With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln Study Guide

With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln by Stephen B. Oates

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Plot Summary

The biography follows the life of Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth President of the United States. Lincoln grew up modestly, in a tough homestead environment, receiving little formal education in childhood. His biological mother, Nancy Lincoln, was prone to melancholy, a trait young Abraham inherited. He had one sister, Sarah, and after Nancy died his father remarried Sally Johnston, who loved the two children as her own. Though his father wanted him to be a farmer, Lincoln struck out on his own when he was twenty-two to New Salem, a tough frontier town in Illinois. There he was involved in a couple of business ventures, and began his foray little by little into politics.

He was respected by the locals as an honest, straightforward man. When he was elected to the state senate Lincoln moved to Springfield, the capital of Illinois. He became a member of the Whig party and married Mary Todd, with whom he had three children: Robert Todd, Willie, and Tad, though Willie died in the White House at age eleven. When the Whig party folded, Lincoln became a Republican, as did many of his friends and colleagues. Though he ran many political races and failed, he won the Republican nomination and the Presidency in 1860 against his Democrat rival, Stephen A. Douglas. During his presidency the Civil War raged, and he was thrust in the middle of the conflict with little military experience and no generals who would rise to the occasion. Finally, after Generals Grant, Sheridan, and Sherman obeyed his orders, the Union armies began taking the offensive against the Confederates. Though General Lee of the rebel army fought well, the Union triumphed over the Confederacy.

Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution, into law, freeing slaves in the United States. This caused major rifts throughout the Union: though many people believed slavery was wrong, racism was rampant and people did not believe blacks and whites could live in harmony, side by side. Lincoln was elected to a second term, which had not happened since President Jackson, and he began to adjust to the idea of a Presidency without war. He had plans to go home to Illinois with his family for a visit, and saw his life beyond war for the first time in four years. On the morning of his assassination, he awoke from a dream where the White House was in mourning for a President who had been killed. Little did he know, it was a self-fulfilling prophecy: the same evening he was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth at the Ford Theatre. Lincoln's funeral train went from Washington to Illinois, and was witnessed by thousands. He accomplished much in his war-torn presidency, and never caved in to any demands which would have compromised what he thought was right.

Part One, Rivers of Time

Part One, Rivers of Time Summary and Analysis

The biography follow Abraham Lincoln's life from his humble beginnings to his Presidency. Having served in one of the most trying times in American history, Lincoln preserved the Union during the horrors of the Civil War, orchestrating battles and preparing the country for Emancipation. Section one examines Lincoln's youth, and how rustic young Abraham grows into the 16th President of the United States. During his candidacy, he was encouraged to write an autobiography so the voters could learn more about him. In it, Lincoln refers to his childhood self as "A": born on February 12, 1809 in a log cabin in Kentucky, he lived the life of a frontier child with little education. His father, Thomas Lincoln, descended from a long line of Lincolns, originally Quakers, who migrated from England to Massachusetts in 1637. His mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, had an ambiguous family background and may have been illegitimate. While Nancy was withdrawn and melancholy, Thomas was convivial and hard-working, despite rumors that he was an alcoholic.

In December of 1816, the family moved to Indiana, where slavery had just been outlawed. They lived in a log cabin, and the following summer Nancy Lincoln died of milk sickness. Thomas Lincoln's household was floundering, so he went back to Kentucky to bring home a new wife, Sarah Bush Johnston, or "Sally." She raised the Lincoln children as her own and had a positive affect on Abraham. More people came to settle in Indiana, and Thomas became a trustee of the Pigeon Creek Baptist Church, where he got Abraham a job as a sexton. The preacher was anti-slavery, and this surely affected Lincoln's opinions on slavery later in his life. Lincoln was raised to be a farmer, and was a master axman. By the time he was thirteen, Lincoln showed signs of both his parents: like his father, he could spin tales and tell jokes to entertain, but he had a melancholy streak like his mother, and was driven to study and find the answers for his many questions. He attended the "blab school" irregularly between ages 11 and 15, developing interests in reading, poetry, penmanship, and the early years of the American Republic. He was an ambitious boy, growing up in a frontier world where extreme hardship was normal, daily life.

When he was 16, he witnessed the seizure of Matthew Gentry, and watched him virtually attack his parents. Thus began Lincoln's macabre fascination with madness, and how quickly one's fortunes can change. Sixteen-year-old Abraham grew estranged from his farmer father, who did not understand his son's desire for education. Lincoln's sister Sarah died in 1828 in childbirth, perpetuating Lincoln's fatalistic beliefs and preoccupation with death.

In April 1828 Lincoln and James Gentry took a boatload of farm produce down the Mississippi River to New Orleans, giving Abraham his first real taste of the world beyond Indiana. After returning, Lincoln began frequenting the log courthouses, sparking his interest in the world of law. In March 1830, the Lincolns moved to central Illinois, and in

spring of 1831 Lincoln, John Hanks, and John Johnston set off to take another load of cargo down to New Orleans. Young Lincoln was tired of farm life, and hungered for adventure. On the way down the river their raft got stuck across a dam in New Salem and, when Lincoln solved the problem, the spectators were so impressed that he was offered a job as a general store clerk.

When he first moved to New Salem at age 22, Lincoln ran with a tough crowd, and made it clear to the rowdy frontier town that he would not be bullied. He became known for his physical strength and his honesty, thus planting the seeds for his of "Honest Abe" image. Lincoln did not drink alcohol because it threatened his self-control, and he was desperately afraid of rejection. Insecurities with women would plague him for many years. Lincoln began attending meetings of the local debating society, and surprised everyone with his clear arguments and trademark high voice. Lincoln read voraciously and taught himself mathematics, but his real interest was in politics. He supported Henry Clay of Kentucky. In 1832 he ran for state legislature, his first venture into political platforms.

When the Black Hawk Indian war broke out in northern Illinois, Lincoln volunteered to fight and was elected captain of his company. Though he was never involved in a skirmish, it gave him his first experience in leading a group. Lincoln opened a county store with Jon Berry, but they went into debt and spent many years paying off money he had borrowed, calling it the National Debt. He was appointed Postmaster of New Salem and then got a job as a Surveyor, and was elected to the Illinois state senate at 25 years old. He arrived at Vandalia, the capital of Illinois, and gained a reputation in the Whig party as an excellent writer, drafting bills and studying law.

Lincoln was religiously skeptical and never joined a church, but he believed in God and tended toward the religious fatalism of his mother. This religious ambiguity contributed to his obsession with death: he would brood on the subject long hours at a time, succumbing to "hypochondria," or depression. He was not afraid to ponder the big questions, but it took its toll on him throughout his life. Lincoln believed in a strong federal government, and worshiped the Founding Fathers and the Declaration of Independence. He became a staple of the Whig Party in Illinois, known as the "Long Nine" because their average height was six feet. Lincoln, at 6' 4", was the tallest.

