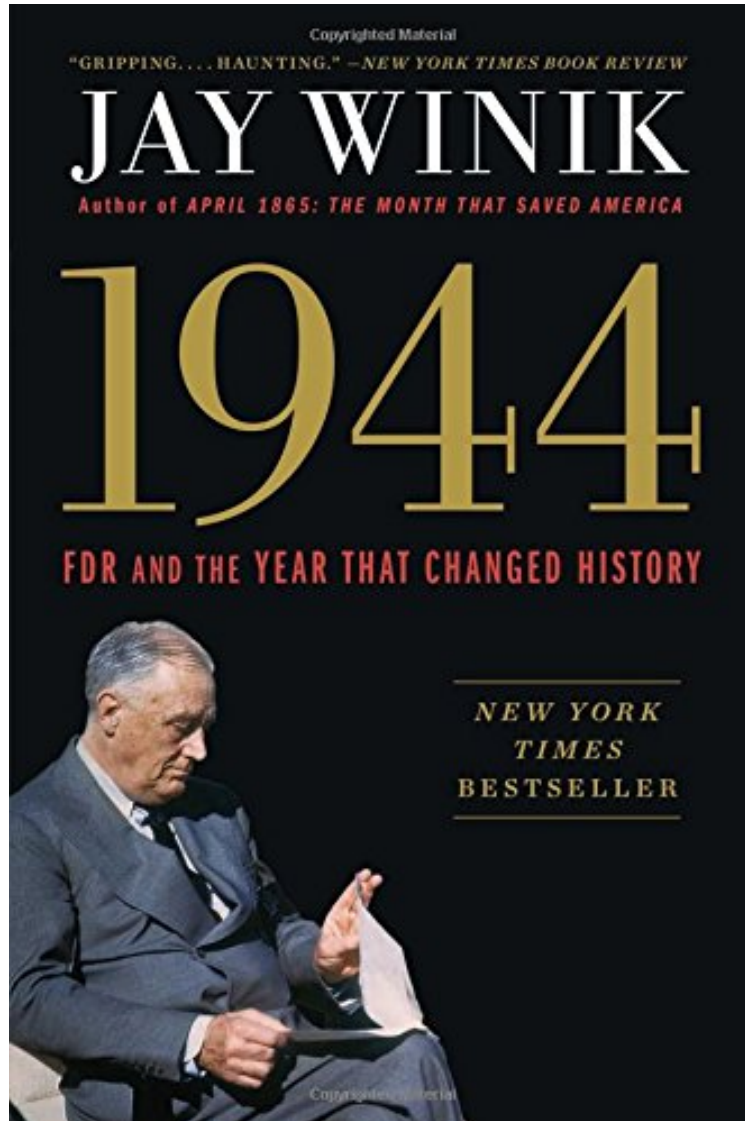


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1944: FDR and the Year That Changed History

Jay Winik

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Jay Winik : 1944: FDR and the Year That Changed History before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised 1944: FDR and the Year That Changed History:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. it's written in a easy to read prose style By Peter Jackson three quarters of the way through this book, it's written in a easy to read prose style, but I didn't like how having gone through from the 30s to D Day, the book reset and started over. There seem to be some inaccuracies too, one where two escapees from Auschwitz, having hidden in place for 3 days, and having spent at least one more day in transit, are discovered in an SS recreation area, and let off as the SS officer thought they are two gay Nazis!! Not very plausible. I'll

come back and finish the review after I've finished this tome.5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. This is a good piece of work by Jay Winik. There is a lot of information here and it is presented well. It will keep your interest throughout the book, as Winik has a skill at telling a story even when we know the outcome. Essentially, the book is about FDR's bad health (the blood pressure readings are horrendous and you wonder how he lived as long as he did), and his total focus on winning the war in Europe. Unfortunately, FDR did not live to see that, but Winik gives a great deal of information about the Holocaust and how the Germans were in a race to exterminate all European Jews. It is a heartbreaking story, partially because FDR could not bring himself to focus on possible bombings of the concentration camps, and would not face the anti-Semitism in his own government, and especially in the State Department, which worked devilishly hard to deny desperate Jews access to our shores. FDR was a great president but was often a frustrating and bumbling administrator and know for confusing organizational charts and duties of subordinates, and he was sometimes too cautious of opinion polls. It is almost as if Winik is trying to go back and argue the case for the European Jews in an effort for a different outcome, another "but what if" scenario, but it was not to be with FDR. Just as he slapped thousands of innocent Japanese Americans on the west coast into confinement camps (concentration camps?), so did he refuse to modify policy to take in more Jews. Some officials in the State Department, such as Breckenridge Long were plain anti-Semitic and did all they could to deny entry to those seeking to escape the death camps. I enjoyed the book very much. It does make me wonder if in another quarter century there will be the elimination of the entire nation of Israel, largely based on our current president, who appeases the most militant Islamic fanatical government in the Middle East, and will ultimately allow them to develop an atom bomb and a delivery system that will wipe out all of Israel. Comment Comment | Permalink0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book, great price, great conditionBy TWChop@aol.com I am a history fan. Almost all my books are on history, biography, non-fiction. This was a great book, a great read. Fascinating to read. The book is in like new condition, at a great price, and arrived as forecast. I would recommend this Seller to anyone who is considering buying a book from them.

****New York Times Bestseller**** Jay Winik brings to life in gripping detail (The New York Times Book Review) the year 1944, which determined the outcome of World War II and put more pressure than any other on an ailing yet determined President Roosevelt. 1944 was a year that could have stymied the Allies and cemented Hitler's waning power. Instead, it saved those democracies but with a fateful cost. Now, in a complex history rendered with great color and sympathy (Kirkus Reviews, starred review), Jay Winik captures the epic images and extraordinary history with cinematic force (Time). 1944 witnessed a series of titanic events: FDR at the pinnacle of his wartime leadership as well as his reelection, the unprecedented D-Day invasion, the liberation of Paris, and the tumultuous conferences that finally shaped the coming peace. But millions of lives were at stake as President Roosevelt learned about Hitler's Final Solution. Just as the Allies were landing in Normandy, the Nazis were accelerating the killing of millions of European Jews. Winik shows how escalating pressures fell on an infirm Roosevelt, who faced a momentous decision. Was winning the war the best way to rescue the Jews? Or would it get in the way of defeating Hitler? In a year when even the most audacious undertakings were within the world's reach, one challenge saving Europe's Jews seemed to remain beyond Roosevelt's grasp. Compelling. This dramatic account highlights what too often has been glossed over that as nobly as the Greatest Generation fought under FDR's command, America could well have done more to thwart Nazi aggression (The Boston Globe). Destined to take its place as one of the great works of World War II, 1944 is the first book to retell these events with moral clarity and a moving appreciation of the extraordinary actions of many extraordinary leaders.

"To understand the 20th century, you need to understand 1944. With his usual great research and storytelling talent, Jay Winik makes that dramatic year come alive." --Walter Isaacson, author of *The Innovators* and *Steve Jobs*"Posing as a book on President Roosevelt in 1944, this extraordinary book is in fact a compelling, comprehensive history of the Second World War told from FDR's point of view, certainly, but also featuring profound insights into Churchill, Hitler, the ordinary soldiers and civilians, and the monstrous suffering of Europe's Jews. The width of the canvas is astonishing. 1944 might have been, as Winik calls it, 'The year that changed history', but 1944 is a book that will change history-writing." --Andrew Roberts, author of *Masters and Commander: How Four Titans Won the War in the West, 1941-1945*"A gifted storyteller with a proven talent for finding universal meaning in particular historical moments, Jay Winik has now turned his attention to 1944, an epochal year that shaped the way we live now. With grace and energy, he tells a vital story well, bringing those distant days back to vivid life. This is a terrific read." --Jon Meacham, author of *Franklin and Winston* and the Pulitzer-winning *American Lion*"Jay Winik is a master storyteller and in 1944 he has a horrifying, mesmerizing story to tell. FDR was a great hero of World War II, but as Winik shows, even the wisest of men can have moral blind spots. With drama, power, and passion, Winik brings to life a magnificent and terrible time." --Evan Thomas, author of *Ike's Bluff* and *Being Nixon*"Jay Winik is a master of the historical moment. His April 1865 distilled the Civil War and Reconstruction into a few fraught weeks. 1944 fittingly encompasses more time, as his canvas is larger, but it delivers the same insight and impact, in similarly vivid and

compelling prose. A wonderful book!" --H. W. Brands, author of *Traitor to His Class: The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt* An accomplished popular historian unpacks the last full year of World War II and the excruciatingly difficult decisions facing Franklin Roosevelt. . . . Winik asks whether, by focusing so wholly on winning the war, Roosevelt missed 'his own Emancipation Proclamation moment,' the chance to make the war about something bigger, specifically the vast humanitarian tragedy occurring in Nazi-controlled Europe. . . . The author's fair assessment of the evidence, detailed scene-setting, deft storytelling, and sure-handed grasp of this many-stranded narrative will inspire any reader to rethink this issue. Do we ask too much of Roosevelt or too little? A complex history rendered with great color and sympathy. --Kirkus s (starred review)"Nimble toggling between hemispheres, Winik knits familiar WWII headlines with surprising details from leaders' lives. . . . His recounting of concentration-camp logistics is haunting, and the tales of those who tried desperately to stop the mass murder have cinematic force. . . . Winik's vision of an alternate universe--in which an earlier end to Auschwitz creates a world that prizes goodness--is hard to buy yet easy to crave. But . . . there's no reason history can't change the future." --Lily Rothman, *Time*"Compelling. . . . This dramatic account highlights what too often has been glossed over that as nobly as the Greatest Generation fought under FDR's command, America could well have done more to thwart Nazi aggression." --*The Boston Globe*"Gripping. . . . Winik tells [the story] well. . . . Haunting." --*New York Times Book Review* Jay Winik is a master of the annus magnus school of history, in which the past can best be fathomed and told by ferreting out individual seminal years. . . . Winik is an effective storyteller. He expertly weaves together several strands of his narrative. . . . His riveting story of the abject moral indifference to what we now know was good enough evidence of what was going on at such places as Auschwitz and Treblinka makes his indictment all the more powerful. --*National Geographic*

About the AuthorThe author of the #1 and *New York Times* bestselling *April 1865* and the *New York Times* bestsellers *1944* and *The Great Upheaval*, Jay Winik is renowned for his creative approaches to history. The *Baltimore Sun* called him one of our nation's leading public historians. He is a popular public speaker and a frequent television and radio guest. He has been a regular contributor to *The Wall Street Journal* book review section, as well as to *The New York Times*. His many national media appearances include the *Today* show, *Good Morning America*, *World News Tonight*, NPR, and FOX News. He is a former board member of the National Endowment for the Humanities and was the historical advisor to National Geographic Networks.

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1944 1 Tehran FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT HAD NEVER wanted to travel to Tehran. Throughout the fall of 1943, the president used his vaunted charm and charisma to push for the three Allied leaders himself, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin to meet almost anywhere else. The conference, their first ever, had been a year in the making, and now, before it even commenced, it seemed on the brink of failure over the thorny question of where it would take place. Dispatched on a visit to Moscow, Secretary of State Cordell Hull had proposed the Iraqi port city of Basra, to which Roosevelt could easily travel by ship. Roosevelt himself suggested Cairo, Baghdad, or Asmara, Italy's former Eritrean capital on Africa's east coast; all these were locations, the president pointed out, where he could easily remain in constant contact with Washington, D.C. as was necessary for his wartime stewardship. But the Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin, was unmoved. He countered that as commander of the Soviet armed forces he could not be out of contact with his deputies in Moscow. He maintained that Tehran, at the foot of the Elburz Mountains, had telegraph and telephone links with Moscow. My colleagues insist on Teheran, he bluntly cabled to Roosevelt in reply, adding that he would however accept a late-November date for the meeting and that he also agreed with the American and British decision to exclude all members of the press. Roosevelt, still hoping to sway the man he referred to as Uncle Joe, cabled again about Basra, saying, I am begging you to remember that I also have a great obligation to the American government and to maintain the full American war effort. The answer from Moscow was brief and direct: no. Stalin was adamant, and he now hinted that he might back out of the entire arrangement for a tripartite conference. Not until Roosevelt was preparing to set sail across the Atlantic en route to the Mediterranean did Stalin, having gotten his way on Tehran, finally acquiesce. Roosevelt promptly cabled to Winston Churchill, I have just heard that Uncle J will come to Teheran.... I was in some doubt as to whether he would go through with his former offer... but I think that now there is no question that you and I can meet him. So it was that at the Cairo West Airport a little past 6:30 a.m. on Saturday, November 27, Roosevelt boarded the *Sacred Cow*, a gleaming silver Douglas C54 Skymaster that could carry forty-nine passengers and a three-man crew, for the final leg of his momentous journey; in total, he would travel 17,442 miles, crossing and recrossing nearly eight time zones. For his part, Joseph Stalin simply had to travel due south from Moscow; his round-trip would be only 3,000 miles. But all this seemed forgotten as, for the first time in over four years of war, the leaders of the three great powers were at last to meet, face-to-face, to establish policies designed to bring the carnage to a close. This would be the most important conference of the conflict. As Churchill later wrote, The difficulties of the American Constitution, Roosevelt's health, and Stalin's obduracy... were all swept away by the inexorable need of a triple meeting and the failure of every other alternative but a flight to Tehran. So we sailed off into the air from Cairo at the crack of dawn. It is difficult, in retrospect, to appreciate the magnitude of this trip, or even how bold it was. The wheelchair-bound president of the United States was flying across the Middle East in wartime, unaccompanied by military aircraft and not even in his own plane. The first official presidential airplane, nicknamed *Guess Where II*, was nothing more than a reconfigured B24 bomber, designated a C87A Liberator; and in

