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[Home](#)

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[The Plague Dogs](#)

[The Art of Racing in the Rain](#)

[The Complete Tales](#)

[The Hobbit](#)

[Mossflower](#)

[The Neverending Story](#)

[Fell](#)

[The Master and Margarita](#)

[Prince Caspian](#)

[The Horse and His Boy](#)

[The Animals of Farthing Wood](#)

[Felidae](#)

[The Complete Fairy Tales](#)

[The Amber Spyglass](#)

[Silverwing](#)

Posted on 10 March 2019 By David McCullough

## Read ? John Adams ? Weplayit.co

John Adams is an extraordinary book, and an excellent political history of the beginning of the United States This is the first book I ve read by David McCullough, and I m impressed at his ability to be respectful but blunt, and be serious but entertaining at the same time. John Adams was an unusual man though he had the ambition and vanity characteristic of all

politicians, he was a remarkably uncomplicated and generally happy family man. The impression one gets from this book is much like a hobbit: a sincere, courageous, fat little man, who was thrown into circumstances far beyond his expectations and rose to each occasion with incredible tenacity, determination, and eventual success, but who vastly preferred being at home on his farm, mending walls, resting with his wife, and playing with his children and grandchildren. Adams was one of the most influential figures in the American Revolution, taking roles in the Continental Congress, choosing Washington as General of the Revolutionary Army, writing the constitution of Massachusetts, largely forming and approving the text of the US Constitution and Declaration of Independence, acting as ambassador to England, France, and the Netherlands, being elected Vice President, and eventually becoming the second US President, and father of the sixth President.

McCullough examines his life through his copious letters, articles, and books, with attention to both his external accomplishments, and his personal life. His joy and enthusiasm in life are impressive to read about. Over his lifetime, he lost a child in infancy, two of his sons grew up to be alcoholics, his only surviving daughter died of cancer in her 40s, he lost several grandchildren in infancy, and eventually lost his beloved wife. Despite this, and despite the public scorn heaped on him for every decision he made as President, yes, they did that back then, too, he managed to build a satisfying life for himself, and take joy in what he did have.

One of the most striking aspects of the book for me was how early partisan politics grew venomous and nasty. The country was already split irreconcilably into two parties by Washington's second term, and the race for president after him between close friends Adams and Jefferson grew so vicious that the friendship between the men was lost for 11 years. And while modern readers will side with Adams against slavery, and Jefferson against the Alien and Sedition acts, the degree of hatred and hysteria on each side was truly amazing, though Adams managed to stay above it as much as possible. Modern politics are always very different when viewed in the light of history.

This is an excellent historical and personal read, and I recommend it to anyone. A solid and satisfying biography of a key leader in the birth of the American Republic. This book helps make him my favorite of the bunch because of his paradoxical mix of humility and ambition, idealism and pragmatism. Unlike Washington, Jefferson, and Hamilton, he didn't have aristocratic bearings and valued honesty, sincerity, and free thinking as the highest virtues. He appreciated the simple things in small town life and farming and liked doing his own physical tasks like chopping wood. I also admire his 50 plus years of devotion to his wife Abigail and his family. By contrast, Franklin effectively abandoned his family for 17 years in Europe and was allured by the high life and ladies in France. The book is at its best in explicating Adams' character. He came from a 100 year line of farmers and common Puritan folk in Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston now part of Quincy. His father was devout, a deacon of his Protestant church, and expected John to become a minister. Instead he chose law after graduating from Harvard College and a boring stint as a schoolteacher. He wanted