On September 9th, 1836, Lincoln won his law license and began an awkward, formal courtship of Mary Owens. He befriended Ninian Edwards and senator Orville Browning, and together they and the Long Nine moved the Illinois capital to Springfield. Relations between Northern and Southern states were strained: slavery was the issue, and the South thought politicians in the North were all abolitionists. In January 1837 Lincoln voted "no" on pro-slavery legislature, one of 6 votes in the house of 77 others who voted "yes." Lincoln had a moral issue with slavery, though he despised abolitionists because their uncompromising ways accomplished nothing. Lincoln preferred diplomacy and smart, thought-though political solutions. He knew that slavery had to end in the South, but believed, if left alone, the institution would die out. He believed that slavery undermined the Declaration of Independence. In 1837 Lincoln was officially declared in attorney in Illinois, and moved to Springfield.

Part Two, Why Should the Spirit of Man Not be Proud?

Part Two, Why Should the Spirit of Man Not be Proud? Summary and Analysis

After moving to Springfield, Lincoln was lonely. The town was very rough, and he wrote Mary Owens to release her from their engagement—he was poor, did not feel he could provide for her, and did not think she would want to live in poverty while he tried to make something of himself. She did not write him back, which humiliated Lincoln, and he decided never to wed anyone who would be "fool enough to have" him. He entered into a law practice with John Todd Stuart, and won his first court case—a murder trial. He lived with Joshua Speed in Speed's General Store, and the two became best friends and confided in each other about everything. Lincoln read newspapers voraciously, and was concerned about race riots between white men and abolitionists. He preached reason and calculated solutions rather than impassioned demonstrations. He was a member of the Whig party with some other young lawyers, including Stuart, Stephen T. Logan, and Edward Baker. Their rivals were Stephen A. Douglas, known as the Little Giant, and the young Democrats. In October 1839 the Whigs held a convention and endorsed William Henry Harrison for President, beginning the so-called Log and Cabin Campaign. In November Lincoln and Douglas had their first debate over state banks, starting a rivalry that would last years.

In December 1839, Lincoln met Mary Ann Todd, a witty young woman who could talk with him about politics. She saw beyond his shyness and truly liked him, as he did her, though she could be stubborn and demanding. Lincoln was intimidated by her family lineage, since he still saw himself as the son of a farmer from the backwoods. Though the two had a genuine regard for each other, Mary's family did not approve of the match, so Lincoln, his confidence shattered, broke off their engagement. Lincoln was depressed without Mary, and he was completely alone after Speed sold the General Store and moved back to Kentucky. He and Mary resolved to be friends, and even wrote political satire together, singling out James Shields, a state auditor and a Democrat, who was extremely offended at the satire and challenged Lincoln to a duel. Though Mary had actually written it, Lincoln defended her honor by taking the blame, and was able to talk Shields out of a fight. Lincoln was ashamed of the scandal and never published any more satire.

Lincoln and Mary secretly became engaged, and set November 4th as their wedding date. They did not tell Mary's family until the morning of the wedding, and were married in the Edwards mansion, where Lincoln gave her a ring with the inscription "Love is Eternal." On August 1st, 1843, Mary gave birth to a son, named Robert Todd. Lincoln bought them a house in January 1844, moving them out of the tavern room they'd been renting. The same year Mary gave birth to their second son, named Edward, and

Lincoln paid off his "National Debt." Because of their time living in the tavern, Mary had an intense fear of poverty, and liked to be fashionable. She liked to discuss their problems out in the open, while Lincoln would often withdraw at the first signs of a fight with her. Though they had their differences, they were in love and loved their children, and were fiercely proud of each other.

Lincoln wanted the Whig nomination for US Congress, though his party did not choose him because of the duel scandal, and he was suspected of being a deist. He proposed an agreement where the Whig candidates would rotate terms to ensure party unity, making him the candidate of 1846. He started a law firm with William H. Herndon as his junior associate to curry favor with the younger members of the Whig party. Herndon was an intellectual and avid reader; also very dramatic and won court cases with great pomp and show. He was very loyal to Lincoln, though Mary disliked him because he compared her to a serpent (meant to be a compliment). In August 1846 Lincoln was voted into Congress, and in December 1847 the Lincolns arrived in Washington, though Mary did not like it and left for Kentucky with the boys to wait for Lincoln. Lincoln spoke against the Mexican War, believing Polk had deliberately provoked the Mexican soldiers into conflict. The Whigs endorsed Zachary Taylor as the next presidential nominee, and Lincoln stumped his congressional district in support. When he returned to Washington, the issue was slavery: Lincoln was still morally opposed to it, and introduced a bill to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. When Zachary Taylor was inaugurated, Lincoln hoped for influence in choosing the cabinet, and drew up a list for Taylor of men he thought worthy. Taylor was between choosing Lincoln and another Whig, Justin Butterfield, and offered Lincoln the governorship of Oregon as compensation. He did not take the job and returned to his law practice.

Part Three: On The Pilgrimage Road

Part Three: On The Pilgrimage Road Summary and Analysis

Lincoln took a break from politics to focus on his law firm, and on February 1, 1850, his son Eddie died. Both Lincoln and Mary were devastated, and Mary turned to religion for help. In July, President Zachary Taylor died, and Millard Fillmore took over the office. These events further fueled Lincoln's obsessive pondering about death. On December 5, 1850, Mary gave birth to another boy named William Wallace. Thomas Lincoln died on January 17, 1851. Lincoln never reconciled with his father, and did not attend the funeral.

On April 4, 1853, the Lincolns had another son named Thomas, or "Tad." The Lincolns were permissive with their children and never raised a hand to them, and neighbors thought the children ill-behaved. Lincoln was closer to his younger boys than the oldest, Robert Todd, which somewhat mirrored Lincoln's estranged relationship with his own father. Robert was more introverted than the other children, and missed his father when he was away for long political trips. Lincoln wore a stovepipe hat and walked with his hands clasped behind him. As a lawyer and a man he was known as logical, fair, and honest. Though he would sometimes surrender to melancholy, he could just a quickly snap out of it. Lincoln was the only lawyer who rode the entire court circuit for both sessions, and had close ties with prominent Whigs such as Jesse W. Fell, Judge David Davis, Henry C. Whitney, and Ward Hill. Lincoln was interested in patent cases and participated in the Supreme Court of Illinois, winning most of his 243 cases there. He became known as a railroad lawyer famous for the McLean County tax case, where he convinced the court that the railroad did not have to pay county taxes because they were public enterprises. Lincoln's idol, Henry Clay, died in 1852. Lincoln favored his policies, and agreed that "Negroes" were not subhuman, and should have Constitutional rights. When Stephen A. Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Bill emerged from Congress, stating slavery should be legal in the territories, the Missouri Compromise had been made practically obsolete, and Lincoln was shocked.

