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FDR: Into the Storm 1937-1940

Kenneth S. Davis

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FDR: The War President opens as Roosevelt has been re-elected to a third term and the United States is drifting toward a war that has already engulfed Europe. Roosevelt, as commander in chief, statesman, and politician, must navigate a delicate balance between helping those in Europe--while remaining mindful of the forces of isolation both in the Congress and the country--and protecting the gains of the New Deal, upon which he has spent so much of his prestige and power.

Kenneth S. Davis draws vivid depictions of the lives, characters, and temperaments of the military and political personalities so paramount to the history of the time: Churchill, Stalin, de Gaulle, and Hitler; Generals Marshall, Eisenhower, and MacArthur; Admiral Darlan, Chiang Kai-shek, Charles Lindbergh, William Allen White, Joseph Kennedy, Averell Harriman, Harry Tru-man, Robert Murphy, Sidney Hillman, William Knud-sen, Cordell Hull, Henry Morgenthau, Henry Stimson, A. Philip Randolph, Wendell Willkie, and Henry Wallace.

The portrait of Henry Hopkins, who interacted with many of these personalities on behalf of Roosevelt, is woven into this history as the complex, interconnected relationship it was. Hopkins burnished the relationship between Churchill and Roosevelt and eased the way for their interactions with Stalin.

Another set of characters central to Roosevelt's life and finely drawn by the author includes Eleanor Roosevelt, Sara Roosevelt, Missy LeHand, Grace Tully, Princess Martha of Norway, and Daisy Suckley.

Integral to this history as well are the Argentina Conference, the Atlantic Charter and the beginnings of the United Nations, the Moscow Conference, lend-lease, the story of the building of the atomic bomb, Hitler's Final Solution and how Roosevelt and the State Department reacted to it, Pearl Harbor and war with Japan, the planning of Torch, and the murder of Admiral Darlan. All these stories intersect with the economic and social problems facing Roosevelt at home as the United States mobilizes for war.

The lessons and concerns of 1940-1943 as dissected in this book are still relevant to the problems and concerns of our own time. A recurrent theme is technology: Do people control technology, or does technology control people?

Kenneth Davis had the rare gift of writing history that reads with the immediacy of a novel; and though the outcome of this history is well known, the events and people depicted here keep the reader focused on an enthralling suspense story.

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