to accomplish something of lasting significance and law was a likely path On the one hand he criticized himself for the sins of vanity and selfish ambition, while on the other was always driven to fulfill the image and succeeded like few others Taking Abigail for his wife kept him down to earth, as she was his sounding board and most significant advisor through the rest of his active life The letters between them are the main window to Adams thinking and personality, and McCullough harnesses them well to reveal his steady good humor, love of people in general, and overall moral optimism Soon his cases began radicalizing him against the powers exerted by the colonial government, like customs searches without a warrant and the imposition of import taxes without representation I liked his courage in acting on his belief in a fair trial to the point of defending the British soldiers who killed several colonists who were protesting the Stamp Act in 1770 in a dangerously rowdy manner He learned the arts of public speaking, of applying logic to negotiation, and of reading people's motivations and likely actions His ability to inspire trust and his reputation for honest dealings contributed to his becoming a leader among the Patriot crowd His effective service as a Massachusetts provincial legislator led to his being included in their delegation to the Continental Congress And the rest is history, as they say. After the violence of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill, Adams could readily lead efforts to build up the local militias into an integrated Continental Army and was responsible for nominating the Virginian Washington for command One last hurrah of the Loyalists had to play out with a failed petition to King George to relent before the majority was ready to assert independence Compared to Adams, Franklin and Jefferson were surprisingly restrained and inarticulate in terms of pushing their ideas in debate When it came to drafting the Declaration of Independence with them and two others on the committee, it fell to Jefferson to compose most of the writing, but Adams was its chief advocate and most responsible for its passage When the British response was cutting off trade and blockade, the key to success and survival as a nation became recognition of American independence by countries like France, including a source of naval muscle to assert rights of free trade Adams was sent with the delegation to France to help pull this off The dangerous trip, accompanied by his young son John Quincy, in a stormy February crossing was nicely covered in the book Success in Paris came slow, and he only had a junior role Upon return, he took up the task of drafting a constitution for Massachusetts, which was one of his accomplishments he was most proud of In 1779 he was sent back to head up negotiations for a peace treaty with Britain This time he took Abigail and their daughter along McCullough is especially engaging in probing for the changing reactions of their plebian family to the fashionable and decadent lifestyles of Parisian society and the state of filth and misery of the lower classes The book seems to lose energy after this point His languishing as the first vice president and tenure as president have few high points The dissension between his Federalist Party and the Republican Party of his vice president Jefferson is given short shrift When the French began seizing American merchant ships doing trade with

Britain, Adams broke with his cabinet advisors and Abigail in refusing to join Britain in their war against Napoleon's forces. The libelous press became a target with the Sedition Act, which he felt violated the First Amendment, and did not support aggressive prosecutions as even Abigail wished. Life winds down for Adams after losing the next election to Jefferson. The high point in this book for the long succeeding decades of private life was his ten-year correspondence with Jefferson starting in 1812 through the encouragement of mutual friend Benjamin Rush to put aside their differences. I wish McCullough had done even than pulling out a few choice sections on their play of ideas. In the end, I felt the book was great for conveying a sense of the man in his times, but it was missing the elements of critical analysis and perspectives that provided a better balance in his biographies of Truman and Teddy Roosevelt. For example, in Isaacson's biography of Franklin Adams comes off a bit as a drudge and moralistic party pooper in his time with Franklin in Paris. And the Wiki summary on Adams reveals unclear or contradictory positions of Adams on slavery and hereditary legislators like Britain's House of Lords. For readers interested in the American Revolution, McCullough's 1776 is a better resource for the drama and broader understanding of how it was that ordinary rural people in a diverse set of colonies came together to form an independent nation. I loved Philbrick's Bunker Hill even. These relative judgments are subject to the caveat that I did this read as an abridged audiobook. I am only aware of missing sections that cover what his reactions and activities were during the period of British blockage of Boston and early battles of revolt, the course of his contentious relations with Jefferson and with Hamilton, and much of Adams' time as an ambassador to England.

Read ? John Adams ? The Enthralling, Often Surprising Story Of John Adams, One Of The Most Important And Fascinating Americans Who Ever Lived. In This Powerful, Epic Biography, David McCullough Unfolds The Adventurous Life Journey Of John Adams, The Brilliant, Fiercely Independent, Often Irascible, Always Honest Yankee Patriot The Colossus Of Independence, As Thomas Jefferson Called Him Who Spared Nothing In His Zeal For The American Revolution Who Rose To Become The Second President Of The United States And Saved The Country From Blundering Into An Unnecessary War Who Was Learned Beyond All But A Few And Regarded By Some As Out Of His Senses And Whose Marriage To The Wise And Valiant Abigail Adams Is One Of The Moving Love Stories In American History Like His Masterly, Pulitzer Prize Winning Biography Truman, David McCullough S John Adams Has The Sweep And Vitality Of A Great Novel It Is Both A Riveting Portrait Of An Abundantly Human Man And A Vivid Evocation Of His Time, Much Of It Drawn From An Outstanding Collection Of Adams Family Letters And Diaries In Particular, The Than One Thousand Surviving Letters Between John And Abigail Adams, Nearly Half Of Which Have Never Been Published, Provide Extraordinary Access To Their Private Lives And Make It Possible To Know John Adams As No Other Major American Of His Founding Era As He Has With Stunning Effect In His Previous Books, McCullough Tells The Story From Within From The Point Of View Of The Amazing Eighteenth Century And