Part Four: Revolt Against the Fathers

Part Four: Revolt Against the Fathers Summary and Analysis

The Missouri Compromise was a line dividing the north and south, above which slavery was illegal and below which it was legal. When the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was passed, it left the status of slavery up to the people who settled in the territory: They could either legalize slavery or ban it, which was Stephen A. Douglas's idea of popular sovereignty. Originally slavery was not going to be allowed in the West, but the Bill left that decision up to settlers. Many free-soilers were outraged, led by Salmon Chase, who claimed the Founding Fathers abhorred slavery and set restrictions so it would eventually die out. Lincoln was with the free-soilers: he believed Douglas had allied with Southern leaders to gain his own ends, and turned a blind eye to the morality of the situation. Anti-Nebraska groups began calling themselves Republicans, and although Lincoln agreed with them, he was not convinced the Whig party was dead. The bill sparked the Lincoln-Douglas debates, where each politician traveled Illinois to give speeches, hold meetings, and debate about the constitutional validity of the Nebraska bill. Lincoln believed he and his party were struggling for human liberty, while Douglas's ideas were causing major rifts in the Democratic party: pro- and anti-Nebraska men. Lincoln wanted to run for a senate seat but, as a member of the legislature, he could not.

The political environment was stormy, with Whigs slowly dismantling, Republicans gaining momentum, and Know-Nothings, begun to stop immigration and halt Catholicism, gaining favor from abolitionists in the North. Lincoln decided to become a Republican, and led men who wanted to keep slavery out of Kansas, where a civil war had begun. The Republicans held a convention to discuss the problem with Lincoln as the keynote speaker, and he gave and hour and a half long impromptu speech. It was never recorded, and became known as the "Lost Speech." The Presidential campaign of 1856 elected Democrat James Buchanan, who had pro-southern sympathies. After inauguration, he passed the Dred Scott decision, declaring the Declaration a white man's document, and that Congress had no right to prohibit slavery in any of the territories. This rendered the Missouri Compromise useless, as well as unconstitutional. Lincoln spent two weeks preparing a rebuttal, stating the Declaration included everyone —-even slaves. Lincoln also continued to practice law, winning the case of Hurd vs. the Rock Island Bridge Co. When Buchanan and Congress approved Kansas as a slave state, the Republican party was outraged and fearful at a possible Slave Power conspiracy. In 1858, Lincoln gave his famous "A House Divided" Speech at the Republican Convention, and was nominated as a senator. Though a turbulent time politically, Lincoln was gaining confidence and favor with Republicans.

Part Five: Years of Meteors

Part Five: Years of Meteors Summary and Analysis

Lincoln ran his Senatorial campaign against Douglas on principle, not for personal gain. Lincoln's "House Divided" speech was instantly famous, though Democrats called him a warmonger and an abolitionist. He was not advocating war, only making a prediction—that if the Union continued with its moral crisis over slavery, disaster would ensue. Lincoln focused on central Illinois: the north would go to him, the south to Douglas, so the central part of the state would be the deciding factor. Though Buchanan sent men to use patronage in Lincoln's favor, Lincoln was wary of accepting favors from anyone—he wanted to remain honest. Lincoln and Douglas roamed Illinois, giving speeches and debating. Lincoln's Republicans wanted him to pin Douglas down on all the contradictions he had made in his campaign, especially his idea of popular sovereignty and the Dred Scott decision.

Their first debate was in Ottawa, and Douglas treated it as if Lincoln was on trial. Lincoln explained again that he thought "Negroes" had the right to life, liberty, and happiness, just like any white American, while Douglas adopted the "don't care" strategy: he used moral evasion to avoid answering tough questions about the future of slavery in the US.

Meanwhile, Kansas rejected the LeCompton Constitution, ensuring that it would eventually be a free state. Lincoln reiterated in the debates that the slavery issue was not between he and Douglas, but between the Union and the Declaration of Independence. Douglas's "don't care" attitude about slavery was nationalizing the institution, subversively putting forth his popular sovereignty doctrine and undermining the issue. Though Lincoln lost the senate seat to Douglas, he made a splash in the Republican party, and gained the respect of many. The loss was disappointing for him, but Republican papers began mentioning his name for the Presidency—he was the top Republican in Illinois, and had no "radical" image among national Republicans. Douglas tried to put himself forth as the Democratic Presidential candidate, but he completely alienated southern Democrats with his oscillating stances on slavery. He tried to win them back by claiming the Founding Fathers created popular sovereignty, although Lincoln dismissed that idea as ridiculous.

In October 1859, a band of Northern abolitionists tried to capture Harpers Ferry, a town in Virginia, and start a rebellion. Colonel Robert E. Lee was sent into the fray to put the rebellion down, and the incident was branded by southerners as a Republican plot to overthrow the south. Southerners invariably associated Republicans with revolutionary violence. Lincoln was distressed about Harper's Ferry, and though he sympathized with the rebels taking steps to end human bondage, he could not condone violence.

In January 1860, a Lincoln campaign for Presidential candidacy was officially underway. He set off for New York City, where he spoke at Cooper Union to a crowd that gave him

a standing ovation. Lincoln's son Robert joined him on the campaign trail, and Lincoln was proud of how his son fit in so easily with distinguished families from the east. He became known as the "rail splitter," because of his tough pioneer background and his legal work with the railroad. "Honest Abe" was born as well—-the rustic candidate who was for the people. Though Lincoln hated the nickname, he bore it with good humor. Presidential candidates did not campaign personally, but sent their party members out to pull for them. Everyone wanted to know about Lincoln, and a short campaign autobiography was published with his photo. Lincoln wanted to unite the Republican party, and nearly all the Republican leaders were behind him. They carried banners, one with an elephant and the proclamation "We Are Coming"—-the first use of an elephant as a symbol for the party. The South was vehemently opposed to Lincoln as President, though he did not think they would secede from the Union. Lincoln swept the election, and became President of the Union—but not without more rumblings from the south.

Part Six: My Troubles Have Just Begun

Part Six: My Troubles Have Just Begun Summary and Analysis

After becoming President-Elect, Lincoln began compiling a list of possible cabinet members. He was very busy, often with over 150 visitors a day, and his right hand was swollen and sore from all the shaking. After his election, Lincoln had a troubling vision: while lying on a sofa alone in his chamber, he saw himself reflected in the bureau mirror across the room. But the two halves of his face looked like different faces: one half was rosy with life, and the other pale as a death mask. Mary took the dream to mean that Lincoln would live though his first administration, but die in his second. He thought about the vision for the rest of his life. Lincoln grew his Quaker beard, now iconic in images of the President, because a little girl in Westfield, New York, wrote him that his face was "too thin and he really should grow a beard" (p. 196).

Southern concerns about slavery were growing more frantic, and Lincoln refused to make a public statement because the Southern papers always misconstrued what he said, painting him as a radical abolitionist. Lincoln's first cabinet appointment was William H. Seward as Secretary of State, then Edward Bates as Attorney General. In the Senate, John J. Crittenden proposed the Crittenden Plan, which suggested reviving the Missouri Compromise line, abolishing slavery above it, and protecting slavery below it. Then each state could decide individually whether or not they wanted to keep the institution; basically Douglas's idea of popular sovereignty all over again. Lincoln did not support the amendment, and South Carolina unanimously voted itself out of the Union. Rebels laid siege to Fort Sumter, the last Union outpost in South Carolina, and President Buchanan did little to help. Lincoln appointed Salmon Chase as Treasury Secretary, though there was a scandal because Lincoln told Simon Cameron he was being considered as well.

