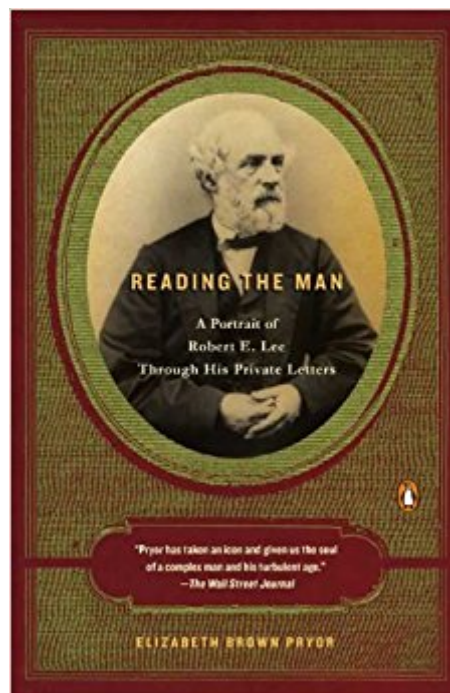




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Reading The Man: A Portrait Of Robert E. Lee Through His Private Letters



Synopsis

A tantalizing biography of the legendary Civil War hero--Winner of the Lincoln Prize
Elizabeth Brown Pryor's new book, *Six Encounters with Lincoln: A President Confronts Democracy and its Demons*, coming from Viking in February 2017. Robert E. Lee is remembered by history as a tragic figure, stoic and brave but distant and enigmatic. Using dozens of previously unpublished letters as departure points, Pryor produces a stunning personal account of Lee's military ability, shedding new light on every aspect of the complex and contradictory general's life story. Explained for the first time in the context of the young United States's tumultuous societal developments, Lee's actions reveal a man forced to play a leading role in the formation of the nation at the cost of his private happiness.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Robert E. Lee remains one of the most revered figures in U.S. history. For southerners he remains the personification of the Lost Cause, a military genius and courtly aristocrat whose nobility of spirit was worthy of the intense devotion he elicited from his men and admirers. Even Americans who despised the cause for which Lee fought express admiration for his military acumen, compassion, and kindness. But both in his personal and public life, Lee was more complicated than the iconic image suggests. Historian Pryor uses a compilation of Lee's private correspondence, adding her own commentaries, to present a more balanced but scrupulously fair portrait. There are surprises here. As commandant at West Point, Lee was far from beloved by cadets, who resented his

authoritarian ways. Although Lee had his doubts about the utility of slavery as an institution, his views on race relations were hardly enlightened. Still, his letters and Pryor's analysis reinforce our appreciation of Lee's best qualities, including his personal warmth, devotion to friends and family, and sense of fairness. Jay Freeman

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"Pryor has taken an icon and given us the soul of a complex man and his turbulent age." --The Wall Street Journal

"Elizabeth Pryor's magnificent *Reading the Man* forever buries the tired assumption that the real Robert E. Lee can never be found. Her exhaustive research and beautiful prose recover the many layers of Lee's being."--Peter Carmichael, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*

"An orthodox, critical, and engaging biography. . . . [Pryor] impressively captures Lee's character and personality."--The Boston Globe

"Pryor moves onto important historical and interpretive terrain with a far more discerning and critical eye than most of her scholarly or popular predecessors."--The New Republic

I'm about three quarters of the way through this book and I've been enjoying it very much. It was a little slow going in the beginning because much of the book relies on Lee's actual writing and that of people in his sphere. It took a little while getting used to the nineteenth-century writing. But what created this challenge was what eventually made me appreciate this book. You can glean a person's mind by reading their personal letters. Anyone interested in probing this historic figure - would do well by acquiring this book.

A classic on Robert E. Lee.

still reading

A window into the private thoughts and life of the all-time gentleman, Robt E Lee.

Very interesting in that it gives one a look at the human side of the Marble Man. he is both saint and sinner, strong in some areas and weak in others. Just a man.

Interesting book and a somewhat different take on this famous General. This book takes the reader to a different place in the life of Robert AE Lee and rather than a authors perception it depends

more on Lee's own correspondence. This book has a propensity to be a little dry in some places but overall a good addition to anyone's Civil War Library. A different way to study history instead of a story.. I have recommended this to friends.

Letters written by a major historic figure can yield a clear sense of the person behind the icon (or they can fail miserably). This book delivers what it promises: a portrait of the man that you could get in no other way than through a collection of private correspondence in Lee's "voice." During a season of reading Civil War books (Grant biography, bio of Sherman, letters of John Hay, etc.) I decided to read about THE figure from the "other side." I mainly wanted to satisfy my curiosity about why Lee has been so revered in the South (down through the ages), yet also respected by his foes in the North. By shedding light on the man, this book also sheds light on the saddest war in American history, and why it was inevitable.

I thought this was a fascinating book. Robert E. Lee was a very private man, his letters reveal a lot more about this personality.

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