any case Roosevelt never used it. After another C87A crashed and the design was found to have an alarming risk of fire which Roosevelt dreaded, the C87A was quietly pulled from the presidential service. Eleanor Roosevelt took the plane on a goodwill tour of Latin America, and the senior White House staff flew on it, but not the president. Furthermore, Franklin Roosevelt hated to fly. The paraplegic president preferred almost any mode of travel on solid ground, but even here, he had qualms: for one thing, he could not bear to ride in a train that traveled faster than thirty miles an hour. His presidential train made him feel especially secure: it had a special suspension to support his lower body, its walls were armored, and the glass was bulletproof. An accomplished sailor, he also felt comfortable on the water, where he could master the pitch and swell of the waves. But flying was an entirely different matter, and one not without considerable personal risk. Even simple turbulence was problematic because the president could never brace himself against the bumps and jolts with his legs as we could, recalled Mike Reilly, head of Roosevelt's Secret Service detail. And Roosevelt knew better than anyone else how he was limited by his useless legs; he would have no chance of crawling away from even a minor plane wreck. Before the Cairo-to-Tehran flight, Roosevelt had made only two other airplane journeys. One was a 1932 flight to Chicago to accept the Democratic nomination for the presidency, during which all the passengers except Roosevelt and his grown son, Elliott, succumbed to airsickness. Before takeoff, mechanics had helpfully removed one of the seats to provide more room, but none of the passengers had seatbelts, so they had to cling to the upholstered arms of their aluminum chairs or risk being tossed about when the plane hit turbulence. The interior noise from the engines was deafening, and the plane's top speed was just over a hundred miles per hour. Two military aircraft providing an escort as well as a chartered plane carrying reporters turned back in the face of thunderstorms and heavy headwinds, while the plane carrying Roosevelt soldiered on. Then, in January 1943, Roosevelt again took to the skies to meet with Churchill in Casablanca. His party of eight departed from Miami in a forty-passenger plane, the Dixie Clipper, which leapfrogged south across the Caribbean to Brazil and then spent nineteen hours making the 2,500-mile Atlantic crossing from South America to West Africa. The clipper planes, although they had spacious cabins and sleeping quarters including a double bed for Roosevelt, were unpressurized, and at the higher altitudes the president would turn pale, sometimes needing to inhale supplemental oxygen. Indeed, the flight to Casablanca, the first airplane trip by an incumbent president, did not make him any more of a convert to flying. As Roosevelt wrote to his wife, Eleanor, who was by contrast an enthusiastic flier, "You can have your clouds. They bore me. But here he was, only ten months later, aloft again, this time in the Sacred Cow. The 1,300-mile journey that morning took Roosevelt east, roaring through the brilliant sunshine across the Suez Canal and the vast expanses of the Sinai desert; the pilot then dipped down to circle low over the holy cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, glistening in the morning rays. Next, the plane soared over chains of ancient wadis, followed by the hallowed ground of Masada, the rugged fortress in the Judean hills where a small band of Jews chose death rather than slavery, outlasting an entire Roman legion for nearly three months in the spring of A.D. 73. When the plane reached Baghdad, it turned northeast, where the pilot raced along the Abadan-Tehran highway, guiding the plane through a tricky series of jagged mountain passes. There was no alternative: the plane needed to stay below six thousand feet to keep the oxygen level stable for the president. As Roosevelt peered out the plane's window, the land below was a chain of mountains rising from a rocky desert, resembling a brown, faded moonscape. It was isolated and empty, except for the exhilarating sight of trains and truck convoys loaded with American-made war materiel, all headed north to the eastern front. SIX AND A HALF hours later, the president's plane landed at 3 p.m. at a Red Army airfield in Tehran. Stalin was already waiting. He had arrived in the city twenty-four hours before the British and the Americans and was ensconced at the Russian legation, where he had personally overseen the bugging of a suite of private rooms where the American president would eventually stay. Shabby was how Elliott Roosevelt, the president's son, described Tehran in late November 1943. The Iranian capital was almost literally a cesspool. Except at the American, Soviet, and British legations, running water was practically nonexistent. Residents and visitors alike scooped their drinking water from a stream that ran along the street gutter, the same stream that also served as the city's sewage disposal system. Downtown, much of the public drinking water was contaminated with refuse and offal; each sip risked typhus or dysentery, and outbreaks of typhoid fever were common. The city was unappealing in other ways as well. It was occupied by Allied forces, and even the most basic goods were in short supply; a year's salary might be spent on a sack of flour. Nor was the city a glamorous place, able to recall a storied past. Among world capitals, Tehran was surprisingly almost as much of a newcomer as the young Washington, D.C., had been at its inception, when it was little more than a charming semirural landscape derided as a city of magnificent distances. By contrast, in 1800, Tehran's total population of about twenty thousand had lived inside twenty-foot-high mud walls, which were bounded by a forty-foot-wide moat as deep as thirty feet. The entire city itself was accessible by a total of four gates. By 1943, the gates had been pulled down, and a newer city had sprung up beyond the original walls. Gone were many of the quaint old houses that had faced an intricate series of elaborate courtyards and fabled Persian gardens; gone were the donkey carts laden with dates and figs and honey and henna en route to the bustling markets. Instead, newer homes looked outward toward wide main streets designed to accommodate automobiles, trucks, and the occasional horse or wheelbarrow. And beyond its modern boulevards, the city emptied out into a vast, barren space with little more than grazing land and oil fields. The drive from the airfield to downtown Tehran was far from tranquil. The route took the

leaders and the accompanying aides through long stretches of curious onlookers and many miles of unprotected road. Before arriving forty-five minutes after the Americans, Winston Churchill, like Roosevelt before him, had endured a potentially deadly journey not unlike that of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914 through the streets of Sarajevo. Churchills daughter, Sarah, who was with him, thought the drive spine-chilling. The roads were rough, the crowds were ubiquitous, and there was only the barest security. Churchill himself drily remarked, If it had been planned out beforehand to run the greatest risks... the problem could not have been solved more perfectly. The prime minister and his daughter were traveling in an unsecured car, while their British security detail followed in a closed jeep, too far behind to be of much use should trouble arise. The route into the city was lined with magnificent white horses of the Persian cavalry in Tehran itself, crowds four or five people deep thronged in between the gleaming animals. Meanwhile, the Allied security details constantly feared a well-lopped grenade or a pistol shot, and for good reason: near the end of the drive, the British car came to a halt in traffic and curious Iranians swarmed the vehicle. Undaunted, Churchill kept smiling at the crowd until the traffic parted and he was under way again. Once he reached his embassy, tightly guarded by a regiment of Indian Sikhs, he brushed off any meetings and went directly to bed, with a fifth of scotch whisky and a mound of hot-water bottles. As Churchill took to his bed, Roosevelt was spending his first and only night at the residence of the American minister on the outskirts of Tehran. The residence was about four miles from the Soviet and British embassies, which were nearly adjoining in the center of the city. The American embassy itself was a mile away, so either Roosevelt or Stalin and Churchill would have to travel through Tehrans unpredictable streets just to meet. Whether because of paranoia, fear of assassination, or perfidy, Stalin seemed particularly unwilling to make the trip to the American residence. In fact, on the day of Roosevelts arrival, he turned down the presidents invitation to dinner, pleading exhaustion. Instead, as Roosevelt was settling in, the Soviets anxiously reported to the Americans that their intelligence services had discovered an assassination plot against some or all of the leaders at the conference. The Soviet NKVD, forerunner of the KGB (state security committee), claimed that thirty-eight Nazi paratroopers had been dropped inside Russian territory around Tehran; only thirty-two were now accounted for, yet six remained missing, and these had a radio transmitter. Was this a genuine concern, or was it fabricated by the Soviets? That was unclear. In any event, to prevent a problem, Stalin offered Roosevelt a suite of rooms at the heavily guarded Soviet complex for the remainder of the time in Tehran. This was actually Stalins second such invitation. The first Roosevelt had politely declined through an envoy. This time the president accepted. The following day he moved his personal staff to the large Soviet complex. Outwardly, Roosevelt displayed little concern; not so his Secret Service. Very much worried about the apparent German threat, the Secret Service agents lined the entire main route with soldiers and then sent out a heavily armed decoy convoy of cars and jeeps. As soon as this cavalcade had departed and was slowly making its way through Tehrans central streets, Roosevelt was hustled into another car with a single jeep escort and was sent tearing through the ancient side streets of Tehran to the Soviet legation. Roosevelt was highly amused by what he called the cops and robbers stuff, but his protection agents, who knew better, were terrified. Once inside the Soviet compound, the American Secret Service agents quickly discovered that they were very much outnumbered. Across Tehran, some three thousand NKVD agents had already been deployed for Stalins personal protection. And nowhere was this more apparent than inside the Soviet residence. Everywhere you went, agent Mike Reilly noted, you would see a brute of a man in a lackeys white coat busily polishing immaculate glass or dusting dustless furniture. As their arms swung to dust or polish, the clear, cold outline of a Luger automatic could be seen on every hip. Actually, even Scotland Yard had sent far more protection for Churchill than the Americans had sent for Roosevelt. FINALLY, THE TEHRAN CONFERENCE of the Allied powers could open. In the next few days, the three leaders and their military men would do no less than chart the Allied course for the remainder of the war, as well as begin to define the outlines of the peace. Yet like the Americans security arrangements, the summit was to be almost entirely improvised. The Americans had arrived without even a provision for keeping the minutes of the high-level meetings. To address this glaring oversight, four soldiers with stenographic skills were hastily plucked from the nearby American military camp and assigned to take dictation after each session. But there were still no schedules, and there was no one who had been told to organize the meetings or handle the logistics. As a result, the head of the American Joint Chiefs, General George Marshall, actually missed the first meeting; he had misunderstood the start time and had instead gone sightseeing around the city. The president had also arrived in Tehran without any position papers, the bureaucratic lifeblood of Washington. In short, the conference was vintage FDR. As always, he had no use for rules or regulations when they did not suit him. His plans were simple: improvise, follow his own instincts, and pursue his own agenda. He had come to Tehran in large part to work his legendary, Prospero-like magic on Stalin. His overarching goal was to make a friend and ally of the Soviet leader, to bring him, as he had brought so many others, into the fold. It was what Roosevelt had been doing for a lifetime. FEW MEN IN AMERICAN history brought to the presidency such a combination of prodigious political talents and formidable leadership skills as Franklin Roosevelt. By nature he was a dissembler, a schemer, a deceiver. But he also had an unconquerable will and an ingrained sense of immortality. Too easily forgotten is that when Roosevelt was first elected to the White House, there was sober talk of a revolution, and the American political system seemed to be on the verge of dissolution from within, so great were the strains of the Great Depression. But through improvisation and adjustment, buoyed by his legendary oratory and

constant experimentation, Roosevelt managed to uplift a dispirited nation. Now, as the Allies fortunes on the far-off battlefields were changing, the world was looking to him to do the same in the war. How does one even begin to describe him? No one on the global stage was neutral about him, and he was sui generis in every sense of the word. An astonishing blend of political genius and inspired ambition, he was an aristocrat like Thomas Jefferson, a populist like Andrew Jackson, a crafty politician like Abraham Lincoln, and a beloved figure like George Washington. He was as extravagant as he was original, as formidable as he was cosmopolitan, as mercurial as he was flamboyant, and as provocative as he could be puzzling. And he was tall, a fact obscured when polio cut him down: he was six foot two, the nations fourth-tallest president, taller than either Ronald Reagan or Barack Obama. Actually, when he had walked, his gait was bowlegged. Were there any inklings that he would rise to historic greatness? He was born late in the evening on January 30, 1882, a beautiful little fellow, to enormous wealth and privilege; and he was an only child. With impressive foresight, one relative described him as fair, sweet, cunning. His doting mother, Sara Delano, became the dominant influence in his life; still, Franklin worshipped his father, James, a lawyer, already in his mid-fifties when Franklin arrived. Reared on the family estate in Hyde Park, New York, he was, in effect, the center of the universe. Roosevelt was homeschooled by tutors and governesses, and fussed over by all sorts of domestic help, all under the watchful eye of Sara. From an early age he was drilled in the finer points of penmanship, the dreary particulars of arithmetic, and the searing lessons of history. And with the benefit of a Swiss teacher, he became fluent in German, French, and Latin. He also absorbed a sense of social responsibility that the more fortunate should help the less fortunate. His mother read to him every day including his favorites, Robinson Crusoe and The Swiss Family Robinson while his father took him riding, sailing, and hunting. It was a pampered, secure existence. When he was a little boy his mother kept him in dresses and long curls; then she dressed him in Scottish regalia. Eventually, at the age of seven, he wore pantshort pants that were part of miniature sailor suits. Evidently, before age nine he had never taken a bath by himself. He had few friends as a boy; most of his time was spent around adults, often illustrious ones. Indeed, he was five when he met President Grover Cleveland. Cleveland wrapped his hand around Franklins head and said, My little man, I am making a strange wish for you. It is that you may never be president of the United States. The Roosevelt family traveled extensively, sojourning annually in Europe; wintering in Washington, D.C., where the family rented the opulent townhouse of the Belgian minister on fashionable K Street; and summering at Campobello, a gorgeous sliver of an island off the rugged coast of Maine, where Franklin fell in love with the water and developed a lifelong passion for sailing. He had a twenty-one-foot boat there, New Moon, which his father gave him as a present. It was also there that Roosevelt began to fantasize about a naval career. He learned to ride at an early age as well. At the age of two he was already cavorting about with a pet donkey and by the age of six with a Welsh pony. However much he was pampered, his parents sought to instill a sense of responsibility in the young Franklin. How? By giving him dogs to watch over: first a Spitz puppy, then a Saint Bernard, then a Newfoundland, and finally a gorgeous red Irish setter. At the same time, he became an avid collector of stuffed birds, which hung on his walls; of naval Americana, which as an ardent sailor he cherished; and, from the age of five, of stamps, another lifelong interest. Eventually, he would fill more than 150 albums and compile a collection totaling more than 1 million stamps. When Franklin was nine, his father suffered a mild heart attack, and although James survived for a decade more, he became markedly feeble. For Franklin, who adored and idolized his father, this was nothing less than devastating. Five times over the next seven years the family sought out the warm mineral baths at Bad Nauheim in Germany, believed to have curative powers for ailing heart patients. James fervently embraced the restorative powers of the baths. So did Sara. And, predictably, so did the young Franklin, who would later seek the mineral waters at Warm Springs, Georgia. How did Roosevelt cope with his fathers illness? As with everything else, surprisingly serenely. Here, though he was discreet about it, his sheet anchor was in part his Episcopal faith. He believed then, as he quietly would believe for the rest of his life, that if he put his trust in God, all would turn out well. At the age of fourteen, he entered Groton, then the most prestigious prep school in the nation; tuition was exorbitant, affordable only by the very rich. The purpose of the school was more than to cultivate intellectual development; it was also to foster manly Christian character, moral as well as physical, among Americas most privileged boys. Character, duty, country was the daily creed; a monastic existence was the daily life. Roosevelt was bright and able to quickly absorb his studieshe would win the Latin prize. He was also a skilled debater. That was as far as it went, though, for he was neither an original thinker nor particularly introspective. But the schools founder, the Reverend Endicott Peabody, a charismatic minister, would become a profound influence on Roosevelt, more so than anyone else except for, as Franklin would one day put it, my father and mother. For Peabody, who embodied the ethic of muscular Christianity, the clash of sports was as central to the education of Groton boys as the classes themselves. Consequently, having grown up in the comfort and seclusion of Hyde Park, Roosevelt was a misfit; he had never before played a team sport and wasnt much of an athlete. It showed. Not surprisingly, he was put on a football squad reserved largely for misfits; it was the second-worst team. Baseball was little better; this time he played on the worst squad. However unremarkable he was, though, his passion never waned; by dint of enthusiasm, he even achieved a letter on the baseball team, not for his play, but because of his efforts as the equipment manager. By the time he prepared to attend Harvard in the autumn of 1900, the ideals of Groton had become second nature to him: work hard and reap the benefits, plunge into competition, and embrace