Meanwhile, Mississippi, Florida, and Alabama seceded from the Union, and later Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas. Together, they establish a Southern Confederacy. Lincoln had to keep the border Southern states in the Union, and he refused to make any compromises about slavery: he did not want to buy his right to be peacefully inaugurated. Lincoln left by train to go to Washington, making stops along the way for speeches and appearances, including a stop in New York to meet the young girl who suggested he grow a beard. A plot was uncovered to assassinate the President-elect in Baltimore, so Lincoln had to split up with his family and make a covert transfer to a sleeping car train, which took him to Washington. He was ridiculed in the press for his midnight flight, starting a media assault against the "backwoods" President. In his inauguration speech, he promised first and foremost to uphold the Union, and told the South if they struck, he would strike back. The Southerners took that as a declaration of hostility, and surrounded Forts Sumner and Pickens with Confederate troops. Lincoln sent reinforcements, but his orders were mixed up and Sumner was taken by the

Confederates. Seward, his Secretary of State, was going over Lincoln's head and the President had to reign him in. Virginia officially seceded on April 17, and the Confederacy declared Richmond its capital.

Part Seven: Storm Center

Part Seven: Storm Center Summary and Analysis

Lincoln lacked capable generals to lead his armies against the Southern insurrection. General Winfield Scott was too old to take the field, and Robert E. Lee, whom he recommended, decided to fight for the Confederates. Lincoln called for troops from the Union, and there was a riot in Baltimore when the Sixth Massachusetts tried to march through. The rest of the troops gradually arrived, with Elmer Ellsworth leading an outfit from New York, though he would be killed in a battle very early on. Lincoln declared a blockade of the Southern coast, and was trying desperately to keep the border states in the Union, including Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri. Maryland and Missouri stayed, and Kentucky declared itself "neutral" in the conflict, with people enlisting in both armies. However, the Confederates sent an army into the state, which enraged Kentuckians and pushed them into the Union.

Lincoln's small war department was ill prepared to deal with such a colossal undertaking, and he had no previous experience to draw upon. He declared that the Fugitive Slave Law no longer applied, which caused flocks of slaves to run to the Union border, claiming themselves for the Union as "contraband of war." In wartime, the government had the right to seize enemy property, including slaves.

Lincoln was doubted in his experience with foreign politics, and Seward tried to strong-arm him into adopting policies. If Great Britain recognized the Confederacy as a separate nation, then the rebels could seek outside help to destroy the Union. Great Britain agreed to the blockade, possibly because if the Americans destroyed each other, it would leave Britain as the sole commander of the world's markets. Lincoln and Seward moved past their rivalry to become great friends, though their wives never got along. Rather than call his full cabinet into session, he would consult cabinet members individually about matters that concerned them. He loved the opera and the theater, and they would relieve his depression and allow him to escape for a little while.

Meanwhile, the public was clamoring for a battle to take place, so Lincoln called Generals Scott and McDowell to discuss summer offensives. The Senate wanted to make annihilation of slavery a war objective, and while Lincoln sympathized with them, he could not jeopardize the border states' loyalties or go back on his word to make the war strictly to save the Union.

After a month of preparation, the Grand Army met the rebels at Bull Run, though the Grand Army was ill-trained and the Union suffered a humiliating defeat. Lincoln was shaken, so he put Charles Fremont in charge of the Western army. He demoted McDowell in favor of George B. McClellan to take command of the Army of the Potomac. McClellan was a brash young general, and though Lincoln was concerned about McClellan's arrogance, he put his trust in McClellan's abilities as a leader. Both armies caused Lincoln problems, however: McClellan claimed his troops were not ready

for battle, and Fremont wired frantically that he could not advance, nor even hold Missouri, without immediate reinforcements from Washington. Fremont even declared martial law in Missouri without Lincoln's permission, freeing the slaves there and angering border states. This was a political act that had nothing to do with the military, so Lincoln ordered Fremont to make the order conform to the Congressional Confiscation act. Eventually, though it pained him, Lincoln had to relive Fremont of his command, and put General David Hunter in charge of the Western army. Lincoln's old friend Edward Baker, a colonel in McClellan's regiment, died in a skirmish at Ball's Bluff, which left the Lincolns devastated. The public still demanded a victory, and Lincoln made George McClellan General in Chief.

Lincoln was conflicted about Emancipation: while he had promised to keep slavery out of the war, he could not escape that slavery was the linchpin in the Confederacy's fight. Lincoln came up with a plan of gradual emancipation, where slave owners would be compensated by the government for their losses. He was also being pressured to recruit Negro soldiers. Lincoln and Mary's relationship was strained by the war: she was needy, and could not spend as much time with him. She was also determined to be a fashionable first lady, though she accidentally overspent her budget by thousands of dollars, which publicly disgraced her. Lincoln asked Cameron to step down from the War Office and put Edwin Stanton in charge, who turned the War Department from administrative nightmare to a well-oiled machine. Lincoln was worried about McClellan, who still refused to attack.

Part Eight: This Fiery Trial

Part Eight: This Fiery Trial Summary and Analysis

McClellan's inactivity was a huge problem. The Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War was formed to keep an eye on the war effort. Lincoln finally had to take matters into his own hands and order the Army of the Potomac into action, which convinced McClellan to keep Washington in the loop about his plans. Lincoln's boys Willie and Tad were refuges for him and helped his depression, but both boys became ill and Willie died on February 20, spinning Mary into wild grief. Lincoln did all he could to help her, but while she wanted to get rid of anything that reminded her of Willie, he took solace in his keepsakes. Lincoln thought more about God than ever before after Willie's death, and saw himself as "an instrument of Providence" (p. 293) put on the Earth for reasons only God knew.

McClellan still refused to attack the rebels head-on, fearing he was outgunned and outnumbered. When he finally ordered his army into the enemy camp at Manassas, he found the camp abandoned and that the cannons he thought the rebels had were just logs. Lincoln demoted McClellan and took over the Commander in Chief job himself, though he hated to do so. He left McClellan in charge of the Army of the Potomac, though the General continued to delay and disobey orders to strike. Lincoln got Congress to sign a bill that overturned the Dred Scott decision, outlawing slavery in all federal territories. In southern Tennessee, Ulysses S. Grant won a victory for the Union, though rumors persisted that he was a drunk. Stonewall Jackson's force blew through Fremont's lines in Shenandoah Valley, though Lincoln had given the generals specific instructions to prevent his escape. Though McClellan moved on to win the battle of the Seven Pines, instead of pursuing his fleeing enemy, he dug in and called yet again for reinforcements. Lincoln decided to combine the forces of McDowell, Fremont, and Banks into one Army of Virginia, with General John Pope as the Commander. McClellan then clashed with General Lee over Richmond, but forgot to secure the city and again moved his force into a defensive position, calling for reinforcements. Lincoln decided to post Henry Halleck as General in Chief, trying to find a man who would fight for him.

