in this century. His is the story of a man who kept trying, arising again and again when life and misfortune knocked him down, and like the proverbial hero of one of Horatio Alger's novels, Truman's persistence and dogged courage before personal defeat eventually brought him to public prominence and to the United States Senate. Once established in the Senate, Truman quite rapidly (and totally unexpectedly) proved himself a consummate diplomat, negotiator, and dogged proponent for what was right, rational, and reasonable. In doing so, he earned himself a reputation as man with uncommon moral character and indefatigable energy. Later this strength of character and ability to do the hard things when pressed to do so proved invaluable, as in the decision to employ the atomic bomb against Japan and to fire that most vexing and perplexing of military war heroes, the legendary Douglas MacArthur. McCullough's treatment reveals for us the drama of Truman's sudden and unexpected tour as President; a terrifying, wrenching and extraordinarily difficult balancing act for someone left so singularly unprepared and unprepared as was Truman. Yet so masterful was his balancing act that he became a legend himself by simply being himself, a man who believed in all of the traditional verities and virtues, a man of the common people who was always unassuming, self-effacing, and quick to admit his own mistakes. This is truly a wonderful book, one I have read several times simply because I find its depiction of Truman as being quite inspirational. Here was a man who rose to meet the challenges of his life and his times, a most unexpected leader and role model who showed us, even in his death, that the role of the man of enduring virtue participating in public life is an achievable and workable goal, that we can have people with moral direction and the courage of their convictions to serve us and the country at large as President. Especially now, in the age of mental midgets and errant sons of former presidents running for office, it is wonderful to remember a time when an ordinary man proved just how extraordinary he could be. Enjoy!

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