effort as the key to success. In the autumn of 1900, Roosevelt enrolled at Harvard, Americas most elite university, then under the leadership of its legendary president Charles W. Eliot. If Groton was where Roosevelt, the pampered only child, developed the social habits of mingling with his peers, Harvard was where he cultivated the ability to guide them. Still, he hardly shed the ways of the idle rich. His was the world of well-connected, sophisticated *bons vivants*; of mint juleps and polo matches; of riding with the hounds and in crosscountry steeple chases; and of tennis at Bar Harbor and sailing at Newport. As for Roosevelt himself? He lived off campus on Mount Auburn Street in a luxurious three-room corner suite (for the extravagant sum of \$400 a year), owned a horse, and was a regular during the busy social season: almost weekly he attended the hunt balls, lavish black-tie dinners, and the endless debutante coming-out parties. When Porcellian, the most illustrious of Harvards clubs, turned him down, he was crestfallen. However, he was chosen for Hasty Pudding, where he served as librarian, and for the fraternity Alpha Delta Phi. Moreover, he was elected to the editorial board of the Harvard Crimson, ultimately becoming its president, a great honor. His duties at the Crimson were extensive and often taxing the paper takes every moment of time he wrote to his mother but he acquitted himself admirably, all the while developing an understanding of the inner workings of the media, which would later serve him well when he entered the political arena. Academically, he coasted through, without challenging himself very much. Thanks to his education at Groton, he was able to skip the mandatory freshman curriculum. As to the electives, he eschewed theoretical courses like philosophy; instead, he gravitated toward history, government, and economics, a subject about which he would later remark, Everything I was taught was wrong. And as at Groton, he won no academic honors, although his grades were solid. During the late autumn of his freshman year, he received word that his father had suffered one more heart attack, then another. The family rushed to New York so that James might be closer to the specialists, but this did little for his worsening condition. With his loved ones collected at his bedside, he died at 2:20 a.m. on December 8, 1900. Though it was a great loss emotionally, the family would never want for anything material. Two years earlier, when her own father died, Sara had inherited an amount equivalent to roughly \$37 million today. Upon James passing, he left Sara and Franklin an estate that would be worth more than \$17 million today. Grief stricken, the family coped by traveling. Rather than going back to Campobello that summer, Franklin and Sara spent ten weeks abroad in Europe: first on an elegant cruise liner that took them through the majestic fjords of Norway and around the arctic circle, where they met Kaiser Wilhelm II. They then went on to Dresden, where Sara had gone to school as a girl, followed by time on the shores of Lake Geneva where they could breathe the crisp air. Finally, they went on to Paris, where they learned that President William McKinley had been assassinated. Their lives would never again be the same. They were not simply rich, but suddenly political royalty: the inimitable Theodore Roosevelt, their cousin, was now president. That first winter without James was a difficult transition. Sara found life without him barren. She did her best to keep busy, supervising the estates many workmen and overseeing its frequently intricate if not chaotic business affairs. But she soon prepared to focus her unwavering attention upon her son. As the new year opened, Franklin spent three whirlwind days in Washington, D.C., in honor of his cousin Theodores daughter Alice, at the White House; it was her coming-out party. The president also invited Franklin for a private talk over tea, twice. One of the most interesting and enjoyable three days I have ever had, he wrote to his mother. Shortly after Roosevelt returned to Harvard, his mother moved to Boston to join him. Rattling around in the house by herself, she found life at Hyde Park unbearable without her husband; she now wanted to be with Franklin. She moved into an apartment, made new friends, and joined the cloistered, elite world of Boston Brahmins. She also became a constant in Roosevelts life, and far from resenting it, he enjoyed having her there. Not infrequently, he asked his mother to approve his dates. Roosevelt loved the company of women. For a decade and a half he had scarcely any contact with the opposite sex and, in part due to the era of Victorian restraint, he had not much more once he arrived at Groton. Harvard was a different story. He fell in love with the lovely Frances Dana, though he was talked out of marriage by his mother because Frances was a Catholic, and the Roosevelts and Delanos were Protestants. Then there was Alice Sohier, the daughter of a distinguished North Shore family who lived in an elegant town house in Boston. He and Alice discussed marriage. An only child, Roosevelt exuberantly confessed he wanted six children. Alice balked at the prospect, confiding to an intimate, I did not wish to be a cow. In the autumn of 1902, she backed out of the relationship and went instead to Europe. That was when he met Eleanor, a tall, regal, coltish looking blue-eyed young woman, who was his fifth cousin once removed, and the orphaned daughter of his godfather, Elliott Roosevelt. Eleanor and Franklins courtship was, in a sense, carefully choreographed. Creatures of elegant New York society, they attended the premier horse show that autumn at Madison Square Garden, perched in the family box. Later, they lazed together on the manicured grass at Springwood, under the watchful eye of a chaperone. They took a dinner cruise aboard Roosevelts motorized sailing yacht, the Half-Moon. And that New Years Day they were in Washington as part of the inner circle as Theodore who was her uncle as well as Franklins cousin stood in the East Room of the White House, warmly greeting long lines of supporters; soon, amid the polished silver and glittering candelabras, they dined with Theodore himself in the state dining room. But Franklins mind was far away from politics. E is an angel, a smitten Roosevelt wrote in his diary. Eleanors world was even more sheltered than Franklins and more tragedy-laced. When Eleanor was eight, her mother, Anna Rebecca Hall, who was often debilitated by migraines and bouts of dark depression, died of diphtheria. Two years later, her father, Elliott, died. A

charming playboy who had dropped out of high school, he suffered from numerous inner demons, and his excesses knew no bounds: he was a dashing philanderer, and when he wasn't taking morphine or laudanum, he was drinking heavily, up to half a dozen bottles of hard liquor daily. One night he was even too drunk to tell a cabbie where he lived. Another time, he almost jumped from his parlor window. And on August 13, 1894, he lost consciousness, alone; he was dead the next evening. From then on Eleanor lived with her maternal grandmother at their elegant brownstone on West Thirty-seventh Street or their estate on the Hudson or she attended boarding school at Wimbledon Park in England. Hers was a solemn existence. Frequently surrounded by cooks, butlers, housemaids, laundresses, coachmen, and tutors, she had few friends and virtually no opportunity to meet other children, except for Theodore Roosevelt's daughter Alice. Unlike Franklin's mother, Eleanor's grandmother was a strict disciplinarian. Eleanor's life became an exercise in self-improvement: piano, dance class, lawn tennis, shooting, and riding. Like Franklin, she was also tutored in German and French, and she became fluent in French. Just as Roosevelt could chat easily in German, she could conduct extensive conversations in French. In time, she also excelled in Italian. Still, she lacked self-confidence and considered herself an ugly duckling. But as the months passed, she shrewdly learned to compensate for her self-doubts. When she entered boarding school at the age of fifteen, in England at Allenwood in many ways as prestigious as Groton where classes were conducted entirely in French, she became the most popular girl in the school. She was earnest and eager and hardworking. She was also a quick study. The school's headmistress was an ardent feminist; this was rare for the time and Eleanor learned to question the orthodoxy of the day and to freely express her thoughts, a scandalous liberty in the rigid, patriarchal age of Victorianism. Slender and sophisticated, already at a young age she was an ardent Progressive, taking an interest in political events. She would later comment that under the tutelage of the headmistress, who had a profound influence on her, she developed a liberal mind and a strong personality. And unlike Franklin, whose success at sports was modest at best, she made the first team in field hockey. In the cool autumn days of 1903, Roosevelt and Eleanor dated, always, of course, with a chaperone. He asked her to come to Cambridge for the big game Harvard versus Yale. The next day, under a clear sky, the two ambled along the Nashua River. Roosevelt proposed; she accepted. When he told his mother at Thanksgiving, Sara was aghast, believing that he was simply too young. She entreated the young couple to keep the engagement secret for a year. However, she did not object to Eleanor, nor did she try to forbid the marriage. They accepted the arrangement. In the meantime Eleanor wrote letters to Franklin brimming with affection; she called him boy darling, or Franklin dearest. In turn her nickname was Little Nell. In September 1904, Franklin and his mother moved to 200 Madison Avenue, a massive brick town house near J. P. Morgan's stately mansion, and Franklin entered Columbia Law School. This was prelude. On October 11, a buoyant Roosevelt gave Eleanor an engagement ring from Tiffany's. She was just twenty, and their arrangement was now official. When their engagement was announced and they were receiving a flurry of congratulations, Theodore Roosevelt insisted the wedding take place in the White House under his roof. They demurred. Instead the lavish wedding took place at Eleanor's great-aunt's twin town houses; there were top hats and elegant carriages, and Theodore himself was there to give the bride away. The couple had two honeymoons: the first was a modest week away; the second was a three-month grand tour that took them to London, Scotland, Paris, Milan, Verona, Venice, Saint Moritz, and the Black Forest. Roosevelt bought Eleanor a dozen dresses and a long sable coat, and, for himself, a silver fox coat and an old library: three thousand leather-bound books. At Columbia Law School, as at Harvard, he was an undistinguished student, receiving Bs, Cs, and a D. Vaguely bored and wealthy, confident and even a bit cocky, he seldom let studies stand in the way of a good time. One Columbia professor remarked that Roosevelt had little aptitude for the law; actually, he had initially failed courses in contracts and civil procedure and that he made no effort to overcome the problem with hard work. Nevertheless, he easily passed the New York bar examination in his third year, upon which he promptly dropped out of school; he never earned his degree. Meanwhile, at Christmastime in 1905, Sara told the newlyweds that she had hired a firm to construct a town house for them (a Christmastime present from mama), which would adjoin a second home: hers; the dining rooms and drawing rooms of the two homes opened into each other. Very much her own woman, Eleanor was deeply unhappy with the fact that Sara was making so many major decisions for her family. But Roosevelt was unsympathetic, acting as if there were no problem. As Eleanor herself explained, I think he always thought that if you ignored a thing long enough it would settle itself. Three years later, Sara gave Roosevelt and Eleanor a second house, an elegant seaside cottage on the gorgeous shores of Campobello Island. The sprawling home had thirty-four rooms, manicured lawns, shimmering crystal and silver, and seven fireplaces, as well as four full baths although no electricity. All told, theirs was a lavish lifestyle. In addition to their three houses, they always had at least five servants, a number of automobiles and carriages, a large yacht, and many smaller boats; Roosevelt continued to love the water. As befitted their station, they belonged to exclusive clubs, dressed stylishly, and donated their money to various charitable causes. As for their five children? They were to be raised by governesses, nurses, and other caregivers. Eleanor, as serious as ever, was the stricter of the two parents. Her grandmother had always been quick to say no rather than yes, and she was the same. By contrast, Franklin was warm, good-humored, and engaging. As his daughter Anna once said, Father was fun. He was more than fun. Early on, he confessed that he had little taste for the law. Nor was he content with summering at Campobello or sailing at Newport or spending his time at seasonal coming-out parties. With uncommon candor, he explained that he planned to run for

