



Lyndon B. Johnson: Portrait of a President

Robert Dallek

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Robert Dallek's brilliant two-volume biography of Lyndon Johnson has received an avalanche of praise. Michael Beschloss, in *The Los Angeles Times*, said that it "succeeds brilliantly." *The New York Times* called it "rock solid" and *The Washington Post* hailed it as "invaluable." And Sidney Blumenthal in *The Boston Globe* wrote that it was "dense with astonishing incidents."

Now Dallek has condensed his two-volume masterpiece into what is surely the finest one-volume biography of Johnson available. Based on years of research in over 450 manuscript collections and oral histories, as well as numerous personal interviews, this biography follows Johnson, the "human dynamo," from the Texas hill country to the White House. We see LBJ, in the House and the Senate, whirl his way through sixteen- and eighteen-hour days, talking, urging, demanding, reaching for influence and power, in an uncommonly successful congressional career. Then, in the White House, we see Johnson as the visionary leader who worked his will on Congress like no president before or since, enacting a range of crucial legislation, from Medicare and environmental protection to the most significant advances in civil rights for black Americans ever achieved. And we see the depth of Johnson's private anguish as he became increasingly ensnared in Vietnam.

In these pages Johnson emerges as a man of towering intensity and anguished insecurity, of grandiose ambition and grave self-doubt, a man who was brilliant, crude, intimidating, compassionate, overbearing, driven: "A tornado in pants." Gracefully written and delicately balanced, this singular biography reveals both the greatness and the tangled complexities of one of the most extravagant characters ever to step onto the presidential stage.

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