Of Those Who, Caught Up In Events, Had No Sure Way Of Knowing How Things Would Turn Out George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, The British Spy Edward Bancroft, Madame Lafayette And Jefferson S Paris Interest Maria Cosway, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, The Scandalmonger James Callender, Sally Hemings, John Marshall, Talleyrand, And Aaron Burr All Figure In This Panoramic Chronicle, As Does, Importantly, John Quincy Adams, The Adored Son Whom Adams Would Live To See Become President Crucial To The Story, As It Was To History, Is The Relationship Between Adams And Jefferson, Born Opposites One A Massachusetts Farmer S Son, The Other A Virginia Aristocrat And Slaveholder, One Short And Stout, The Other Tall And Spare Adams Embraced Conflict Jefferson Avoided It Adams Had Great Humor Jefferson, Very Little But They Were Alike In Their Devotion To Their Country At First They Were Ardent Co Revolutionaries, Then Fellow Diplomats And Close Friends With The Advent Of The Two Political Parties, They Became Archrivals, Even Enemies, In The Intense Struggle For The Presidency In , Perhaps The Most Vicious Election In History Then, Amazingly, They Became Friends Again, And Ultimately, Incredibly, They Died On The Same Day Their Day Of Days July , In The Year Much About John Adams S Life Will Come As A Surprise To Many Readers His Courageous Voyage On The Frigate Boston In The Winter Of And His Later Trek Over The Pyrenees Are Exploits That Few Would Have Dared And That Few Readers Will Ever Forget It Is A Life Encompassing A Huge Arc Adams Lived Longer Than Any President The Story Ranges From The Boston Massacre To Philadelphia In To The Versailles Of Louis XVI, From Spain To Amsterdam, From The Court Of St James S, Where Adams Was The First American To Stand Before King George III As A Representative Of The New Nation, To The Raw, Half Finished Capital By The Potomac, Where Adams Was The First President To Occupy The White House This Is History On A Grand Scale A Book About Politics And War And Social Issues, But Also About Human Nature, Love, Religious Faith, Virtue, Ambition, Friendship And Betrayal, And The Far Reaching Consequences Of Noble Ideas Above All, John Adams Is An Enthralling, Often Surprising Story Of One Of The Most Important And Fascinating Americans Who Ever Lived This is a must read for anyone interested in the American Revolution I would call this David McCullough s masterpiece, except I ve read several of his remarkable books, including Truman and The Wright Brothers, and they are all so good I don t think I could pick a favorite But let s get back to John Adams, who, along with Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, was a critical founder of America If you ve seen the impressive HBO miniseries based on this book starring Paul Giamatti and the amazing Laura Linney as Abigail Adams , you already know the outline of events John Adams was a lawyer in Massachusetts, and after the Boston Massacre in 1770, he agreed to defend the British soldiers, arguing that facts are stubborn things Despite widespread anger toward the British, John Adams won the case. Meanwhile, the colonists were growing increasingly dissatisfied with their English overlords, especially with their taxation without representation When a Continental

Congress was formed in Philadelphia, Adams was chosen to represent Massachusetts. It was there that he found his voice in politics, and met the other men who helped design the American government we know today. Adams was also sent to France and England as an ambassador, and the stories of him abroad were charming in their fish out of water ness. Oh, and let's not forget Adams became our second president and his son, John Quincy Adams, became our sixth. In short, John Adams lived an amazing and full life, and had an impact on history that few have the opportunity to do. Aside from being a fascinating person, what really makes this biography shine are the passages from letters that John and Abigail wrote to each other. This is where McCullough excels as a writer of history, in weaving together the best quotes and stories and making the narrative flow as smoothly as a novel. I came away from this book a great admirer of John Adams, and grateful that he was in the right place and the right time to help build this new country. He was smart and fair, but also stubborn and vain. He was a good man with flaws, as many of us are. As I write this, Hamilton the musical is a huge hit on Broadway, but in my mind, John Adams deserves his own show.