office, and audaciously believed he would one day be president. First, he would become a state assemblyman, a low-paying part-time job in Albany, then assistant secretary of the navy, and finally governor of New York. Theodore had made it to the White House following exactly that path; why couldn't Franklin? IT HAPPENED ALMOST AS he predicted. Except at the start. The assemblyman who Roosevelt assumed would step aside to provide him with a seat declined his entreaties. Still, Roosevelt was determined. He first threatened to run as an independent, but was then persuaded to run for the state senate as a Democrat, in the Twenty-sixth District, which had elected only one Democrat to the office in fifty-four years. A committee of three nominated Roosevelt, and the local newspaper, the Republican Poughkeepsie Eagle, sniped that he had been discovered by the Democrats more for his deep pockets than for any other redeeming qualities. Roosevelt, in a style he would use again and again, motored around the district in an open touring car, which was painted bright red and owned by a piano tuner. Along with two other local candidates, he crisscrossed the district in this newfangled automobile, purring along at twenty-two miles per hour. He was attentive: as he bumped down the dusty, rutted roads, he made sure that the campaign car was pulled over and the engine shut off whenever a horse-drawn carriage or hay wagon appeared, lest it startle the animals or peeve a voter. At the outset, he was not a great speaker. His words were too abstract, and he relied too much on flattery of himself and others. But he would speak anywhere on a front porch, by the side of a road, on the top of a hay bale. Eleanor would describe his style as slow, noting that every now and then there would be a long pause, and I would be worried for fear he would never go on. With her discerning eye, she thought he looked tall, high-strung, and even nervous. However, he excelled at working a crowd; his energetic hands seemed permanently outstretched, ready to grip the next open palm. Still, the campaign was often poorly run. Once, while traveling in the eastern edge of the district, he arrived at a small town late in the afternoon, jumped from the car, headed straight to the hotel, and invited everyone in the bar to have a drink on him. Only after the bartender began pouring did Roosevelt think to ask where he was: Sharon, Connecticut, not only the wrong district but the wrong state. Undaunted, Roosevelt grinned and paid up; and then proceeded to reuse the story and the joke for years. And he had no qualms about trading on his famous name, borrowing his cousin Theodore's pronunciation of dee-lighted, and sometimes announcing to a crowd, I'm not Teddy, his way of suggesting that he was the other Roosevelt. On Election Day, despite a last-minute rush by the Republicans, Franklin Roosevelt carried the district by more than 1,100 votes. The Roosevelts rented a house in Albany, for a princely \$4,800 a year. Eleanor, prone to recurring depressions, was at first reluctant about the house, about the job, and about politics in general, but she gritted her teeth and assumed that it was a wife's duty to be involved in her husband's interests, although when she had tried her hand at golf, Roosevelt had watched her swing and promptly dissuaded her. He immersed himself in political life but did not always win over his fellow politicians. He particularly had trouble reaching the Irish-Catholic Democrats. Roosevelt's father had disdained Irishmen, even as workers in his household, and a leading New York politico, James Farley, claimed that Eleanor had once said to him, Franklin finds it hard to relax with people who aren't his social equals. Eleanor strongly denied it, although in her own early letters she made less than temperate observations about Jews; once, of a party honoring the financier Bernard Baruch (who would later become a close ally), she wrote, I'd rather be hung than seen there. And Roosevelt himself was at times clearly uneasy working with different classes outside his own tight circle. As he later acknowledged to his secretary of labor, Frances Perkins, I was an awfully mean cuss when I first went into politics. Moreover, if he was a Progressive, he was a cautious one. It took him until 1912 to openly support women's suffrage, and he would not back a labor reform bill mandating a fifty-four-hour maximum workweek for women and children, even after the devastating fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company, in which more than a hundred female garment workers died. Then came 1912. Two years after Roosevelt had won his state senate seat, he was running for reelection and Woodrow Wilson was running for president, against Theodore, who was a third-party candidate. Following politics rather than kinship, and, as ever, self-interest most of all, Roosevelt backed Wilson. He had been at the Democratic convention, working the room, ostensibly on behalf of Wilson, but equally on behalf of himself. One of the men he impressed was Josephus Daniels, a member of the Democratic National Committee and also the editor of the Raleigh, North Carolina, News and Observer. But that would be significant later. First, Roosevelt had to win reelection to the state senate, and suddenly that goal was in jeopardy. In September, Roosevelt fell seriously ill with typhoid fever in New York City. He was too sick to campaign, or even to get out of bed. Eventually he recovered, but his political career now seemed imperiled. It was Eleanor who rescued him by contacting Louis Howe, a dogged Albany newspaperman and political impresario who was enthralled with Roosevelt. She asked whether Howe would consider taking over the campaign. Howe eagerly said yes. In truth, he didn't look like much, and seemed an odd partner for the patrician Roosevelt. He was squat, asthmatic, and stooped, with a pitted face and a cigarette wobbling between his lips; he was often unbathed as well. Yet he was a political genius who quickly became Roosevelt's virtual surrogate, taking out full-page newspaper ads and producing a direct-mail campaign of multigraphed letters bearing Roosevelt's signature. In effect he took over the last six weeks of the campaign. And in a dramatic departure, Howe remade Roosevelt into a full Progressive, supporting labor rights, supporting women's suffrage, and complaining about Republican political bosses. With Howe at the helm, Roosevelt won reelection by an even wider margin than he had achieved in 1910. When Roosevelt reached the White House, Howe became his secretary, the equivalent of today's chief of staff, and he did not leave Roosevelt's side until he died in

April 1936. The state senate was only a stepping-stone. Roosevelt had early on let it be known, to Wilson in particular, that he wanted a job in Washington. He turned down two offers as an assistant secretary in the Treasury, and as a collector for the Port of New York holding out for his desire: assistant secretary of the navy. His obstinacy paid off; Wilson gave him the navy job. He would be serving under Josephus Daniels, whom he had befriended during his state senate campaign. Roosevelt now held the same post that had launched his cousin Theodore on the way to the White House. In the Navy Department, Roosevelt learned about the bureaucracy and the ways of Washington. He brought Louis Howe with him, and this enabled him to also keep tabs on New York. Roosevelt enjoyed the trappings and the ceremony, but as the number two man, he was on the periphery of power, and he knew it. Making the ships run on time was not the role to which Roosevelt aspired. He tried to make a bid himself for the U.S. Senate but failed. His candidacy was rebuffed by his own party and by the president himself humiliatingly for Roosevelt, Wilson openly backed a rival candidate. Roosevelt was routed in the primary, and never forgave the man who had opposed him, James Gerard, who was the U.S. ambassador to Germany and a former justice of the New York state supreme court. Fortunately World War I intervened, and Roosevelt quickly devised plans for expanding the U.S. Navy (which were ignored) and also improved his ability to testify before Congress (which got him noticed). The efforts worked. By 1916, his stance as a preparedness Democrat made him an asset in Wilson's reelection campaign. Roosevelt was sent to stump in New England and the mid-Atlantic states, and it was here that he first began using his fire hose analogy, the idea of lending one's own hose to a neighbor whose house is on fire. Over time, he would tweak, amend, and refine this analogy, which became one of the most famous concepts of his political career. He would later use it during World War II to sell a wary American nation on his Lend-Lease policy for Great Britain. For Roosevelt, when the United States finally entered World War I in April 1917 after the torpedoing of three steamships, the navy was the place to be. At that time it had 60,000 men and 197 ships in active service; at the end of the war it had almost 500,000 men and more than 2,000 ships, a staggering number. Roosevelt threw himself enthusiastically into the expansion and was so successful that he was forced to share some of his newly acquired supplies with the army, and see young Roosevelt about it quickly became a catchphrase in Washington. But Roosevelt, as ambitious as he was restless, was unsatisfied. He dreamed of seeing military action, again following in the footsteps of his cousin, but was thwarted at every turn by his superiors, who would not allow him to go overseas, let alone enlist in any branch of the armed forces. Instead, he put his persuasive skills to use, lobbying for the creation of a 240-mile underwater chain of explosives to foil German submarines. Roosevelt's position in the navy and his work to protect naval shipyards also endeared him to the leaders of Tammany Hall, which dominated New York Democratic politics. In the capital, the Roosevelts were much in demand. Invitations arrived daily, and Eleanor quickly discovered that the social whirlwind required her to have a social secretary. In 1914, she hired Lucy Mercer to come in three mornings a week. Not long after that, having borne six children, Eleanor informed Franklin that there would be no more babies. To ensure this, Roosevelt was also informed that he was no longer welcome in his wife's bed. Roosevelt was a tall, attractive man of thirty-four. When he had first run for the state senate, women had flocked to hear his speeches, even though they could not vote. Now he also had status, a touch of maturity, and roving interests. Lucy, Eleanor's part-time social secretary, was everything her employer was not, feminine and self-assured with a gentle voice and a hint of fire in her eyes. She was also tall, slender, and blue-eyed, with long, light-brown hair. And although her family had long since exhausted its funds, she was nevertheless part of the same hallowed social set as the Roosevelts. Even as she worked in the Roosevelts' house, Lucy attended the same large dinners and parties as Franklin and Eleanor. Amid the guests, Roosevelt flirted and Lucy flirted back. From there, things quietly escalated. Roosevelt and Lucy went on cruises on the Potomac and long, private drives in Virginia alone. Once, Alice Roosevelt Longworth, Theodore's oldest daughter, who had been Eleanor's maid of honor at her wedding, caught sight of them riding side by side in Roosevelt's roadster. Alice wrote to Franklin, mentioning that he had never noticed her: Your hands were on the wheel, but your eyes were on that perfectly lovely lady. Eleanor sensed trouble. Not long after a Potomac cruise hosted by Franklin and Eleanor, a suspicious Eleanor terminated Lucy's employment. She likely did it on the pretext of going away for the summer; she had no proof of any relationship, only her suspicions. Almost immediately, Lucy enlisted in the navy. Not unsurprisingly, her first assignment was secretarial duty at the Navy Department; she had left Roosevelt's house for his office. Possibly aware of the link between Roosevelt and Lucy, Secretary of the Navy Daniels removed her from her post and then from the navy only a few months later. Yet while distance may have banked their passion, it did not extinguish it. For nearly thirty years, Franklin and Lucy would continue to meet and write to each other. In his last conscious moments in April 1945, it would be Lucy, not Eleanor, who was with him. At the end, it was her voice that he heard and her face that he saw. THE YEAR 1918 WAS when Franklin Roosevelt was at last determined to go to war. All four of his Republican Roosevelt cousins had signed up for combat. Just as the young Austrian painter Adolf Hitler was itching for action on the front, Roosevelt wanted at least to set foot in Europe, even if he were not in full uniform. Then a congressional delegation announced plans to inspect naval installations during the summer. Secretary Daniels dispatched Roosevelt to ferret out any potential problems. While crossing the Atlantic on a destroyer, he heard bells sound for a U-boat attack, and he raced to the deck. The attack never materialized; the waters remained calm, and the destroyer was unmolested. Yet that outcome was not good enough for Roosevelt. His biographer Jean Edward Smith has observed:

As Roosevelt retold the story through the years, the German submarine came closer and closer until he had almost seen it himself. He arrived in England a week after his cousin Quentin Roosevelt was killed in a dogfight over France. After his ship docked, Rolls-Royces whisked Roosevelt to London, where he met the king and the prime minister and came away with a strong dislike of the British Minister of munitions, Winston Churchill, one of the few men in public life who was rude to me, he would later tell Joseph Kennedy. From there he went on to Paris, where he was deeply impressed with the presidential wines, perfect of their kind and perfectly served. And at each location, letters awaited him, from Eleanor and also from Lucy Mercer. Then he headed for the front. He saw the scarred battlefields of Chteau-Thierry, Belleau Wood, and Verdun. At Verdun alone there had been some 900,000 casualties; partially and fully exploded shells had obliterated the forts and trenches, and the battlefield was an unrecognizable expanse of brown, churned-up earth. Roosevelt stared at it in silence. He was still eager, however, to witness action. Once, a shell whistled and landed with a dull boom nearby. Roosevelt took off toward the sound, leaving behind a suitcase of important papers on the running board of his car. Yet for all his jaunty enthusiasm, the devastation wrought by combat made a lasting impression on Roosevelt. Later, he would mention the images he had seen in a walk through Belleau Wood: rain-stained love letters, or men buried in shallow graves, with nothing more than a weathered rifle butt poking out of the ground to mark their resting place. After France, he traveled to Italy, where he tried unsuccessfully to negotiate a command structure for the Mediterranean, then back to England. Determined as ever, on his return to Washington he planned to resign his post and head for the front. Again, another foe intervened: Spanish influenza. Roosevelt was struck on board the USS Leviathan, collapsing in his cabin. His flu was compounded by double pneumonia. Clammy and sweating, Roosevelt lay in his bunk barely conscious, hovering near death. He lived. Many others were not so lucky. Death came often during the passage, and both officers and men who passed away on board were buried at sea. Then, when the ship docked, Roosevelt was transported by ambulance to his mothers New York town house. Four orderlies carried his prostrate body up the stairs. Eleanor had hurriedly arrived to attend to him and dutifully unpacked his bags. In the process, she discovered sheafs of love letters, neatly tied together, all from Lucy Mercer. These letters confirmed her worst fears, and as Eleanor would later put it, the bottom dropped out of my own particular world. According to various family accounts, Eleanor offered to give Franklin a divorce so that he might marry Lucy, but both Louis Howe and Sara Roosevelt were aghast at the idea and convinced him that it would derail his political career. Sara may well have threatened to disown him if he left Eleanor for Lucy. In the end, he stayed, as did Eleanor. Roosevelt did not recover from either the pneumonia or the discovery of his liaison with Lucy in time to resign his post and enlist in the war. When peace came, he instead pressed his case to return to Europe to preside over the demobilization of the navy, and Daniels finally relented. Franklin and Eleanor were sent together. The trip was a watershed. When they were four days out of New York harbor, word arrived that Teddy Roosevelt was dead. And before the years end, President Woodrow Wilson would be paralyzed by a massive stroke. His cherished dream of a League of Nations would collapse, and the 1920 campaign would begin. Roosevelt was there, giving the seconding speech for New Yorks Al Smith at the Democratic convention; moreover, he became the partys nominee for vice president, on the ticket with Governor James Cox of Ohio. Roosevelt again felt no shame in trading on his name: as he had done in running for the New York state senate, he adopted many of Theodores characteristic expressionsb-u-ll-y, stren-u-ous. Yet the campaign soon foundered, and Warren Harding routed Cox and Roosevelt, with more than 60 percent of the popular vote and an impressive 404 votes in the Electoral College. Still, the loss at least proved to be a financial gain for Roosevelt. He became vice president of the Fidelity and Deposit Company of Maryland, for the hefty sum of \$25,000 a year, largely for lending his name to the masthead. The Democrats, Roosevelt thought, would be wandering in the wilderness for the near future. With the future ahead of him, he preferred to decamp to his summer home on the island of Campobello, Maine. IT BEGAN AS A vague malaise and a dull ache in his legs. Then came the exhaustion and shivering. He only picked at his dinner tray and was cold even under a heavy woolen blanket. In the morning, as he was walking to the bathroom, his left leg gave way beneath him. He shaved and made it back to bed. He could not know it then, but this was the last walk he would ever take unassisted. By now, he had a fever, and the pain in his back and legs had increased. The family attempted massage, but to no avail. Within a week, his frantic doctors were desperate for even a glimpse of movement in one of Roosevelts toes. They could not see any. In truth, he could not even use the toilet on his own; a catheter was implanted, which Eleanor got up to drain during the night. By the end of August, there was no improvement. By the end of September, significant muscle atrophy had set in. He was eventually diagnosed with poliomyelitis, or infantile paralysis, although more recent medical speculation has suggested some form of Guillain-Barr syndrome. Whatever the cause, the outcome was the same. He was a paraplegic. Nevertheless, on October 15, Franklin Roosevelt reached a milestone. He was able to sit up. He had been transported back to New York City and left the hospital in late October. An intensive exercise regimen was designed to enable him to use crutches. His now-useless legs were laboriously strapped into fourteen-pound steel braces, molded from his ankle to his hips. He could no longer balance on his own or extend one leg at a time. Instead, his crutches became his legs; he stabilized himself using his upper body, and half-dragged, half-swung his legs and his hips along from behind. At Hyde Park, the rope-and-pulley trunk elevator became his conveyance to the upper floors; dutifully, his mother had inclined planes installed and removed all the raised thresholds so nothing would impede a wheelchair. Sara Roosevelt