Lincoln could no longer ignore emancipation: he needed to free slaves everywhere as a war tactic. On January 1st, 1863, as Commander in Chief of the army and navy, Lincoln would liberate all slaves in the rebel states. At the second Bull Run, Lee' s troops defeated Pope's forces and they came running back to Washington. Lee then invaded Maryland, and Lincoln had no choice but to set McClellan and the Army of the Potomac to dispel the attack. He decided if McClellan won, it was God telling Lincoln to move emancipation forward. McClellan stopped the rebels at Antietam, but again refused to pursue them, and they escaped back into Virginia. Ironically, had the south stayed in the Union, slavery could have gone on indefinitely. It was the war that forced the slavery issue, ultimately ending the institution.

On October 23 Lincoln fired Buell, one of his generals, and put William S. Rosecrans in his place to command the Army of Ohio. He fired McClellan on November 5, and put Ambrose E. Burnside in charge of the Army of the Potomac, though the Union armies were still suffering defeats. Lincoln's cabinet was increasingly divided about the war effort, and Seward became a scapegoat for the Republicans because of his intimacy with the President. West Virginia separated from Virginia to become part of the Union, and Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was officially put into effect.

Part Nine: The New Reckoning

Part Nine: The New Reckoning Summary and Analysis

Lincoln had to relieve General Burnside because of a disastrous campaign at Fredericksburg and internal dissent with his officers. Instead, Lincoln put "Fighting Joe" Hooker in command of the Potomac Army. Because of the Emancipation Proclamation, most Democrats were now against Lincoln. The War Department began mobilizing black regiments, agreeing that black and white outfits would remain segregated. Lincoln still needed more troops, so he enforced conscription—the draft. Though those who could afford it could buy their way out, antiwar protest flared up, and Democrats organized a "Peace Movement," calling Lincoln a tyrant and a dictator.

Upon reports that Grant was drinking again, Lincoln sent people to check on him, who proclaimed him able-minded and sober. The Army of the Potomac suffered yet another defeat, this time under Hooker, while Grant used new military tactics to storm and lay siege to Vicksburg. General Lee shocked the Union by taking rebel troops north, first into Maryland and then Pennsylvania, and when Lincoln ordered Hooker to counterattack, he would not and offered his resignation. George Gordon Meade continued with the Army of the Potomac, on a collision course with Lee in a Gettysburg. The Army of the Potomac won, but both sides suffered crippling casualties. Meade, like his predecessors, did not pursue Lee's army to an unconditional surrender, but allowed them to escape. Vicksburg surrendered to Grant, who Lincoln admired because he never refused orders or lost his objectives.

When the 54th of Massachusetts—a Negro outfit—launched a viscous attack against rebels at Fort Wagner, the myth of the complacent Negro was effectively ended. Fredrick Douglass, influential black abolitionist leader, came to Lincoln demanding the same pay for Negro soldiers as white soldiers, and Lincoln promised him they would have it in the end. Riots were popping up all over the Midwest and Northeast, mainly whites who could not afford to buy themselves out of conscription. State elections approached as well, and Lincoln hotly defended his policies, though he was secretly apprehensive about the coming elections. On Lincoln's orders, Burnside and Rosencrans launched a joint campaign against Tennessee, but Meade could not comprehend that Lee's army as his target, not Richmond. Rosencrans was driven back by the rebels and ran from the battlefield, and Lincoln gave Grant command of all armies.

In November, Lincoln was asked to speak at the National Soldier's Cemetery at Gettysburg. He was apprehensive and was afraid his speech would be too short. Lincoln spoke at Gettysburg after Edward Everett, the keynote speaker, whose oration lasted an hour and a half. Lincoln then delivered perhaps the most famous speech of his Presidency: The Gettysburg Address. Grant drove the rebels back to Chattanooga, and defeated them in the battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. Lincoln tried to reconstruct Louisiana, and drafted a proclamation to prevent the same ruling

Southern class from taking over again in the south: men who had held Confederate civilian and diplomatic posts, men who had served above the rank of colonel in the Confederate Army, and all who had resigned Union Congress or judicial posts to help the Rebellion were refused pardon. Once a number of people equal to 10% of those who had voted in the 1860 election had taken then oath, the state would be restored to the Union. Lincoln received praise for his plan, and it considerably lightened his moods.

Part Ten: Mighty Scourge of War

Part Ten: Mighty Scourge of War Summary and Analysis

Lincoln invited Emilie Helm, Mary's half-sister, and her three children to stay with them at the White House, despite hot accusations that Mary was secretly a Southern sympathizer. Emilie found Mary much changed, haunted by images of dead Willie. Robert, Lincoln's oldest son, wanted to enlist in the army, but Mary said she could not bear losing him. Reconstruction in Louisiana was complicated: Lincoln's 10% plan was hotly debated in Congress, as was Negro suffrage. Lincoln endorsed the all-white government established in Louisiana because he thought it was better than nothing. Sumner was angry with that solution, claiming the President did not care enough about black people. Lincoln wanted to be elected for a second term, though he had a strange feeling he would not live to see the end of the war. Though Salmon Chase was favored to run against Lincoln for the Republican nomination, the Pomeroy Circular scandal erased any hope Chase had for the nomination.

Lincoln called Grant back east and appointed him General in Chief of all Union armies and Lieutenant General, the first to hold the position since Winfield Scott. Grant was a small man who graduated from West Point, and the first general Lincoln had who took any initiative. Lincoln and Andrew Johnson ran on the Republican ticket for the next election, with the likes of Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of Uncle Tom's Cabin, defending the President. While Grant settled in to siege Petersburg, Lincoln accepted Chase's resignation as Secretary of Treasury and appointed the position to William Fessenden, which pleased the liberals. Henry Winter Davis put forth a reconstruction plan called the Wade-Davis Bill, which discontinued Lincoln's 10% plan and also officially abolished slavery as a state institution. Lincoln vetoed the bill on the grounds that only the President, not Congress, had the power to abolish slavery, but Wade and Davis were furious, and sent an extremely harsh manifesto to newspapers. This hurt Lincoln deeply: it was a stab in the back from his own party. Meanwhile, Jude Early led a rebel force from Harper's Ferry to seize Washington. Grant sent an envoy up immediately, but there was still bloody fighting around Washington. When Early retreated, Philip Sheridan was dispatched by Grant to dispose of Early's army.

While the Democrats announced they would run McClellan against Lincoln for the Presidency, Atlanta surrendered to General William Sherman as Hood's army fled further south. With the war looking brighter for the Union, Republicans began to flank behind Lincoln again. On October 19 Sheridan defeated Early's forces at Cedar Creek, with the leader rallying his men personally into the fray. On November 8, election day, Lincoln defeated McClellan by almost half a million votes. Sherman was burning his way across Georgia, cutting off vital supplies to rebel troops. On Christmas day, General Sherman gave Lincoln the city of Savannah as a Christmas gift. Lincoln was heartened

by the upswing in the war, but was growing tired and ill from the constant strain of his office.