**Favorite Quotes** The source of our suffering has been our timidity. We have been afraid to think. Let us dare to read, think, speak, write. Our obligations to our country never cease but with our lives. So, it was done, the break was made, in words at least on July 2, 1776, in Philadelphia, the American colonies declared independence. If not all thirteen clocks had struck as one, twelve had, and with the other silent, the effect was the same. It was John Adams, than anyone, who had made it happen. Further, he seems to have understood clearly than any what a momentous day it was and in the privacy of two long letters to Abigail, he poured out his feelings as did no one else. The second day of July 1776 will be the most memorable epocha in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the Day of Deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations from one end of this continent to the other from this time forward forever. I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history, naval architecture, navigation, commerce, and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study paintings, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry, and porcelain. The longer I live, the I read, the patiently I think and the anxiously I inquire, the less I seem to know. do justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly. This is enough.

McCullough dazzled with his depiction of Harry Truman and brings that passion now to look at the life of John Adams. As he tackles the daunting task of bringing this Founding Father and former president to life, through a plethora of research and historical tomes, McCullough illustrates the varied life Adams lived and the complexities of his journey. Presenting Adams as both a man of the people and a politically minded gentleman, McCullough shows how he shaped the formation of the United States and led it through its early years. Crossing paths with

numerous greats, Adams not only took from them but also added some of his own ideas, which benefitted all who took the time to synthesise the discussion. Throughout the biography, McCullough shows three predominant sides to Adams, all of which play an important part in his entire personality: Adams the advocate, the political leader, and the family man, though not necessarily in that order of importance. Written in a clear and fluid manner, McCullough does an amazing job of showing John Adams to be than a stuffy politician who signed the Declaration of Independence. I have now found respect and admiration for Adams and took away so much from this one book, as I do whenever I give McCullough the chance to teach. McCullough makes reference throughout that Adams enjoyed playing the role of advocate, especially for the underprivileged. In his early years as a lawyer, Adams handled defending those whom others would not assist, citing that he wanted to grow both in his knowledge of the law as well as strongly believing that everyone deserved a proper defence. McCullough shows that Adams sought to use his way with words both the written and spoken to present as strong a case as possible, no matter the defendant. One might extend this advocacy to Adams' role in Philadelphia, where he acted as one of Massachusetts' representatives at the Continental Congress. Adams planted the seed of formal independence from Britain in the minds of many, through speeches and shaped legislation. McCullough comments that Adams sought to advocate as vociferously as possible against the oppressive George III and tried to promote the idea of an independent country whose rights ought to be held in Congress, not some far off parliament with no representation. McCullough illustrates Adams' passion for independence and while some of the pre-conference happenings receive but a passing mention (Boston Tea Party, for example), the actual constitutional discussions at the Congress receives much attention and exemplifies how Adams shone repeatedly. After declaring their independent interests in 1776, Congress sent Adams abroad to advocate for treaties of support and commerce in France, as well as peace with England when it became clear that George III's armies would be no match for Washington's forces. Congress went so far as to appoint Adams as the first Ambassador to the Court of St James, an awkward honour in which Adams thrived. While these were by no means simplistic jobs, Adams took them as challenges in which personal growth was assured. McCullough depicts the trials and tribulations throughout these journeys, binding them together with the thread of intense interest to advocate for what Adams felt was right for all. As a political leader, Adams looked past his own interests and pushed ideas of the greater whole while working in Congress and overseas. The oft-stated belief that a leader ought to look outside themselves and seek what is best for the entire populace may have been based on Adams' life, as he tried to lead others when little or no precedent existed. Working to create a constitution for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Adams drew on some of the key aspects found within the Declaration of Independence something he thought might be tasked to him before he passed it along to Jefferson, and added key tenets that he felt were best for all those living there, Adams tried