hoped her son would retire to Hyde Park, but his political adviser Louis Howe had other ideas. I believe, Howe audaciously said, someday Franklin will be president. THE MAN WHO HAD fallen in a heap when he attempted to navigate on crutches across the slippery marble floor at his Wall Street offices, the man who could not lift even one arm and wave for fear of toppling, the man who had once towered over others but was now almost always the one who did the looking up miraculously returned to politics in 1924 as a lead speaker for the Democratic presidential convention. What Roosevelt could no longer do with his arms, he did with his head, throwing it back, holding his shoulders high. Whatever parts of himself he could still move, he animated. And he now used his voice brilliantly. No longer halting, it had matured into a resonant tenor and was infused with a passion that he had previously lacked. It thrummed, it vibrated, it sang. And wherever he was, the audience felt it. In November 1928, Franklin Roosevelt achieved what had once seemed to many to be impossible. He was elected the Democratic governor of New York. He did it by being carried up back stairs to deliver speeches and by riding in the back of a car, from which he could speak without standing up. Indeed, the simple act of standing up and sitting down required more effort for him than most men exert during an entire day. Day after day on the campaign trail, he disguised his disability and seemed to have gained a new equanimity. Frances Perkins, who joined Roosevelt on his run for governor and who would later become his secretary of labor, recalled him telling her once, If you cant use your legs and they bring you milk when you wanted orange juice, you learn to say, thats all right and drink it. Roosevelt was now truly living what his cousin Teddy had preached: the strenuous life. And he lived it not in a charge up San Juan Hill or on a big-game hunt in the western plains, but every waking hour of every day. He lived it from the moment he summoned his strength to hoist his useless legs from his bed into his self-designed wheelchair; he lived it when the sweat ran down his face as he said to himself, I must get down the driveway or I must get to the podium or I must get across the room. He did it minute after minute and week after week, always refusing to give up or give in. As never before, he had become a man of conviction and determination. And when the country was on its knees because of the Great Depression, Governor Roosevelt seemed, however improbably, the man who might best be able to lift it back onto its feet. ROOSEVELTS POLITICAL OPERATIVES WERE already preparing their candidate for the presidential election only a few days after he was reelected as New Yorks governor. He formally announced his candidacy on January 23, 1932, and proceeded to win all the delegates in Alaska and Washington state in the first week. But he did not succeed in derailing his opposition. In his final speech before the Democratic convention, he promised bold, persistent experimentation. Take a method, he boomed, and try it. If it fails admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something. He arrived at the convention with a solid lead, but still about a hundred votes short of the nomination. After a night and a day of fierce lobbying and multiple votes, he finally won on the fourth ballot, claiming more than two thirds of the delegates after California and Texas switched to the Roosevelt column. He then made a dramatic flight to Chicago to accept the nomination, and his words to the assembled crowd thundered over the radio: I pledge you, I pledge myself, to a NEW DEAL for the American people. Whatever Roosevelts promises, no one could overlook the desperate situation the country found itself in. The Great Depression was horrific. At least 25 percent of the American workforce was unemployed; in some industrial cities, unemployment was as high as 80 or 90 percent. International trade was devastated. In less than four years, the American economy had shrunk by \$45 billion, or about 45 percent. Even more staggering than the numbers were the haunting images: the bread lines forming in every city; the evicted families, jobless and destitute and dirty, shuffling from one soup kitchen to the next; and the makeshift tents in the dead of winter buckling from rain and sleet, not to mention the filthy children who huddled by bonfires alongside the railroad tracks. And the great midwestern dust bowl was yet to come. Sometimes, the enormosity of the task and the despair must have seemed overwhelming. But not to Roosevelt. In his race against Hoover, he gave twenty-seven major addresses, each covering a single topic, and he made his campaign about substance and about organization. Most of all, he believed he would win, and equally remarkably, everyone around him became a believer as well. The embattled incumbent president, Herbert Hoover, accused the Democrats of being the party of the mob. Hoover also insisted that despite the Depression, no one was starving: The hobos, he exclaimed, are better fed than they have ever been. The voters went overwhelmingly against Hoover and for Roosevelt; it was a drubbing the president carried only six northeastern states. Roosevelts Democrats also gained a nearly three-to-one majority in the House and control of the Senate. On election night, Washington seemed to be his. And there was this: we think of our presidents as robust, vigorous, capable of striding through any part of the country or indeed the globe. But Franklin Roosevelt could not stride. He could not even stand unbraced or unassisted. Never before or since has a disabled person run for the American presidency, let alone won. That he ran and won in a time of national turmoil is a testament not only to the skill of his campaign, but to something fearless and indomitable deep within himself. HE HAS BEEN ALL but crowned by the people, newspaperman William Allen White grandiloquently wrote. Actually, this was an overstatement. True, in the New Deal days he was the man whom millions loved, but he was also the man whom millions loved to hate. In his first hundred days in office, he undid the Temperance movement by repealing Prohibition and rebuffed both organized labor and veterans with his sweeping legislative proposals and executive orders. He remade the banking system and began to remake the government and economy. For Roosevelt, no dream seemed impossible. And to many, as inch-by-inch he restored confidence in the economy and tamed the worst of the

Depression, it was nothing less than miraculous. Yet the heady promise of those early days and months also could not be indefinitely sustained. By the mid-1930s, some of Roosevelt's presidential magic had begun to wear off. The jaunty, quick-witted president who seemed to relish sparring with his enemies now appeared at times baffled and weary, though he did rebound in 1936 an election year with a string of legislative achievements reminiscent of the first hundred days of his term. By the end of his second term, however, as he confronted ever-rising difficulties with Congress, continued obstruction from a wary Supreme Court, a persistently sluggish economy, and the ominous sight of Adolf Hitler looming over Europe, he suddenly looked ordinary, much like any other two-term president. Yet once plunged into the throes of World War II, he emerged not only as a great statesman, but as one of history's originals. Callous and cunning, he was careful never to get too far ahead of public opinion, even as he pushed, prodded, and manipulated his two very different wartime allies, Churchill and Stalin. Neatly attired and insouciant, he was the very picture of understated upper-class elegance and seemed strangely immune to mercurial passions. Francis Biddle once remarked that Roosevelt had more serenity than any man he ever met. And despite his useless legs, he was still a strikingly imposing figure, with his broad torso and wide shoulders. His charm was without peer. When he famously tossed his head back, or flashed a wide grin, his eyes flickered with emotion. When he chuckled with delight, so did those around him. His smile remained infectious, and his company was irresistible: Churchill felt it; so did Stalin; and so did General Dwight Eisenhower, Roosevelt's chief adviser Harry Hopkins, and Secretary of State Cordell Hull. Roosevelt was a magnet to which thousands were drawn. How else to explain the nearly slavish devotion of those who supported his political endeavors, or the unwritten rule among the press corps never to report on his disability or photograph his wheelchair or his shriveled legs? In spite of his disability, Roosevelt remained a man of constant action, loving to drive, loving his stamps, loving the interplay of politics. Largely motionless himself, he instead made motion orbit around him, perfecting the tilt of his head and using his cigarette holder like a conductor's baton. He was given to drumming his fingers when excited. He could infuse equal gusto into discussions of grave international issues such as the survival of democracy, as he did into mundane politics such as the fate of a ward heeler in a Pennsylvania precinct. And when angered he could point a threatening finger or display a menacing scowl. Like all great leaders, he was not above simple demagoguery or ruthless invective when it served his purpose: Roosevelt blithely referred to isolationists as cheerful idiots; when he appointed a Republican, he joked to the press corps that he couldn't find any dollar-a-year men among the Democrats; and when Ambassador William Bullitt fell out of his favor, Roosevelt encouraged him to leave Washington and run for mayor of Philadelphia and then promptly instructed the Pennsylvania Democratic bosses to cut his throat. He once derided Congress as a madhouse, and denounced the Senate as a bunch of incompetent obstructionists. The commander in chief even thought that his own vice president, Henry Wallace, who served with him for his entire third term, was a crackpot. And he liked to make fun of his secretary of state, cheerfully imitating Hull's lisp. But intuitively, Roosevelt understood Adolf Hitler's bloodthirstiness as much as anyone. Ironically, he and Hitler had come to power at the same time, in 1933 and knew that with each new battle and each month of the war, we are fighting to save a great and precious form of government for ourselves and for the world. IN 1933, AFTER HIS first hundred days in office, Roosevelt had brilliantly managed to usher fifteen historic pieces of legislation through Congress. When it was necessary to hold firm, he did that; when it was necessary to compromise, he did that; when it was necessary to make a bargain, he did that as well. It's more than a New Deal, his secretary of the interior, Harold Ickes, boasted: It's a new world! Even when a bleak recession and unemployment lingered and when he failed in his attempt to pack a restive Supreme Court, he never lost the adulation of vast segments of the public or the interest of the press. Yet when it came to the darkening situation in Europe, Roosevelt flinched. Instead of showing his customary confidence, he played it coyly. Despite Hitler's onslaught, the ghastly memories of World War I remained as fresh as ever: the sights and sounds of exhausted armies shadowboxing from their trenches; the tedium of siege and the billowing clouds of dense, roiling smoke; and the stabbing bursts of gunfire that never seemed to fade away. America had buried over 117,000 soldiers in World War I, while Europe and Russia lost 10 million. Many Americans thought that was plenty, and two decades later they had little appetite for what they still thought of as Europe's wars. By the summer of 1939, with Europe bounded by France's Maginot Line against Germany in the west and the provisions of the Munich agreement in the east, Roosevelt had all but decided not to run for a third term. But then came a stark phone call at 2:50 a.m. on August 31, 1939, informing him that ten armored German divisions had stormed across the Polish border, and that war had been declared. Roosevelt cleared his throat and rasped to his ambassador in Paris, William Bullitt, who was relaying the news from Warsaw, Well, Bill, it has come at last. God help us all. It was then that Roosevelt began the process of reversing himself: he would ultimately decide to seek an unprecedented third term in office, breaking a tradition begun by George Washington himself. Over the next eight months, during the period known as the phony war, Roosevelt publicly promised to keep America out of Europe's conflict. I've said this before and will say this again, he told the nation; your boys will not fight in foreign wars. Anyone who suggested otherwise was perpetrating a shameless and dishonest fake, the president said, adding, The simple truth is that no person in any responsible place has ever suggested the remotest possibility of sending the boys of American mothers to fight on the battlefields of Europe. Still, he also did what he could to nudge Washington and indeed the nation at large closer to action and to the growing reality of future conflict. But whereas Churchill had lectured Neville Chamberlain about his

policies of appeasement (The government had to choose between shame and war, he bellowed. They chose shame and will get war!) Roosevelt instead searched for a middle way. He informed members of the Senate Military Affairs Committee that if England and France fell, all of Europe would drop into the basket of their own accord.... I cannot overemphasize the seriousness of the situation. This is not a pipe dream. When Great Britain declared war on Germany, followed by France five hours later, Roosevelt took to the airwaves in a fireside chat, and said: This nation will remain a neutral nation, but I cannot ask that every American remain neutral in thought as well. Even a neutral has a right to take account of facts. And though he told Congress in a personal address, Our acts must be guided by one single hardheaded thoughtkeeping America out of war, he emphasized the urgency of repealing the Neutrality Act so that America could provide military support to the western Allies. (Congress responded by authorizing a so-called cash-and-carry plan, which allowed American manufacturers to sell arms to Britain and France so long as each country paid cash and sent its own ships to pick up the goods.) Still, neutrality had a high price. The war news haunted Roosevelt. While poring over cables from abroad, or reading his morning New York Times and the Herald Tribune, he would mutter to himself over and over, All bad, all bad. The first president to use the phone extensively Harry Truman recalled how Roosevelt's voice boomed so loudly he had to hold the phone away from his ear he often spoke to his emissaries in Europe or aides in the State Department. Day-in and day-out, the phone rang constantly, bringing him the latest news of Hitler's feints and moves. Then his days were filled with meetings: with the press, with the secretaries of state and the treasury, with the attorney general, with his personal secretary for afternoon dictation, and ever more frequently with senior members of the Senate. Invariably, Fridays were cabinet days, when the president met with the members who had the greatest political weight or the greatest measure of influence. Predictably, he craved diversion where he could find it in his nightly rubdown with masseur George Fox, in his collection of stamps and cherished naval prints, in his beloved tree plantings, in his frequent naps, in the movies he was addicted to, and most of all in the cocktail hour that took place every afternoon at the White House, when he banished all talk of war and busied himself with mixes and shakers. But none of this was ever quite refuge enough. I'm almost literally walking on eggs, Roosevelt confessed early in 1940. The strain showed. The president's blood pressure shot up to 179/102. Then came a scare: one evening in February, during an intimate dinner with Ambassador Bullitt and the close presidential aide Missy LeHand, Roosevelt collapsed at the table it was a small heart attack, which his longtime attending navy physician, Admiral Ross McIntire, quickly dismissed and hushed up. AS SPRING APPROACHED, THE United States made one last-ditch effort to forestall all-out war. In March, Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, a close adviser to the president, traveled to London, Paris, Berlin, and Rome to propose a plan of peace and security through disarmament. In hindsight, the proposal reeked of desperation. At the time, the Germans were scornful and the British were horrified. As the world watched, the United States seemed to be doing little more than awaiting Hitler's next move. It would not have to wait long. On May 10, 1940, Hitler launched his now infamous blitzkrieg lightning war against the Netherlands and Belgium, ravaging them by land and air. On day four of the German advance, Hitler ordered the old Dutch city of Rotterdam destroyed not for military reasons but for Schrecklichkeit (frightfulness) the explicit use of terror to break a people's will to resist. After a day of ferocious bombing, some thirty thousand people lay dead beneath the rubble. Hours later, the Dutch surrendered unconditionally, and the Belgians followed within two weeks. Then Hitler, unencumbered, turned his full force on France. Protected by Stuka dive-bombers, Nazi tanks and motorized infantry ripped through the Ardennes virtually unopposed, and Erwin Rommel's notorious panzers rapidly reached the Channel coast. In World War I, movement of the battle lines was often measured in yards rather than miles, and the French and British had managed to hold back German thrusts for four ghastly years, despite the carnage and millions of casualties. This time, the French, considered to have the best army in the world, were dumbstruck. They were overrun and had hardly fired a shot. Churchill urgently cabled to Roosevelt: The scene has darkened swiftly. The small countries are simply smashed up, one by one, like match wood. We expect to be attacked ourselves. Privately, Roosevelt told his aides that if Great Britain fell, the United States would be living at the point of a gun. The question for Roosevelt, however, and for the world, was this: was he willing to publicly rally the nation to brave the German fury? His answer was silence. Within weeks, German panzer units had trapped the British expeditionary force and the French First Army along the harsh English Channel on the French beach at Dunkirk. While the German officers waited for Hitler's final orders to annihilate the British, about 338,000 English and French troops escaped in an armada of small fishing boats and other craft, leaving behind nearly 2,500 guns and 76,000 tons of ammunition. Half of the British naval fleet, including its destroyers, had been sunk or damaged, and now England, fearing the worst, braced itself for an attack. Expecting the Germans to follow his troops across the Channel, Churchill proposed laying poison gas along England's southern beaches to try to thwart the Nazi forces at the shore. Then on June 5, German forces prepared to turn south. At the Somme, the French line crumpled before the onslaught of German panzers. Four days later, the Germans crossed the Seine, facing only token resistance. On June 14, the unthinkable happened: Paris itself fell. France was now finished, and its tattered government hastily retreated to Bordeaux. An armistice was signed on June 22, ceding a vast part of France to the Germans. The south of France remained in the hands of a puppet government in the resort town of Vichy. Meanwhile, the countryside was filled with refugees and littered with corpses and the abandoned carts and luggage of the dead. Moreover, the Germans