On January 31, the 13th Amendment was voted into the Constitution, just three votes beyond the necessary two-thirds majority. Slavery was illegal, and ironically, could not have been outlawed without Southern secession. Although Negro suffrage was still an issue, Lincoln and Sumner remained close friends. Sumner was also close to Mary, who took solace in his friendship since she and Lincoln had grown apart in the harrowing years of war. She finally relented and allowed Robert to join the army, and he was placed under General Grant's command. Lincoln's health was failing, and Edwin Stanton feared assassination plots. In his inauguration speech, Lincoln declared they must go forward "with malice toward none" to heal the nation. Later, at a reception in the White House, Frederick Douglass was admitted to shake the President's hand. Lincoln asked Douglass what he thought of the speech—the first time in the history of the Republic where a President shook a free black man's hand and asked his opinion.

Part Eleven: Moody, Tearful Night

Part Eleven: Moody, Tearful Night Summary and Analysis

In February, Sherman's army blazed though South Carolina, where the rebellion began. Though the President did not fear assassination plots, Ward Hill Lamon organized bodyguards for him and urged him to be more cautious. Lincoln was getting sicker as well, even holding a Cabinet meeting in his bedroom. On March 23 he sailed for Virginia on an invitation from Grant himself, taking Mary and Tad with him. They visited Robert, thought Mary threw a jealous fit and stayed on the boat the rest of the visit. While Lincoln was visiting, Union forces took Richmond, and he ventured into the Confederate capital building, sitting in the very chair of Jefferson Davis. He had to return to Washington when Seward was injured in a carriage accident, and General Lee surrendered to Grant on April 9 at Appomattox Courthouse. On April 11 Lincoln gave a speech, and where many expected a jubilant declaration of victory, it was a subdued oration on the next steps to repairing the Union. Lincoln was not sleeping well, and had a dream of a death at the white house where the President was killed by an assassin. On Good Friday, April 14, the President assassinated by John Wilkes Booth at the Ford Theatre. He was not killed instantly, and finally died at 7:22 am, April 15. Thousands of people mourned him as his funeral train took him, and his son Willie, all the way back home to Illinois.

Characters

Abraham Lincoln

The 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln endured some of the most trying time in American history. He was the first Republican President, though originally he was a member of the Whig party, and he had anti-slavery sympathies. He was a self-made man who grew up on farms and homesteads in Kentucky and Indiana, then moved to Illinois when he was a young man. He was ashamed of his humble upbringing, and was not close with his father, who did not understand his hunger for education. He also tended toward melancholy, also a trait of his mother, and would brood in silence on a number of questions, often pondering religion and death.

Lincoln was fascinated by law, and after moving to Illinois worked in a general store and read and studied all the law books he could. He began to run in local elections, joined the debating society and gained the respect of the community, planting the seeds for his later image as "Honest Abe." Lincoln eventually passed the bar and become a lawyer, and moved to Springfield, the capital of Illinois, when he was elected to state senate. Springfield was the place he called home for many years, and he married Mary Todd and they had four children, Robert, Eddie, Willie, and Tad. The Lincolns were permissive with their children, and devastated when Eddie and Willie died at early ages.

When elected President, Lincoln ran for the Republican party, and tried to keep the South from seceding from the Union. When the Confederate declared itself separate from the Union, the Civil War began, and Lincoln fought long and hard to preserve the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, put in place by the Founding Fathers. The war was long a bloody, though the Union eventually emerged victorious. Lincoln looked forward to the peaceful years ahead back in Springfield, but was assassinated in Ford's Theatre by John Wilkes Booth. There was an outpouring of grief for Lincoln, who led American through its worst conflict since the Civil War.

Mary Todd Lincoln

Mary Todd wed Abraham Lincoln against her family's wishes: he was considered beneath her; a backwoods lawyer with no family pedigree or money. She was a very intelligent woman who was interested in conversation, poetry, and politics. She also loved dancing, and was and outgoing and vivacious personality. Mary could be very needy and paranoid, and was terrified of poverty because of the years she and Lincoln spend living in a tavern. When she became First Lady, Mary was determined to show the ladies of Washington she was not some pioneer woman, so she redecorated the entire White House. However, she overspent her budget, and became known as a spendthrift, which humiliated her. She was also extremely proud of her husband, and always did her utmost to keep up with fashions and events.

Mary and Lincoln had four children: Robert Todd, Eddie, Willie, and Tad, though Eddie and WIllie would die at a young age. Toward the end of her life, Mary's nerves got the best of her, and she jealously guarded her time with her husband. During the years of the war Mary and Lincoln grew apart, and she turned to others for attention. Though her attention-seeking was not sexual, she was often preyed upon by sycophants who were using her to catch the ear of the President. Mary could not keep a secret, and Lincoln had to stop telling her things because he knew they would be in the newspapers the next day. She grew very dependent on he children, and was confined to her bedroom for weeks after Willie died. Mary attended Ford's Theatre with Lincoln the evening he was killed, and she was absolutely inconsolable as he lay on his deathbed. She, Robert, and Tad would accompany Lincoln's coffin on the long funeral dirge back to Springfield, where he would finally be home.

Ulysses S. Grant

He fought on the side of the Union, eventually becoming Lincoln's General in Chief and Lieutenant General. He accepted Lee's surrender at Appomattox. Though rumors persisted that Grant was a drunk, he was a brilliant general and was unafraid to send his army into the fray. Lincoln loved Grant because he could count on him.

Robert E. Lee

Lee was offered a position in the Union army at the beginning of the war, but decided to fight for the Confederacy instead. Though he was a smart and strategic general, he eventually surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse.

George McClellan

The leader of the Army of the Potomac. McClellan was strategically brilliant, but often refused Lincoln's orders to push forward with his men to overtake the enemy. He was relieved of his command, and attempted to run for President under the Democrat ticket in later years.

Robert Todd, William Wallace, and Tad

The children of Abraham and Mary Lincoln. Willie died prematurely at age eleven after an illness that lasted several days.

William Seward

Lincoln's Secretary of State. Though their policies sometimes differed, the two were great friends.

Edwin Stanton

Lincoln's Secretary of War.

William Tecumseh Sherman

One of the Union generals. He won the battles of Massassa and Shiloh, and later seized Atlanta.

Philip Sheridan

One of the Union generals.

Charles Sumner

A powerful abolitionist Republican senator.

George Meade

A Union general who fought and won the bloody battle of Gettysburg.

Joseph Hooker

General who fought at Antietam and later served under Sherman during the siege of Atlanta.

William Herndon

Lincoln's law partner in Springfield.

John C. Fremont

A general in the west during the Civil War, removed from his duties because he freed slaves without permission. He was later considered for the Republican presidential ticket of 1864.

Stephen A. Douglas

Known as the "Little Giant," Douglas and Lincoln were rivals from their early days in politics. Douglas was a Democrat.