to lead by example and to use his passion for his home state province in the early years to better everyone. As mentioned above, Adams sought also to lead in his roles as plenipotentiary minister to both The Netherlands and England, an interesting story told by McCullough about how Adams scored this post and England, seeking to forge new alliances and political ground for the newly born state. Through trials and tribulations abounded, Adams worked to foster needed relationships and climb the ladder of importance, which worked when Congress eventually named him the first vice president of the United States in 1788. The role still new and the constitution's depiction of the job description lacking, Adams tried to lead from the dais of the President of the Senate, injecting himself into debate and offering up many opinions. Not used to the role well founded now, the vice president is better seen and not heard, waiting for the demise of the president to assume any true role. Still, through his pamphlet writing, Adams sought to lead the country through his ideas and political commentary on world events, most especially the French Revolution, drawing parallels to the happenings in 1776. Political leadership took on a new role when Adams narrowly defeated Jefferson by a mere 3 votes in the Electoral College in 1797. The presidential campaign of 1796 saw the birth of party politics in America. Tarred and feathered as a monarchist by many of those seeking to derail him, Adams had to shed the moniker in order to move forward and to keep him from the figurative and perhaps literal gallows. Forging ahead, Adams used a great deal of his political knowledge to act in as strong a capacity of president as he could. Faced with an openly volatile and confrontational vice president, Jefferson, the nation faced its most strained administration. While Jefferson tried to set pitfalls for his president, congressional progress appeared glacial and the two parties the Republicans and the Federalists sought to stop the other from any crumb of success. McCullough presents much support for the argument that Adams' presidency was ultimately shaped by the post-revolutionary French government, which began goading America into war. Adams built up the needed defences, should war become necessary and proposed two major pieces of legislation to define America for decades thereafter, the Aliens Act, and the Sedition Act. He argued that these pieces of legislation would defend honour and patriotism within America and let foreign potentates know with whom they were dealing. While McCullough posits that peace was Adams' ultimate goal, this is hard to see amongst the military chest bumping. While making the ultimate decision to seek peace, Adams ruffled the feathers of many and may have cast himself in a poor light from thereon in the eyes of Jefferson and other key Republicans. However, it is his prerogative to do so. This paved the way for the highly vicious campaign of 1800, pitting president against vice president for the first and only time in history. McCullough presents a highly intriguing story surrounding this campaign and the dirty politicking for which America would eventually become known. McCullough further posits that the outcome of that election hinged greatly on Adams' decision not to go to war with France. Perhaps his greatest role, seen as a major arc throughout the tome, is that of a family man. McCullough uses this role as an

overarching one throughout the book Abigail Adams plays a central role in the story of John Adams life and there is no section found therein that McCullough does not have some reference to her importance in his life Adams valued his family above all others and tried to include them wherever he could Granted, looking at things through the lens of the time, some might query his dedication to family and he and Abigail discuss stillbirths and deaths by letter, but there is no doubt that Adams did all he did to better the lives of his wife and children, going so far as to bring his sons with him to France and The Netherlands on various plenipotentiary missions His constant letters to Abigail and the detail in which he discussed his adventures, as well as the poetic way in which he waxed and waned about missing his brood shows how dedicated he was to their inclusion in his life McCullough does a wonderful job illustrating this through the book's numerous parts and keeps the theme of family predominant throughout the numerous segues Bringing family along with him on his numerous political appointments, Adams sought to enrich their lives as much as his own, exemplifying his dedication to the family unit McCullough shows a strongly supportive father and keen head of household whose determination to open new paths for his children as a central tenet of the biography Even through his trying years as president, Adams always kept his family close at hand, especially Abigail's near death at the hand of yellow fever He juggled things as best he could, never shutting his family out to run the executive of the country. Of interest, McCullough does not isolate the story to the life of John Adams and family Numerous, detailed accounts of some of the other Founding Fathers and key actors in the rise of American independence whose interactions with Adams were central tasks undertaken by McCullough throughout Jefferson, Washington, Franklin, and even Madison all receive great attention from McCullough and offer a teaser to the biographical backgrounds of each Jefferson surely played a significant role in Adams life, even if they did eventually distance themselves when wearing their respective political hats The executive clashes between Washington and Adams would likely be accentuated with an alternate perspective, making Ron Chernow's biography of Washington essential In the same light, Jon Meacham will surely help show Jefferson's side to the numerous clashes with Adams, both as Founding Fathers and within the executive Some great storytelling surrounding the difficulties Adams and Franklin faced while working together in France may give the reader a new perspective on both, though surely that is to be expected in such a thoroughly documented tome. One area I had hoped would receive attention though the length of the tome justifies its exclusion is the debates surrounding the independence movement and eventual creation of the Constitution of the United States Being an institutional reformer, I find it interesting to see where the constitutional seeds germinated and some of the important aspects arose From his Truman biography, I know that McCullough does present electoral campaigns in a highly detailed fashion While 1896 was a mere blink of the eye, the re-election campaign of 1800 proved highly entertaining Kudos do not seem to be enough to encapsulate how much I enjoyed this biography Choosing a