held 2 million French POWs. In one audacious stroke, Hitler had outdone Kaiser Wilhelm and Napoleon: he had managed to sever the alliance of his enemies, drive Britain from the European continent, all but destroy the French army, and rewrite the Treaty of Versailles. Germany had either bullied its enemies or smashed them with its blitzkrieg. And its constellation of military forces was now feared from the Caspian Sea to the English Channel. In vain, Great Britain sought to involve the United States. On the morning of May 15 the French premier, Paul Reynaud, telephoned the newly installed British prime minister, Winston Churchill, at 7:30 to convey, in English, a grim message: We are defeated. We have lost the battle. Churchill had been imploring Roosevelt to help. The prime ministers immediate reply to Reynaud was: be steadfast; hang on until the United States joins the fray. Churchill then cabled to Roosevelt, saying, The voice and force of the United States may count for nothing if they are withheld too long. Roosevelt did promptly ask Congress to agree to spend \$1.2 billion more on defense in order to build more planes and to increase production facilities. He would also ask for another \$1.9 billion a few weeks later. But for the moment, that was all. There would be no troopships of American forces, no public threats, and most critically, no declaration of war. In the days surrounding the fall of Paris, both a frantic Reynaud and Churchill made desperate, last-second pleas to Roosevelt to intervene. Where, they asked, was the might of the United States? In private, Roosevelt offered support, but in public the official American response remained a noncommittal, stony silence. It had become every country for itself. AT THE OUTSET OF World War I, Englands secretary of state for foreign affairs, Sir Edward Grey, had lamented, The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime. This, of course, was before Americas entry into the first Great War. Now, it was as if history were tragically repeating itself, as one European nation after another was conquered by a rapacious Germany, and as America remained absent. In truth, militarily Roosevelt was hamstrung: far from being a powerhouse, his army was ranked eighteenth in the world, and he commanded not millions of battle-hardened troops like Hitlers, but a pathetic number of men only about 185,000 many of whom trained with fake wooden rifles. Despite his plan for a large expansion of American airpower, his air forces were outdated and almost nonexistent. The navy was little better. And at one point, Roosevelt reviewed a contingent of national guardsmen training, their brightly colored regimental banners streaming in the wind. They drilled with broomsticks instead of machine guns, raced around in trucks instead of tanks, and were so out of shape that many collapsed from heat and exhaustion during the maneuvers. Politically, the situation was equally desperate. On the heels of the Depression, Roosevelt had kept defense spending at minimal levels, even though a belligerent Third Reich was violating pact after pact and arming itself to the teeth. By 1940, the American nation remained in the grip of isolationism, and because that was an election year, Roosevelt was unwilling to muster his considerable persuasive powers to prompt an early American entry into the war. So as the summer of 1940 arrived, Britain stood alone, Roosevelt was running for an unprecedented third term on an antiwar plank, and the Nazis were unopposed wherever they went. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN ROOSEVELT, appealing to the American people for a third term with pledges to keep the nation out of war, and a jubilant Adolf Hitler in Berlin could not have been more striking. Nor could the tenor of the two men have been more stridently at odds. For Hitler, at the pinnacle of his power, anything and everything now seemed possible. When he toured the deserted streets of a defeated Paris Nazi loudspeakers had warned all the residents to remain indoors it was a visit to the tomb of Napoleon that most seemed to captivate the Fhrer. First he slapped his thighs giddily, followed by a prolonged pause, and then total silence. Standing before the remains of the emperor, the Fhrer was transfixed. The German people felt much the same about Hitler. On July 6, he returned to Berlin and was welcomed as if he were a victorious Roman emperor. By the time his train pulled into the station at three o'clock, hundreds of thousands of well-wishers had lined the streets all the way to the Reich Chancellery. The roads themselves were strewn with flowers, and huge crowds of storm troopers shouted, Sieg heil! Sieg heil! SIEG HEIL! The sun shone brilliantly, and the people, cheering themselves hoarse and delirious with war fever, called again and again for Hitler to come out onto his balcony. Time after time he did. Hitler was now, one of his generals insisted, the greatest warlord of all time. Little wonder that Hitler believed it was just a matter of time before Britain itself would fall or sue for peace. And little wonder too that he audaciously began to contemplate a final showdown with the Soviet Union in the fall, a titanic battle that would demolish Bolshevism. It would be, Hitler remarked, childs play, another lightning war. And, the Fhrer reasoned, if Russia was routed, Britains last hope would be shattered. Until that moment arrived, Hitler remained content to smash Great Britain from the air. Throughout August and September successive waves of German fighters took to the skies to bomb England into submission. The Luftwaffe had first sought to blast the Royal Air Force from the air, but the British fought back with everything they could: in a series of dramatic dogfights over the Channel coast and the cities of southern England, the RAF pilots went wing to wing against the Nazi fliers. With America on the sidelines, Englands survival had now depended on these close-combat dogfights. When the Germans failed to annihilate the British air force, they then launched a terror-bombing campaign. Thus began the epic Battle of Britain. Initially, the Germans had targeted ports, radar stations, airfields, and communication facilities. Then the Luftwaffe shifted to nighttime bombing and unleashed as many as a thousand planes a night. German bombs lit up Londons East End and then London itself for fifty-seven consecutive nights. When they attacked the city of Coventry, most of its ancient churches were reduced to rubble, and so were seventy thousand homes. The RAF retaliated in kind, bombing Berlin. Hitler angrily announced, If they attack our

cities, we will simply rub out theirs. In response, Churchill said of Hitler, This wicked man, this monstrous product of former wrongs and shame, has now resolved to break our famous island race by process of indiscriminate slaughter. His jaw jutting, the prime minister boldly promised, We can take it. England did, but it wasnt easy. The damage was unprecedented. Ten thousand lay dead, and more than fifty thousand were injured. In the German raid on the manufacturing city of Birmingham, more than 1,300 people were killed in a single evening. Buildings were reduced to charred skeletons; vast craters were left in the city streets. Children were fitted with gas masks. And night after night as the lights were extinguished across the city, some 177,000 Londoners took to makeshift bomb shelters in the stations of the citys famous Underground. Soon, the ground would shake and the sky would be ablaze, as firemen rushed to douse the walls of flame. Once day broke, weary citizens would stumble out from their subterranean world and gaze anew at another round of devastation. Steadfast, impatient, fretful, Churchill himself would frequently make his way out from the cavernous yellow chamber where he met with aides and would hike up the stairs to a roof when he heard heavy bombing. There, clad in a thick siren suit and steel helmet, gas mask at the ready, he munched restlessly on a tired cigar and watched as his beloved London burned. But come daylight, tens of thousands of tiny Union Jacks still flapped defiantly in the breeze from the windows of Londoners houses that is, those situated beyond the wreckage. How much they can stand, I dont know, CBS newsman Edward R. Murrow reported in his sonorous voice. The strain is very great. Yet the British gave as much as they got. Churchill was right; his people could take it. And they managed to inflict extensive losses on the Wehrmacht as well. By late fall, a stymied Hitler had decided that the key to winning the war lay not in the west, but in the east. He indefinitely shelved Operation Sea Lion, the Nazis planned naval assault on Great Britain across the English Channel, and began to set his sights on invading the Soviet Union a nation with which he had a nonaggression pact. The consequences would be fateful for the war, for the people of Europe, and eventually for the United States. And though this was unknown at the time, also for the increasingly embattled Jews of Europe. WHILE ROOSEVELT WAS STILL groping for a grand strategy, Hitler was finally settling on his own. Having achieved nearly total domination in the west, he now planned to attack eastward. He picked June 1941 to begin. He expected the battle to be over by the first frost. Upon receiving word of the attack against the Soviet Union, Winston Churchill immediately sided with Stalin. And with impressive foresight, Roosevelt extended to the Soviet Union the ever-increasing quantity of American arms and supplies being sent to the Allied powers fighting against the Nazis. But for nearly six months, only two nations were at war with Germany. That would change after December 7, 1941, when Pearl Harbor was attacked and America finally entered the war. Suddenly, there were three: Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and now the United States. ROOSEVELT AS COMMANDER IN chief was both a feast of a character and a massive riddle of a man. To be sure, not everyone loved the American president. God damn Roosevelt! that was the least of what his critics said. Throughout the war, the genial president was castigated as a tyrant and a paralytic cripple, as a fabricator of bogus promises and a dictator thirsting for global control, as a Don Quixote of the present century living in his dreams and as a feeble politician with a warped brain. Among wartime presidents, only Lincoln was as castigated. While preaching freedom abroad, long after the direst days of the Depression, he also had to weather his own mounting problems at home. For example, in the summer of 1943 a simple fistfight in a remote corner of a Detroit park quickly escalated, prompting spasms of racial violence and race riots across the country. National morale was battered. The whole world is watching our domestic problems, the New York Times direly reported. In the meantime, the business of war was ceaseless. A never-ending parade of problems, appeals, complaints, and queries flowed into the Oval Office. Cartoonists lampooned the presidents indecision and ridiculed him for allowing the nation to be so buffeted mercilessly. Yet against all this, against all the nagging policy disputes and temporary military failures, Roosevelt invariably retained his grace. Where an exhausted Abraham Lincoln had morosely wandered the halls of the White House muttering to himself, I must have relief from this anxiety or it will kill me, and a disgusted George Washington resorted to invective against his political enemies, Roosevelt continued to display good humor and aplomb. It is little wonder that one of Roosevelts political opponents wrote, We, who hate your gaudy guts, salute you. Roosevelt as chief executive remained a puzzle to friends and foes alike. This suited him just fine. He always grasped the symbolism of governance. Thus he spoke to blacks at Howard University, to foreigners at the Statue of Liberty, to the nation from his fireside. Often he acted not by following any grand design but by sheer instinct, hastily improvising makeshift arrangements. One of his greatest accomplishments, the Lend-Lease plan to keep Great Britain viable militarily after 1940, he devised on board a yacht while sailing the Caribbean. It was pure genius, a masterstroke. Under that benign name Lend-Lease Roosevelt created a mechanism to sidestep the entire government apparatus and open up the United States military arsenal in the simple guise of a short-term loan between allies and international friends. Then he sold it, to the American people and to the Congress, genially and cheerily, but all the while never giving an inch of ground. Not every policy, however, was as masterly. Time and again, he also temporized, unwilling to make a decision until a crisis arrived at his doorstep. Temperamentally, he might have been more at home in the quieter and quainter presidencies of Woodrow Wilson or Theodore Roosevelt, a time of simpler, more ad hoc government. But by the end of 1943, he would be responsible for creating, first, a structure for waging global war overseeing the creation of the huge, imposing defense and war agencies that we know today and laying the foundation for the very structure of modern presidential government. Even