Frederick Douglass

A black abolitionist campaigning for Emancipation. He was the first black man to shake the President's hand after his second inauguration.

John Wilkes Booth

Lincoln's assassin. Booth was a struggling actor with Southern sympathies.

James Buchanan

The President before Lincoln.

Salmon Chase

Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury.

Henry Clay

Lincoln's idol and prominent Whig senator.

Jefferson Davis

President of the Confederate States of America.

Andrew Johnson

Lincoln's vice-President.

Sarah Lincoln

Lincoln's sister, who died in childbirth.

Thomas Lincoln

Lincoln's estranged father.

Nancy Hanks Lincoln

Lincoln's biological mother, who may have been illegitimate.

Sarah Bush Johnston

Lincoln's stepmother, whom he loved.

Objects/Places

Springfield, Illinois

Springfield was where Lincoln got his political start in the state senate, and was also his launching platform for his Presidential campaign.

Gettysburg

Gettysburg, PA was the bloodiest battle in the Civil War, where Robert E. Lee's army met George Meade's Union forces. The Union emerged victorious, but each side suffered heavy casualties. Later made into a National Cemetery, when Lincoln delivered his famous Gettysburg Address.

White House, Washington

The White House was Lincoln's official home as President. He and his family lived in the West Wing, while his political and business affairs were conducted in his office.

Appomattox Courthouse

Where General Lee surrendered his army to General Grant on April 9, 1865.

Emancipation Proclamation

The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, declaring slavery illegal and unconstitutional.

Richmond, Virginia

The Confederate capital city.

Battle of Bull Run

A humiliating defeat for the Union, when the Grand Army disintegrated in the face of adversity. Bull Run was an example of the poor Generalship that would plague Lincoln for so long.

Army of the Potomac

Stationed in Virginia, the army had its unfortunate share of incompetent Generals, finally ending when General Grant took command.

Ford's Theatre

Where Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth, an actor with southern sympathies.

Fort Sumner, Fort Pickins

The first forts the rebels occupied in the very beginnings of the war.

The National Debt

Lincoln's nickname for the debts he ran up in New Salem during his joint General Store venture.

Axes, Logs, and Log Cabins

Lincoln's childhood was in the wild frontiers of Kentucky and Indiana. He lived in rough-hewn log cabins, and became a master axeman. Later, during his campaign for the Presidency, his colleagues used these images and the nickname "Honest Abe" to endear him to the people.

Mortality

Lincoln's favorite poem, by William Knox. He would quote from the poem throughout his life.

Themes

Freedom

The biography expounds on Lincoln's ideas of freedom, and how they differed from other theories popular in his time. Lincoln took the Constitution very seriously, claiming it did not exclude black men from the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness. Lincoln hated slavery from an early age, and continued to find it a flaw in the supposedly "free" republic—-by the people, of the people, for the people. Lincoln identified with the oppressed black man, and thought that every American should have the right to better circumstances. Lincoln himself felt he had been free to move from the son of a frontier farm to President of the United States, and thought personal freedoms and liberties essential to the Union.

He was opposed mostly by Democrats, and conservatives who literally viewed blacks as subhuman, to whom the rules of the Constitution did not apply. Lincoln was an incredible humanitarian, not only seeking equal rights for freed slaves, but also paying attention to discrimination of Native Americans. Lincoln also treated women fairly, which made Mary jealous: if he got in a conversation with an intelligent woman at a state function, he would debate with her and treat her just as he would a man. In a society that was so structured, Abraham Lincoln must have seemed a radical man: but he never compromised his beliefs, and was always fighting for equality among people.

Unity

The South's decision to secede from the Union threatened everything America had been built upon: the Constitution did not bend to suit the will of the few, and secession was unconstitutional. The nation had to stand together as one, or it would fall, divided. Lincoln focused his efforts in the Civil War on preserving the Union. He and his cabinet thought the South had no right to secede, and that the American experiment of self-government could not go down in flames. The people had to learn to live together and accept changes the nation was undergoing. Keeping the Union whole was a cause to die for, though some also fought for Emancipation.

The United States, by European standards, was still a fledgling country that may or may not have survived, by the estimation of Europe, beyond its adolescence. Not only was the Union essential to the mission of the Founding Fathers and the Constitution, but it was essential to the people's existence in the world's economy. Great Britain was a threat to the Union if she sided with the Confederates, and was poised to take over United States commerce if the new country destroyed itself. Lincoln needed to keep the Union together for its very survival. He knew Americans needed to identify themselves as a people—not as North versus South, not as black versus white, but simply as Americans. The Union was everything, and the Founding Fathers drafted the Constitution to keep the melting pot of American together.

Morality

Lincoln was a very moral man. He was opposed to slavery, believing that one human being owning another was essentially wrong. As a politician, he did no dirty dealing and made a point not to put himself in anyone's pocket. He was extremely honest, even paying his "National Debt" down to the very last penny. He was fascinated with the rights and wrongs of law, which spurred him to become a lawyer. Throughout Lincoln's life, he was constantly choosing between right and wrong, often going against the grain to do what he believed was morally right. He thought going against the Constitution was morally wrong as well, and stuck to his convictions throughout his personal life and political career. Though he never officially subscribed to a religious practice, he did feel there was a God, and that God put him on earth for His workings. Lincoln believed in the Constitution and the Founding Fathers, and wanted every man to have the right to pursue life, liberty, and happiness.

Mortality

Lincoln was obsessed with death from an early age. He was not particularly religious, though he lived in a society where religion was the cornerstone of most communities. Lincoln was confronted with death at an early age when his mother died, and would ponder the mystery long hours, often going into a trance-like state. This constant rumination on death may have spurred Lincoln to stick to his personal and political beliefs: he understood how quickly life could be taken, and he wanted to live the best he could, while he could. He didn't want to compromise a moment of his precious time on earth. The Civil War pained him even more because he felt the loss of life heavily, as did other Americans at the time: brother against brother was a horrible way to leave the world. Lincoln unwittingly predicted his own assassination, claiming to have a dream the night before he died of a President's death in the White House. Mary Lincoln claimed to see Willie, her dead son, and countless battlefields across the nation were bathed in the blood of American soldiers. Lincoln's favorite poem was called "Mortality," and he spent many hours thinking about the mysteries of life and death.

Style

Perspective

Stephen B. Oates' biography, published in 1977, is part of a quartet of books examining the Civil War. He seeks to bring Lincoln to life again in the eyes of his reader, and attempts to blend Lincoln's political and personal lives into an accurate portrait of the man. He portrays Lincoln as a man rich with humanity, not just the cold, factual historic figure. Oates is a professional biographer and historian whose body of work focuses on American history from the Civil War, antebellum, and Western expansion periods. He is dedicated to the idea that biographies can be both factual histories, and important pieces of literature. He gives the reader insight on Lincoln the man, not the President, during the atrocities of the Civil War. He has an obvious regard for the President, taking time to meticulously explain Lincoln's political and personal moves: the whens, wheres, whys, and hows of Lincoln's life. The time period is extremely complex, and Oates' obvious knowledge of the era is a boon for readers who may not have a history background. Oates identifies with the beleaguered Lincoln, and seamlessly weaves historical and personal aspects of Lincoln's life into one comprehensive story line.