well known president by name, but not necessarily by background appears to be a strength for McCullough as he weaves the detailed background of their lives, their successes and certainly their demises I learned about early America and the roots about some of the current goings on than I have in all my reading to date Thank you so very much for this and I hope to dive into another McCullough classic soon. Well now I just want to read a biography on Abigail Adams Watch me discuss this book in my June wrap up I haven't read a book this good in years I cannot imagine anyone who wouldn't enjoy this book This is a book about a man, John Adams, but it is also much, much It is a book about American Independence, the American Revolution and all the Founding Fathers, the seven most important being George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, George Madison and Benjamin Franklin The book follows all the events from the Declaration of Independence and the Revolution, through the presidencies of George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, George Madison, James Monroe and finally John Adams son, John Quincy Adams, the sixth president This is a book about people, each very different in character, but the author brings each one of them to life I adore learning about people I loved the book for this reason alone You understand how the individuals think, what they feared, what they loved, what made each one special You understand their differences It is the little details that will make you LOVE this book John Adams, this guy wrote volumes in the margins of his books Jefferson loved his books too, but rarely did he write in them The relationship between these two men is extraordinary John Adams relationship with his wife Abigail is extraordinary too I love how it taught me history, and it was never ever boring I don't read books about politics, but this book is definitely about politics, and I adored it I normally avoid books on politics because I find them confusing Why Because for me politics doesn't follow the rules of logic A party claims they stand for a given set of principles, but then the politicians do not follow these principles The result is that I get confused A central theme is, and particularly John Adams presidency and the following election where he sought his second term but lost it to Jefferson, was a battle of politics, and yet I understood exactly what was happening This book is clear, informative and presents a balanced view of all the prime players. John Adams by David McCullough is stupendous I cannot help but compare it with Walter Isaacson's Benjamin Franklin An American Life, which I recently read and loved, but Isaacson's book doesn't come near to McCullough's John Adams wrote letters to all his contemporaries, to newspapers, public officials, friends and his dear wife Abigail He kept diaries John Adams was opinionated Jefferson and Franklin were close mouthed After his presidency, when he was much older, Adams wrote copious letters to his dear friend and previous arch enemy, Jefferson Adams is the person to follow if you are interested in learning about American Independence, American life in the colonies during the 1700s and about France and England and Holland too, about the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812 It is all here and it is all interesting Every page has quotes Don't assume that this makes the book dry and

