



Crucible of Command: Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee--The War They Fought, the Peace They Forged

William C. Davis

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They met in person only four times, yet these two men—Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee—determined the outcome of America's most divisive war and cast larger-than-life shadows over their reunited nation.

They came from vastly different backgrounds: Lee from a distinguished family of waning fortunes; Grant, a young man on the make in a new America. Differing circumstances colored their outlooks on life: Lee, the melancholy realist; Grant, the incurable optimist.

Then came the Civil War that made them both commanders of armies, leaders of men, and heroes to the multitudes of Americans then and since who rightfully place them in the pantheon of our greatest soldiers. Forged in battle as generals, these two otherwise very different men became almost indistinguishable in their instincts, attributes, attitudes, and skills in command.

Each the subject of innumerable biographies, Generals Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee have never before been paired as they are here. Exploring their personalities, their characters, their ethical and moral compasses, and their political and military worlds, William C. Davis, one of America's preeminent historians, uses substantial, newly discovered evidence on both men to find surprising similarities between them, as well as new insights and unique interpretations on how their lives prepared them for the war they fought and influenced how they fought it.

Crucible of Command is both a gripping narrative of the final year of the war and a fresh, revealing portrait of these two great commanders as they took each other's measure across the battlefield with the aid of millions of men.

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