Tone

The book is non-assuming, and portrays early Lincoln very much as a man, and not the future President. Lincoln's failures, as well as his victories, as shared with the reader, and the reader identifies with Lincoln without be told they must. Obviously Lincoln is the subject of the work, but the reader does not feel pressured by the author to accept Lincoln as a knight in shining armor. Instead, the writing juxtaposes humanity with history and private life with career, making sure the reader understands every aspect of why Lincoln does, thinks, and feels what he does. If the book ever tries to lead the reader, it is with slavery and emancipation, or essentially, equal right: a touchy subjects even today. The book states the historical facts, then weaves in explanations and situations that explain the events.

Structure

The books examines Lincoln's personal life and his political life together with long chapters, eleven in total. Within the chapters there are shorter, untitled sections, usually just a couple pages long. Lincoln's quotes are interspersed frequently in the text, woven into paragraphs in a way that it seems, very often, Lincoln himself is addressing the reader. No quotations actually stand on their own: they are all used within the paragraphs, with the author paraphrasing or summarizing to offer extra explanation or move the plot forward.

The author, in an attempt to step into Lincoln's mind, forms many of the subject's potential thoughts as questions, theorizing what he may have been thinking and how he

came to decisions and conclusions. He seems to switch into the first person, briefly sharing thoughts as Lincoln himself, then turning back to his third person narration. The chapter titles are all quotations from the time period including Lincoln, his contemporaries, and even his favorite poem "Mortality." There are two sections of photographs, many of Lincoln but also plenty of his contemporaries. The book fully attributes all the quotations used, and has an extensive index.

Quotes

"Slavery has the power of making me miserable" A. Lincoln, p. 60

"Our Republican robe is soiled, and trailed in the dust. Let us turn and wash it white, in the spirit, if not the blood, of the Revolution. Let us turn slavery from its claims of 'moral right,' back upon its existing legal rights, and its arguments of 'necessity.' Let us return it to the position our fathers gave it; and there let it rest in peace. Let us re-adopt the Declaration of Independence, and with it, the practices, and policy, which harmonize with it. Let north and south—let all Americans—let all lovers of liberty everywhere—join in the great and good work. If we do this, we shall not only have saved the Union, but we shall have so saved it, as to make, and to keep it, forever worthy of saving..." Lincoln, during the Lincoln-Douglas debates (p. 118).

"Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it" Lincoln's speech at Cooper Union, regarding the Republican stance on slavery (p. 173).

"Well, boys, your troubles are over now, mine have just begun" Lincoln, after becoming President-Elect (p. 195).

"Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration, will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass, will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We say we are for the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it. We—even we here—hold the power, and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free—honorable alike in what we give, and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best, hope of the earth" (p. 326). Lincoln in the midst of the Civil War, regarding the Emancipation Proclamation and its importance to the war.

"As Lincoln told an Indiana senator, the war was the supreme irony of his life: that he who sickened at the sight of blood, who abhorred stridency and physical violence, should be cast in the middle of a great civil war, a tornado of blood and wreckage with consequences beyond prediction for those swept up in its winds" (p. 332). Oates on Lincoln's relation to the war.

"You say you will not fight to free Negroes. Well, some of them seem willing to fight for you; but no matter. Fight you, then, exclusively to save the Union. I issued the proclamation on purpose to aid you in saving the Union." (p.359). Lincoln, in defense of allowing black soldiers in the Union army.

"Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-

field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." (p. 366). The Gettysburg Address, delivered by Lincoln at the consecration of the Gettysburg cemetery.

"The Tycoon is in a fine whack. He is managing this war, the draft, foreign relations, and planning a reconstruction of the Union, all at once. I never knew with what tyrannous authority he rules the Cabinet, till now. The most important things he decides & there is no cavil. He will not be bullied, even by his friends." (p. 358). John Hay, one of Lincoln's secretaries, on the President's many responsibilities.

"To be wounded in the house of one's friends is perhaps the most grievous affliction that can befall a man." (p. 393). Lincoln, after Wade and Davis published their manifesto.

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations." (p. 411). The end of Lincoln's second inauguration speech.

"About ten days ago, I retired very late. I had been up waiting for important dispatches from the front. I could not have been long in bed when I fell into a slumber, for I was weary. I soon began to dream. There seemed to be a death-like stillness about me. Then I heard subdued sobs, as if a number of people were weeping. I thought I left my bed and wandered downstairs. There the silence was broken by the same pitiful sobbing, but the mourners were invisible. I went from room to room; no living person was in sight, but the same mournful sounds of distress met me as I passed along. I saw light in all the rooms; every object was familiar to me; but where were all the people who were grieving as if their hearts would break? I was puzzled and alarmed. What could be the meaning of all this? Determined to find the cause of a state of things so mysterious and so shocking, I kept on until I arrived at the East Room, which I entered. There I met with a sickening surprise. Before me was a catafalque, on which rested a corpse wrapped in funeral vestments. Around it were stationed soldiers who were acting as guards; and there was a throng of people, gazing mournfully upon the corpse, whose face was covered, others weeping pitifully. 'Who is dead in the White House?' I demanded of one of the soldiers, 'The President,' was his answer; 'he was killed by an

assassin.' Then came a loud burst of grief from the crowd, which woke me from my dream. I slept no more that night; and although it was only a dream, I have been strangely annoyed by it ever since." (p. 426.) Lincoln's dream, prophetically predicted his own assassination that very evening.

Topics for Discussion

How did Lincoln's childhood and early years help shape him into the President he would become? Was he comfortable discussing his past? Did his background make it easier or more difficult for him to fulfill his dream of becoming a lawyer?

How did Lincoln's relationship with his father change over the years? Did this reflect Lincoln's relationship with his own children? What influences did each parent have on the young "Abe?"

Lincoln was obsessed with death and mortality. Discuss some of the reasons for his obsession, citing specific occurrences in his past that may have played a part.

Lincoln weathered many failures before his great election to the Presidency. Discuss how his political life in Springfield, successes and failures, prepared him for the Presidential campaign. Did Lincoln see himself capable of being President of the United States? Did others? How was Lincoln's "simple" background help or hinder him in the campaign?

Should the Civil War have lasted as long as it did? Discuss Lincoln's war tactics and his Generals, comparing them to the Confederate tactics and Generals. Were there specific skirmishes that hindered the Union's cause?

Do the terms "Republican" and "Democrat" have the same meanings as they do today? What were the differences between the two parties?

How did Mary and Lincoln's relationship evolve throughout his Presidency? How were they each affected by Willie's death? By the war?

Lincoln tried to live his life "with malice toward none." How did he deal with the Emancipation issue in the beginning, middle, and end of the war? Why was he so cautious about making his view public? Was he solely responsible for ending slavery in the US?