difficult to read The opposite is true You learn about the peculiarities of all the important Founding Fathers Jefferson bought and bought and bought He couldn't stop buying It is the way the author depicts these small idiosyncrasies that will make you laugh out loud Jefferson lists all that he buys, but the funniest is that the columns and columns of purchased items are never added up Never Both Adams and Jefferson died on July 4, 1826, fifty years after the Declaration of Independence Guess which one was wealthy then I REALLY love this book and I want you to understand that this is the book to choose if you have any curiosity about any of the Founding Fathers, about American Independence or about life in Europe during the 1700s and early 1800s. Have I convinced you to choose this book Here is another reason why The descriptions of the people, places and events are vivid When the British ships are set to attack at Staten Island you see them in the sun and you feel the imminent threat At Washington's inauguration he travels in a canary yellow carriage pulled by white horses I am skipping all over the place, I know, but the descriptive quality of the lines is perfect throughout the entire book I personally adored the depiction of French, English and Dutch's I adored how family problems are described so you laugh Charles, one of Adams' sons, had some difficulties in Harvard and almost got thrown out Yes, they were running around naked But wait, you will cry too when you learn of his final fate Moral and so very devoted to his wife as Adams is, you should hear his conversation with the French women Instincts will show us what to do, he replies to a tricky question about men and women's sexual behavior 0 This reply is just so perfect it is so Adamsee And Hamilton, oh what he does I could wring his neck All the details are amusing, engaging, thorough, and accurate When I compare Isaacson's versus McCullough's portrait of Benjamin Franklin, I feel that McCullough's is superior His is unbiased and clear sighted An author may not fall in love with the character being portrayed impartiality is essential So here is my advice read John Adams first The two are similar, but this one is superior Read Walter Isaacson's Benjamin Franklin An American Life afterwards if you then still want a little bit about Franklin's scientific inventions Nelson Runger is the narrator of both of the audiobooks Yes, he slurps and seems to need to swallow his saliva repeatedly, but there is less of that in McCullough's book His French pronunciation could definitely be improved, but otherwise the narration is fine Don't shy away from either audiobook for these reasons The narration's speed and clarity is fine, and that is what is most important I really did enjoy Benjamin Franklin An American Life, but I absolutely loved John Adams And I think I sort of have a crush on John Adams, even with his faults What a man What a time What writing No man who ever held the office of president would congratulate a friend on obtaining it, wrote John Adams, and this superb biography by David McCullough makes it clear why Adams was undoubtedly sincere in this sentiment Adams was a plain and honest speaking man who rose to the challenges of extraordinary times In this biography he emerges from the shadows of the better known presidents Washington and Jefferson whose administrations bracketed his McCullough did not originally intend to write a biography of Adams, it

transpires, but a general book on American history This eventually became his later work, 1776 But Adams character and life made McCullough reconsider, and soon he found himself writing a book solely on Adams I confess to having known almost nothing about Adams, and further confess to being dismally uninformed about the revolutionary period in general, especially considering that I majored in history as an undergrad albeit with a focus almost exclusively in European history Some dreadful instruction during middle and high school still casts a pall over American history for me, which I realize is a poor excuse now in my fifth decade, but sadly is the only one I can offer for not having really ever undertaken a thorough study of my own country s development Since reading this book, however, I ve vowed to read McCullough s 1776 and several other notable accounts of the period I m confident that I won t go wrong if I begin with McCullough, for he is a master portraitist, using apt quotes and vivid description to make his subjects spring to life Someone I forget who remarked that McCullough never wrote a bad page of prose, or something to that effect, and while that may be an exaggeration, it s no exaggeration to say that he is one of the most graceful stylists of our time He is eloquent without seeming over enad of his own words McCullough s long years as an editor no doubt paid off in honing his own style Like John Adams, McCullough gravitates toward classical modes of oration and style There s a forcefulness and directness that shines through both in Adams and in McCullough s portrayal of him. McCullough has a gift for humanizing his subjects Of Adams, he wrote, He had a brilliant mind He was honest and everyone knew it Emphatically independent by nature, hardworking, frugal, he could be high spirited and affectionate, vain, cranky, impetuous, self absorbed, and fiercely stubborn passionate, quick to anger, and all forgiving generous and entertaining He was blessed with great courage and good humor, yet subject to spells of despair Thus Adams is shown as not a paragon but as someone who had to struggle with his shortcomings The author s gift for fleshing out his subjects comes the fore in describing the marriage of John and Abigail Here is a marriage shown in all its complexity two people who were ideally suited to one another I couldn t help but think that in their union McCullough saw something of his own he s often cited his own wife as being one of the reasons for his great success as a writer, especially in standing behind his decision to quit his job as an editor and research his first book I confess to having done something I usually hate to do I saw the HBO special based on the book before I listened to the audio version of it Normally that ruins a book for me, but here I found it simply reinforced it Edward Hermann is an excellent narrator, and in fact I ve ordered another audio book read by him from my library, Mornings on Horseback McCullough s biography of Teddy Roosevelt It s easier for me to relate to history when I have a link with particular people and places McCullough established that link for me in this period of history, and for that I m grateful. I LEARNED SO MUCH I m moved deeply moved at this book and partly at myself SOMETHING HAS SHIFTED INSIDE ME THROUGH THIS READING EXPERIENCE A handful of books have done this for me but not usually two in a very short period of time But

