



Book Review

Destiny and Power: The American Odyddeck of George Herbert Walker Bush

Sapiens: The Brief History of Humankind

John Meacham portrays our 41st president, George H W Bush as the last gentleman president. Although he came from the family of elites, he was a self-made man who carved his own destiny in the oil fields of Texas away from his family's stronghold in New England. He led his life on his own merits and principles. His was, undoubtedly, the most impressive public careers in the latter half of the 20th century.

GHWB was a true patriot with impressive education and heroic service in World War II. He got into oil business on his own which was a deviation from his family tradition. Later he served as a congressman, ambassador to the United Nations, chairman of the Republican National Committee, envoy to China, director of Central Intelligence, vice president of the United States, forty-first president, and the only president since John Adams to see his son also win the

ultimate prize in American politics. Nothing came easy to Bush.

Meacham has done tremendous Research in writing this book. It's not a quick read (836 pages), but it is full of interesting revelations about the actors in Bush's life. "I feel like an asterisk," Bush remarked to Meacham, reflecting on his place in history. "I am lost between the glory of [Ronald] Reagan — monuments everywhere, trumpets, the great hero — and the trials and tribulations of my sons," particularly his eldest, former President George W. Bush.

Bush, criticized former Vice President Dick Cheney and former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. "The two had hurt George W. Bush's presidency with their iron ass approach to foreign policy," he said.

Bush always had to struggle to achieve his goal. He was not in good books of Reagan to start with but he eventually earned Regan's respect and confidence with his

loyalty and sincerity and honesty towards him.

Eight years later, as Reagan's political heir, Bush faced off against the governor of Massachusetts, Michael S. Dukakis. It was a rough campaign, which Bush justified to himself on the grounds, Meacham notes, that he was the "better man" for the job.

His greatest achievements were the ending of the cold war with the Soviets without destabilization of Europe, forging a coalition to successfully roll back Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and negotiating with Democrats to reduce the federal deficit. Doing so required a tax increase against his campaign promise of, "Read my lips; no new taxes." Gingrich and his allies never forgave him for that, and when the economic downturn began in 1991, Bush was left with few allies.

He ultimately lost the second term to a more energetic and charismatic Bill Clinton. He never understood that how

Sapiens: The Brief History of Humankind

Author: Yuval Noah Harari

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Brilliant. Bold. Fascinating. To say that it's thought-provoking would be a major understatement. I simply wasn't prepared for many of Dr. Harari's arguments, theories and interpretations and the staggering amount of historical time that he covered so aptly! It's not just any history book. Controversial? Yes. But where the author has a point - he is very convincing; where there isn't enough historical information to make a point he

could he lose to a draft dodger and philanderer. This was probably due to changing times, according to Bush. The defeat that followed was the "ugliest period" of his life, Bush said. He realized that he no longer truly understood the country he led.

He regained interest in life after two of his sons, George W and Jeff became the governors of Texas and Florida respectively. George W Bush later became the president of the USA. George W Bush asked Bill Clinton and his father, the elder Bush to work on international projects. That brought the senior Bush closer to Bill Clinton. They became like father and .

This is a great book for the lovers of American presidency. I recommend this book for everyone to read.

-Reviewed by Musafir

honestly says so, all the while producing very plausible theories... Excellent chapter on Polytheism and Monotheism and a great take on Buddhist view of happiness - among so many other fascinating, even if at times "irreverent", insights... Interesting theories about "patriarchal genes" in our societies even up to this day. I also truly see Dr. Harari's reasoning about love-hate relationship between global empires and the societies that they absorbed. What's more, I find the author very objective in his search for answers. All in all, I agree with one of the readers: this book is "most enjoyable and most depressing"

at the same time. But it's honest. If I were to choose one book to recommend to my

two adult children, this would be the one.

-Reviewed by Irene Rudra