here, however, he remained unpredictable. For example, he established the National Resources Planning Board, but then criticized it for dreaming up grandiose theories, particularly in economics. By the middle of the war, he had put together a first-rate, even stellar, cabinet, and surrounded himself with men like Hopkins, Hassett, Stimson, Marshall, Forrester, Bowles, Byrnes, Nimitz, Eisenhower, and MacArthur. However, he frequently resisted delegating power to them, or even providing them with adequate coordination or administration. The result was a government often in conflict with itself. Stimson, the secretary of war, once groused that Roosevelt was the poorest administrator he ever worked under. Stimson concluded: He wants to do it all himself. In truth, Roosevelt saw his job as head of state less as a matter of management and more as leading the American people. Thus he was also the sermonizer in chief, with his great, resonant eastern voice, articulating principles, fostering shared morals and momentum, and inspiring personal loyalty. In short, moving a nation. And always, he remained the public face of humanity. Nothing about him was textbook. He was a man of principle but also a man of expedience. He ably practiced the nuances of negotiation, but he was also a preacher, talking about the global brotherhood of man. And he was devious. With a mischievous air, he loved nothing more than keeping his own government off guard. He deliberately fostered disarray among his own people, believing that this led to more creative policy making: sometimes he would supply information to his aides; at other times he would deliberately withhold it, keeping them in the dark. He made copious use of his own personal desk drawer of intelligence, culled from bits of gossip and all the endless telegrams, correspondence, and memorandums that arrived daily in his office. And as Hitler would one day learn, he also had an impeccable sense of timing: some days, he seemed strangely sluggish, dragging his feet on decisions, waiting interminably before acting. But he was just as likely, particularly when he was politically vulnerable, to move quickly, even before his staff and his cabinet were informed. Given his style, it was almost predictable that as Roosevelt navigated the war, his government was in constant turmoil. No surprise, Walter Lippmann once described Roosevelt's leadership as hesitant and confused, and a congressional critic gave a radio talk called Roosevelt Versus Roosevelt, saying that the nation needed fewer and better Roosevelts. Was this fair? Sometimes his presidential magic worked; sometimes not. Disorder, delays, and muddle were frequently the watchwords; problems were met principally by improvisation, not long-term strategy. Yet somehow it all came together. For example, in virtually the same breath he could be a consummate realist, speaking about winning the war as quickly as possible, but also speak fervently about the peace, when a successor to the ill-fated League of Nations would take over. It was thus perhaps fitting that on April 13, 1943, Roosevelt dedicated the Thomas Jefferson Memorial on the two-hundredth anniversary of Jefferson's birth. While a stiff wind whipped across the tidal basin, the bareheaded president donned his black cape and rose on his braced legs to speak to the crowd. Today, in the midst of a great war for freedom, he said, we dedicate a shrine to freedom. Then he paid this simple tribute: Jefferson was no dreamer. Indeed, these two presidents, one a son of Virginia, the other a New Yorker, had much in common. Jefferson was an aristocrat who spoke in the name of the common people, and so was Roosevelt. Jefferson was a schemer and a manipulator, and so was Roosevelt. Jefferson was a deft politician and a fierce partisan, and so was Roosevelt. Both gave birth to poetic wordsfounding documents, really that brilliantly inspired the American people in their own time and generations later. And each could divide people as passionately as he united them. Each was also more than a touch hypocritical, even though both had a sublime quality. Finally, both men sought to peer over the political horizon. As with the Depression, throughout the mind-numbing trials of the war, Roosevelt never shed his optimism. But unlike Hitler, neither did he have blinkers on. Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau observed, The amusing thing about the president is that he can state these facts coolly and calmly whether we win or lose the war, and to me it is most encouraging that he really seems to face these issues, and that he is not kidding himself one minute about the war. And as Isaiah Berlin said of Roosevelt, He was absolutely fearless. In a despondent world which appeared divided between wicked and fatally efficient fanatics marching to destroy, and bewildered populations on the run... he believed in his own ability... to stem this terrible tide of war. Berlin concluded that Roosevelt had the character and energy of the Axis dictators, but was on our side. Yet even his equanimity had its limits. Roosevelt sought respite from the war, often with a small group of intimates, on many weekends at Shangri-La, the presidential retreat in the Catoctin Mountains about sixty miles north of Washington. Invariably, his workload traveled with him. But once there, he could thumb through his beloved detective novels, nibble on cheeses and cocktail appetizers, and chat with friends, sometimes about matters of state but more often about trivial things. In contrast to Hyde Park, Shangri-La was rustic to the point of being ramshackle. For Roosevelt, this was grand. His eyes lit up with boyish glee, and he liked to inform his guests jokingly that one of the bathroom doors did not close securely. No one, however, neither his enemies nor his friends, should have been seduced by his geniality. He was as tough as steel just as aptly, as tough-minded as Abraham Lincoln, who weathered the heavens hung in black to win the Civil War. Actually, his adviser Rex Tugwell did compare Roosevelt's ordeal in the face of the Depression to Lincoln's struggle against disunion. A good fight invigorated him. Roosevelt said mockingly that every senator was a law unto himself and he dripped with contempt for his adversaries. Once, speaking before a cheering crowd at Madison Square Garden in October 1936, he said that his enemies were unanimous in their hate for me! Then he paused dramatically, and added, and I welcome their hatred! Another time he was subjected to sustained booing on Wall Street, and again in Cambridge when Harvard students gathered to see the university's most eminent alumnus as he glided by in his

motorcade; in both instances Roosevelt continued on his way, waving and smiling warmly. Not unsurprisingly, he came to admire the populist Andrew Jackson, who like him had been increasingly regarded with venom by the rich. Politically he described himself as a little left of center, though it is worth remembering that he kept a folder labeled Liberalism Versus Communism and Conservatism. Still, he was anything but dogmatic in his philosophy, willing to experiment with countless policies, or jousting with the secretary of state, or deriding economists speaking in jargon, ab-so-lute jargon. But deep down, he was a liberal: when his critics insisted that the administration have a balanced budget, Roosevelt boomed, Hell, a balanced budget isn't putting people to work. I will balance the budget as soon as I take care of the unemployed! And there remained an indisputable fact: for a time in the 1930s, when American democracy seemed on the verge of dissolution, when the two political parties seemed drained of energy and the collapse of free institutions remained a very real concern, when millions of people had flocked to the new pied pipers of unrest, demagogues like Huey Long and Father Coughlin, and when society and humanity were in peril, Roosevelt rescued democracy at home. Now, as World War II raged and the Tehran summit began in earnest, the question loomed: could he do the same abroad? During the war, this was the issue. It was always the issue. IN TEHRAN ROOSEVELT WAS about to see exactly how far his personal magic could take him. At three o'clock on a warm Sunday afternoon beneath a cloudless blue sky, Stalin walked unaccompanied from his building and was met outside by a U.S. army officer who escorted him into a room where Roosevelt was waiting. Stalin, short man with bristly gray hair, pitted cheeks, and a weather-beaten face, not to mention broken teeth stained from years of smoking, was dressed in a khaki tunic adorned with a star of the Order of Lenin on his breast. Roosevelt, seated in his wheelchair, was dressed in a handsome blue business suit. As Stalin extended his hand to take Roosevelt's, the president was struck by what a powerful figure he was. (He was a very small man, but there was, one American noted, something about him that made him look awfully big.) Roosevelt also noticed that Stalin looked curiously at his shriveled legs and ankles. Throughout his career Roosevelt had believed in his ability to bond with political allies and adversaries alike, and he was determined to make a personal connection with the Soviet dictator. Well, he should have been; there was much at stake in this meeting. Coarse, cunning, and unscrupulous, Stalin was bound by neither morality nor sentiment: he was the architect of the gulag and the great purges; his regime had coldly executed hundreds of thousands of alleged enemies of the people on the flimsiest of evidence; and having started the war as Hitler's partner until the Nazis double-crossed him by invading the Soviet Union, he was also an unpredictable ally. Up to this point, Stalin had been insisting angrily that the Soviets were suffering a disproportionate loss of life, and the Americans therefore feared that even now the Soviet Union might make a separate peace with Germany. Almost incomprehensibly, the Soviets had lost 1 million men in their victory at Stalingrad alone, more than the United States would lose in the entire war. But bravery and sacrifice also took other forms. Thanks to Roosevelt, the United States was contributing crucial supplies and munitions to the Soviet war effort. In the latter part of 1942 alone, it had sent Stalin a staggering 11,000 jeeps, 50,000 tons of explosives, 60,000 trucks, 250,000 tons of aviation gas, and 450,000 tons of steel, as well as (soon) 5,000 fighter planes, and 2 million pairs of boots for the Russian soldiers fighting and bleeding in the gravelly, snowy wastes around Stalingrad. American tires were keeping Soviet trucks moving and American oil was keeping Soviet planes flying; American blankets were warming Soviet troops, and American food—millions of tons including wheat, flour, meat, and milk—was feeding them. Still, Stalin believed the Allies should bear a larger burden of the fighting: hence his intense determination that they make a direct assault on Nazi-occupied western Europe as soon as possible. Here, Roosevelt was sympathetic. Nonetheless, Churchill had been lukewarm about this idea, preferring to invade Sicily or to focus on the Mediterranean, while out of necessity Roosevelt had deferred the idea until the United States had sufficient sea transport—cargo boats, tankers, destroyers, and escort vessels—for a major cross-Channel assault. But now, as 1943 drew to a close, with troops fighting on the mainland of Italy, the Allies were making significant inroads. The end of the war was within sight. The next storm was about to break over Europe. And while meeting with Stalin, Roosevelt was looking ahead. IN TRUTH, ROOSEVELT HAD wanted to see Stalin in person from the moment the Germans had lunged across the Polish border. He often said that at a meeting he learned more by watching a face than by listening to any of the actual words that were uttered. For years, even as president, he had disliked relying on long written missives. And his private secretary Grace Tully also noted that although he used the phone constantly it was a lifeline—Roosevelt liked to watch facial expressions as well. Churchill too had recognized this early on and took many opportunities to sit down with Roosevelt in person in order to cement the Anglo-American relationship. But so far, Joseph Stalin had only sent his elusive deputy, V. M. Molotov, to the White House. That was not enough for Roosevelt. So it was that the first meeting of the Tehran conference would be an informal tête-à-tête between himself and Stalin, and it would take place in Roosevelt's rooms. Roosevelt welcomed Stalin, repeating his long-stated wish that they meet in person. Surprisingly soft-spoken, even humble, Stalin countered with his own greeting and pleaded, once again, that his preoccupation with military matters had until now kept the two apart. Then the two men began to talk, and the topics ranged across the globe. True, Roosevelt wanted to talk about military issues, but above all he wanted to discuss longer-term diplomatic matters as well. Still, in deference to Stalin, the president asked about the eastern battlefield, where the Soviets were taking the brunt of the punishing German assault—it was not too good, in Stalin's words. Stalin added that the Germans were bringing up fresh divisions and the Red Army was about to lose a crucial

railway center. Roosevelt artfully asked, however: didn't the initiative still lie with the Red Army? Stalin nodded yes. At Roosevelt's urging, they moved on to discuss broader matters: France, Indochina, China, and India. Again and again, the president was drawn to diplomacy; again and again, he wanted to talk about the future beyond the war, and specifically his concept of a postwar world managed by an international body led by the four great powers: the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and China. Then, almost as quickly as it had begun, the private meeting was finished; the two had spoken for about an hour. It was enough time for them to feel each other out but, as far as Roosevelt was concerned, not enough to cement any kind of personal connection with Stalin. THE FIRST MEETING OF all three leaders had been scheduled for four o'clock, in the large conference room at the Soviet embassy. The leaders and their staffs gathered around a specially procured oak table. It was round, eliminating the issue of who would be seated at the head or the foot, but that did little to eliminate the subtle jockeying for global influence. Given this group's diversity, there was bound to be conflict. Also, there was no fixed agenda; the participants could discuss what they liked and avoid whatever they did not. Inside, the conference room itself was more suited to the chilly winds of Moscow than the sunny warmth of Tehran. Curtains billowed about the windows, tapestries hung from the walls, and the chairs were oversized. Each leader arrived with his aides, although Roosevelt was without George Marshall, who, confused about the scheduled time, was off sightseeing. Churchill and Stalin had already agreed to defer to Roosevelt to open the session. Roosevelt, who was sixty-two, began with a quip about welcoming his elders, and then noted emphatically, We are sitting around this table for the first time as a family, with the one object of winning the war. Churchill spoke next; he was suffering from a cold, so his normally resonant voice was barely audible, yet he said eloquently that the three of them represented the greatest concentration of power the world has ever seen, adding, In our hands here is the possible certainty of shortening the war, the much greater certainty of victories, but the absolute certainty that we hold the happy future of mankind. Stalin was perfunctory, speaking about the potential collaboration of the three Allies, then thundering, Now let us get down to business, by which he meant the American and British invasion of Europe, the opening of a true second front against Germany. The Americans in turn wanted Stalin to signal willingness to commit his forces in the battle in the Pacific. Here, Stalin was sly, saying that he was too deeply engaged in Europe to join in the war against Japan, but that once Germany collapsed the Allies would march together in the Far East. Satisfied, Roosevelt then steered the conversation back to Europe and the projected invasion, emphasizing that the Allies should indeed stand by the decision, made in August 1943 at the Quebec Summit, to invade in May 1944, while also noting that the harsh realities of weather would impede a second front in France before late spring. The Channel is such a disagreeable body of water, Roosevelt said; then, conscious of Stalin's concerns, he added, No matter how unpleasant that body might be, however, we still want to get across it. Churchill, who could well remember a dismal period less than three years earlier when Great Britain had been the only nation under assault from German bombs, testily interjected that when it came to the English Channel, We were very glad it was a disagreeable body of water at one time. Roosevelt plunged ahead with further discussion of the cross-Channel invasion, to be code-named Overlord. Given the projected timetable, what could America and Britain do in the interim to divert German resources and reduce the onus on the Red Army? An impassive Stalin, smoking profusely, had his ideas, averring that an invasion from the north could be preceded by an attack through the south of France. In a pointed reminder that the east still remained the central front of the war, he stated that in battling the Germans it had become clear to him that a big offensive launched from only one direction had a far lower likelihood of success. Attacking from two directions would compel the Germans to disperse their forces and would give the Allies a chance to link up and multiply their power by converging. Perhaps this thinking might be applied to the current plans? Whereas Roosevelt seized upon this concept, Churchill balked. He did not want to pull out forces currently in Italy; as such, he had already suggested making alternative plans for the eastern Mediterranean, perhaps even enticing Turkey to join the war. But Stalin wanted no eastern Mediterranean routes; he believed Italy could be nothing more than a diversion, useless as a path into Germany because of the near impassability of the Alps. Ignoring Churchill, Roosevelt sided with Stalin. The British prime minister gracefully fell back, saying, Although we are all great friends, it would be idle of us to delude ourselves that we all saw eye to eye on all matters. Meanwhile, Roosevelt implored the military staffs to begin work at once on a plan of attack on southern France to accompany the cross-Channel invasion. Overlord and its tactics dominated the remainder of the afternoon, until the three leaders retired. They were to reconvene shortly afterward for dinner. ROOSEVELT HOSTED THE DELEGATION next. In the past few hours, the president's Filipino cooks had built cooking ranges and had begun preparing a quintessential American dinner of grilled steak and baked potatoes. For their part, the Secret Service agents were relieved that it was American food being prepared in an American kitchen; at the Roosevelt-Churchill summit in Casablanca, all food and drinks were tested first by medical officers and then bundled together and placed under heavy guard to prevent poisoning or any other tampering. As the three leaders gathered, the president began by mixing cocktails for what he affectionately called the children's hour. His drinks-free-form, ever-changing combinations of alcohol and various accompaniments were very much an acquired taste. This evening Roosevelt put a large quantity of vermouth, both sweet and dry, into a pitcher of ice, then added a smaller amount of gin, stirring the concoction rapidly. Stalin dutifully drank it; actually, he preferred wine to vodka but said nothing until Roosevelt eagerly inquired how he liked it. Well, all right, but it is cold on the stomach, the Marshal

replied. At dinner, the cocktails were replaced by wine and bourbon, which flowed freely for a long series of toasts. But if on the surface the leaders were festive, there remained an icy undertow in their discussions. As the meal progressed, postwar Europe again became the focus. Coldly writing off Russias ancient enemies, Stalin took control: he returned to a theme from his private talk with Roosevelt, this time publicly denouncing the French to the entire delegation gathered around the table. He declared the entire French ruling class to be rotten to the core, adding that its members deserved no consideration from the Allies and should not be left in possession of their empire. Churchill, firmly believing that France would have to be reconstructed as a strong nation, spoke up on behalf of the French. Roosevelt attempted to play peacemaker, but to no avail. Stalin then took up the more crucial issue of Germany, arguing for its dismemberment and the harshest possible treatment as the only means to prevent an eventual return of German militarism. To emphasize his point, Stalin, himself the ruthless force behind countless purges the slightest criticism of his regime was an offense against the state, and he himself once muttered, Whos going to remember all those riffraff in ten to twenty years? No one! spoke about interrogated German prisoners of war. When these prisoners were asked why they had butchered innocent women and children, their reply was that they were doing only what they had been ordered to do. Then Stalin recounted an experience of his own inside Germany. In 1907, he had been in Leipzig to attend a workers meeting. But two hundred German delegates failed to appear, because the railroad clerk who had to punch their train tickets did not arrive at work and the German delegates would not board the train without properly punched tickets. The German mentality, Stalin declared, was too blindly obedient to authority. (In the interest of maintaining harmony, neither Roosevelt nor Churchill was daring enough to comment on the paradox of such a statement by an absolute despot who wielded power from the barrel of a gun.) Clearly Stalin was probing his allies, attempting to see exactly how far they could be prodded into punishing and remaking a postwar Germany. He even said he disagreed with Roosevelts view that the Fhrer was mentally unbalanced, instead calling Hitler an intelligent man hindered by a primitive approach to politics. This time, Roosevelt tried to steer the conversation back to less controversial topics, like the matter of access to the Baltic Sea. But suddenly, at about 10:30 p.m., just as he prepared to speak, no words came out of his mouth. There was a long pause. To the horror of the participants, the president turned green, and great drops of sweat began to bead off his face. Then he put a shaky hand to his forehead. A stunned silence descended on the gathering as everyone gazed at the American president, who was clearly in serious distress. Saying little, Harry Hopkins leaped from his seat and had Roosevelt wheeled away from the table and back to his room. Roosevelts physician, Admiral Ross McIntire, was dining outside. He raced to the presidents room. As it happened, only McIntire knew that a similar incident had happened once before, on an evening in February 1940, also during dinner. Was this a repetition of that ghastly dinner except that this time, the presidential collapse was happening with the worlds most powerful leaders present? At this pivotal time, the nation could not afford to have Roosevelt seriously ill. In Roosevelts room, McIntire hurriedly began his examination. Roosevelt explained that after the meal ended, he had felt faint. McIntires diagnosis was surprisingly perfunctory: indigestion and excess stomach gas. He gave Roosevelt something to relieve the symptoms. If the presidents discomfort was anything more than indigestion and it almost surely was McIntire apparently never pursued it. And by the next afternoon, Roosevelt was again meeting with Stalin to lay out his vision of a postwar world, before the two then joined Churchill for another round of conferences. But even if the Americans could move on, untroubled, the night was surely a worrisome omen, as well as a grim reminder to Churchill and to Stalin that for Roosevelt, good health was fleeting. WHILE ROOSEVELT SEEMED FULLY recovered from the attack of indigestion, and was, according to the Americans, as alert as ever, the summit had once more snagged on the increasingly thorny issue of the cross-Channel invasion. Fearing that a direct assault could wipe out civilization and leave the Continent desolate, Churchill was still dragging his heels. For his part, Roosevelt, unable yet to commit vast forces for the planned assault on Europe, still wanted to focus on the postwar world and his concept of an international organization to resolve disputes. Stalin, however, mindful of his troops bleeding and dying on the unforgiving eastern front, kept returning to Overlord. Whether doodling on a pad with a red pencil (he liked to draw wolves heads) or sitting impassively cradling a cigarette, he was relentless. He wanted an explicit date in Mayas Roosevelt had promised and he wanted a commander. To this end, a somber Stalin pointedly asked Roosevelt for the commanders name. The president acknowledged that he had not made a final choice, although everyone knew that the leading candidate, General George Marshall, was attending the conference. Stalin saw this simply as stalling and fumed, Then nothing will come out of these operations. After some talk of Turkey and Bulgaria, the discussion again returned to Overlord. Now Stalin said accusingly to Churchill, Do the British really believe in Overlord, or are you only saying so to reassure the Russians? Churchill, chewing on a cigar, scowled and noted that it will be our stern duty to hurl across the Channel against the Germans every sinew of our strength. As on the previous day, the session ended with Churchills words. Later, in private, the frustrated prime minister retorted, Bloody! NOW IT WAS STALINS turn to be the host at dinner. Through the long succession of toasts and amid tables groaning with a classic Russian meal cold hors doeuvres to start, then hot borscht, fish, an assortment of meats, salads, compotes, and fruits, all accompanied by vodka and fine wine the Soviet leader began goading Churchill. He alternately teased or needled the British prime minister, and even went as far as suggesting that Churchill still harbored warm feelings toward Germany and privately desired a soft peace. Despite the fact that it was

Churchill who had mustered the facts against Hitler earlier and more cogently than anyone else, Stalin continued with his verbal barbs, almost always sanctioned and even aided by Roosevelt. The acrid exchanges accelerated, until Stalin riposted that the German general staff must be liquidated. The whole force of Hitlers armies, he continued, depended upon about fifty thousand officers and technicians. If these were rounded up and shot at the end of the war, German military strength would be undone. Stalin made his remark with a sardonic smile and a wave of the hand. But either Churchills translator missed the Soviet leaders ostensible sarcasm or the prime minister himself decided that he had had enough. Furious, he icily replied, The British Parliament and public will never tolerate mass executions. Even if in war passion they allowed them to begin, they would turn violently against those responsible after the first butchery had taken place. Churchill added, I would rather be taken out into the garden here and now and be shot myself than sully my own and my countrys honor by such infamy. At this point, a previously silent Roosevelt sought to mediate by offering some humor of his own. He suggested a compromise: on the number fifty thousand, he could not support Marshal Stalin. Instead, only 49,000 should be shot. Unremarked by any side was the glaring fact that when it came to human liquidations in this ghastly war, including an entire race of innocent civilians being inexorably butchered in the dark forests of Poland, fifty thousand seemed to be a very small number indeed. ON THE THIRD DAY, all sides found a way to come together. Stalin made a less than subtle suggestion that failure to open a second front in Europe in 1944 could all but ensure that a war-weary Soviet Union would seek a separate peace with Hitler. However improbable it was at this stage of the conflict, his threat had the desired effect. This time, Churchill bowed to reality. By lunchtime, he and Roosevelt pronounced Overlord a go, with a possible side operation against the south of France. The Soviets, for their part, would organize an offensive to take place in May against German forces in the east. That night, November 30, Churchill, although still ailing by now he had a miserable bronchial cough and an intermittent fever nonetheless was the host of the official dinner. It was his sixty-ninth birthday, and the trappings of the British Empire were on display. Crystal and silver glistened in the candlelight, Roosevelt and Churchill wore black tie, and the toasts were poignant. Usually, the person proposing a toast would circle the table to touch his glass to the toastees. At one point, however, Roosevelt toasted the health of Churchills daughter, Sarah. But it was Stalin who rose and walked around the table to clink glasses with her and bow. Sarah Churchill hesitated a moment, then left her seat to walk to Roosevelts place, where she touched her glass to his, and he said with great charm, I would have come to you, my dear, but I cannot. As the evening wore on, for the first time Stalin rose to thank America publicly for the extensive shipments that were keeping the Red Army alive (I want to tell you what the president has done to win the war). He even acknowledged, memorably, that without Lend-Lease, we would lose this war. Then it was Churchills turn. With Stalin sitting to his left and Roosevelt to his right, he recalled: Together, we controlled practically all the naval and three-quarters of all the air forces in the world, and could direct armies of nearly twenty millions of men, engaged in the most terrible of wars that had yet occurred in human history. He paused, then added, I could not help rejoicing at the long way we had come on the road to victory since the summer of 1940 when we had been alone. It was Roosevelt, however, who would have the last word. At 2 a.m., he triumphantly raised his glass and said, We have differing customs and philosophies and ways of life. But we have proved here at Tehran that the varying ideals of our nations can come together in a harmonious whole, moving unitedly for the common good of ourselves and of the world. But whatever harmony was achieved at Tehran, it nonetheless remained elusive in a larger sense; for there was still much more war and unfathomable moral tragedy to come. WHEN ROOSEVELT RETIRED TO his room on his last night in the Soviet compound, he fretted, worrying that he had not yet achieved his primary purpose: reaching a lasting, personal accord with Stalin. Despite his best efforts, he found the Soviet dictator correct, stiff, solemn, with nothing human to get hold of. In his own words, he felt discouraged. Then it occurred to him that for two evenings, he had watched Stalin needle and tease Churchill with obvious enjoyment. True, he had joined in, but with some restraint. For the most part, when Stalin had been blunt and Churchill had debated vociferously, he himself had patiently listened and mediated, joked and prodded. On the final day of the conference, seeking political gain, he chose an opposite course. He would mock the prime minister outright. On his way to the conference room on that last morning, the president caught up with Churchill and said, Winston, I hope you wont be sore at me for what I am going to do. The prime minister was somewhat taken aback; just days earlier he had enjoyed an intimate Thanksgiving dinner with Roosevelt in Cairo, where they had carved turkeys (two of them), drunk champagne while holiday music blared in the background, and eaten pumpkin pie. Amid the carnage of war, it was an evening of unforgettable friendship. Nevertheless, Churchill, a veteran of tough-nosed English politics, needed little help in imagining what was about to come next; as Roosevelt remembered it, the prime minister simply shifted his cigar and grunted. As soon as he entered the conference room, Roosevelt wheeled his way over to Stalin and the surrounding Soviet delegation. He appeared cagey, even intimate, as if drawing Stalin into his confidence; but Stalin was unmoved. Then, lifting his hand toward his mouth, as if covering a whisper, Roosevelt chuckled, Winston is cranky this morning; he got up on the wrong side of the bed. As the Soviet interpreter repeated the words, a vague smile passed over Stalins eyes. Roosevelt immediately decided that he was on the right track. Once the group was seated at the table, he began to tease Churchill about his Britishness, about John Bull, about his cigars, about his habits. The president watched Churchill turn bright red and scowl, and the more he did so, the more Stalin smiled. Finally, Roosevelt recalled, Stalin broke out into a

deep, hearty guffaw, and for the first time in three days I saw light. At last, the ice has been broken. Having made his inroad, an ecstatic Roosevelt even took the liberty of calling Stalin Uncle Joe to his face, and the Soviet leader was not offended. What Churchill felt went unrecorded. However, it was the American ambassador Averell Harriman, an admirer of both Roosevelt and the Russians, who offered perhaps the most telling observation on the presidents choices: He always enjoyed other peoples discomfort, Harriman would write. THE SUMMIT WAS A success. Roosevelt left Tehran for Cairo, as did Churchill. Overlord had been agreed to; they had discussed the need for an international body to keep the peace; they had hashed out the fate of the Baltic states and the status of a postwar Germany; they had talked of reparations from Finland and of persuading the Turks to enter the war; and they had huddled over State Department maps of central Europe, hotly debating the contentious matter of the borders of Poland as well as its government-in-exile. But there was still unfinished business, including one of Roosevelts most important decisions of the war. On December 5, he rendered the much-awaited verdict that would set Operation Overlord and D-Day fully in motion: he formally selected the commander for the joint Allied invasion. His army chief of staff, General George Marshall, whom the president considered the most accomplished figure of the joint chiefs and who had accompanied Roosevelt to Tehran, was now anxiously waiting. Marshall knew that almost every sign suggested he would be the commander, and he wanted the job. Indeed, at one point during the Tehran conference, Stalin had personally congratulated Marshall on his upcoming command. Yet the more Roosevelt had thought about it, the more he worried about losing Marshalls discreet, wise counsel. He wanted him in Washington, not in the field, and decided this was a gamble not worth taking. So late on a Sunday morning, Roosevelt called Marshall into his room. After some small talk, the president finally asked the general what he wanted to do about Overlord. The taciturn Marshall, ever the good soldier, replied that it was the presidents decision to make. Then it will be Eisenhower, Roosevelt said. To ensure the finality of his decision, the president then instructed Marshall to start writing as he dictated a personal message to Stalin. The general put pen to paper and took down Roosevelts words announcing the appointment of his military subordinate: The immediate appointment of General Eisenhower to command of Overlord operation has been decided upon. Once Marshall wrote this, Roosevelt added an exclamation point and coolly affixed his signature. There would be no turning back. Marshall later gave Eisenhower the original signed note as a memento, adding by way of explanation, It was written very hurriedly by me. This was the start of a year of fateful decisions. But first, the president, tired but feeling confident, had to return the thousands of miles home. ON HIS WAY BACK, Roosevelt had wanted to go to Naples to see the troops, but combat was still raging there, and the president was eventually dissuaded, electing to go to the islands of Malta and Sicily instead. At Malta, he would present a plaque to the inhabitants for resisting the Nazis; in Sicily, he would inspect the troops, decorate war heroes, and speak to his flamboyant but troubled general, George Patton, who had recently slapped a shell-shocked soldier in the face. Then Roosevelt went on to Morocco and the sea voyage back across the Atlantic. On December 17, Roosevelt returned to the White House. He had been abroad for over a month. By Christmas Eve, he traveled north, to Hyde Park, and was preparing to deliver a fireside chat on Tehran. Surrounded by microphones and the glare of klieg lights, Roosevelt sought to prepare the American people for the final push against Germany; he spoke of a true world war and the launching of a gigantic attack upon Germany, adding, We shall all have to look forward to large casualty lists, dead, wounded, and missing. War entails just that. There is no easy road to victory and the end is not yet in sight. Then came Christmas Day. For the Roosevelts it was spent listening to carolers and hearing the president read Dickenss classic A Christmas Carol. But in chilly upstate New York, the president was suffering through a bout of influenza, coughing and aching; his temperature would soon spike and he would feel at loose ends. Still, it was the first time in eleven years that he had spent Christmas with his family in Hyde Park, and he was determined to enjoy every minute of it. Yet on that same day, as wreaths and red ribbons dotted the elegant hotels and homes of official Washington, and as the fire crackled at Hyde Park and eggnog and other drinks and little cakes were served, a young lawyer in the Treasury Department was working overtime on a memorandum for its chief, Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr. It had a long, but stunning title: Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews. For all the talk of battle plans, empires, and postwar peace, the systematic murder of the Jews was one item that none of the Big Three had discussed in Tehran. The blistering report would be delivered to the secretary of the treasury at the start of the new year, and then in turn to the president himself.