I can't deny what's so SNAP CRACKLE POP BOOKS THAT CHANGE OUR THINKING OUR ACTIONS MUST BE REMEMBERED this is another one of those books A light switch is turned on in my brain for the first time in almost 65 years I haven't been reading biographies about past Presidents I have some natural interest in Kennedy Lincoln and Obama but I've never been the girl to run to the history or political sections in book stores seeking out past Presidents to read about WHY THE HECK HAVEN'T I Fear of boring dry reading It's amazing how shallow and small my thinking is sometimes Has anyone else ever cried when coming nose to nose with your own stupidity laziness and or shame for allowing yourself to be ignorant Really angry at yourself I've been reading this book for 4 to 6 weeks other books too, but a couple of weeks ago I broke down cried like a baby facing the reality of HOW MUCH I DON'T KNOW At the same time., I WAS FASCINATED WITH THIS BOOK THIS STORY I'm left wanting to explore Hallelujah John Adams worked his ass off LONG HOURS A DAY RISKING HIS HEALTH making constant sacrifices and contributions with the most humble heart A GREAT MAN I've read my share of the The dreaded multiple POV novels I'm discovering it's possible that reading historical books about past Presidents might not be drudgery or work any than it's been to read about Jack or Libby taking turns narrating every other chapter If books about past Presidents are this good good storytelling, I have nothing to fear I FEEL LESS RESISTANCE TO READ ABOUT MORE PAST PRESIDENTS. That's what's shifted I'm ready to read another, and another Ha ha we certainly have plenty of past presidents to choose from JOHN ADAMS inspired me His character was outstanding Were all Presidents this honest, loving toward his wife and children, down to earth, decent,..really decent He was bright worked hard Model integrity I didn't think of him as a politician I can't imagine Trump ever saying these word I only wish I were better qualified..John Adams Ohhhhhh, and Abigail did you not love this woman Up at 5am to begin her day taking care of the needs of their family and home running a farm during war loss of children while her husband was away sadness loneliness missing her partner She was a courageous independent woman ahead of her days.I knew nothing about John Adams relationship with Thomas Jefferson Friends, then enemies, then friends again.John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died on July 4, 1826, same day Blows my mind John Adams lived longer than any other American President I wonder if it was all that Apple cider he drank every day Question to those who are history buffs Suggestions of which President I might read about next A few suggestions And by whom Wonderful book great opening for me Much thanks goes to David McCullough Since reading John Adams I have continually been reminded of my delusion of our country's history Today as I saw the conclusion of the John Adams series on HBO I realized I was one of those John Adams saw as deluded by the artistic portrayal of our history in Trumbell's Declaration of Independence Adams was right Too many of us believe Trumbell's view of the Declaration of Independence not acknowledging the many difficulties over many years before and after the signing of that great document I'm reminded of that as we too often

expect other countries to simply get their act together over a short space of time to form a free country such as we enjoy It was never easy It shall never be easy There must be always those within the country who are willing and able to do something to make a difference It takes many making a difference and it takes respect for one another never simple Much happens in the process in the making of people God raises up good and able men and women to make a difference among every people. An important book to read.

# DAVID McCULLOUGH

WINNER  
OF THE  
PULITZER  
PRIZE

*John  
Adams.*

## New Post

Fire Bringer  
Into the Wild  
The Cricket in Times Square  
A Bear Called Paddington  
The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents  
The Last Unicorn  
Just So Stories  
Wild Magic  
The Rescuers  
Bambi  
The Sight  
Three Bags Full  
Time Cat  
Lirael  
The Story of Doctor Dolittle

## Recent Post

Charlotte's Web  
Watership Down  
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe  
Animal Farm  
Winnie-the-Pooh  
Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH  
The Golden Compass  
The Wind in the Willows  
Redwall  
The Wonderful Wizard of Oz  
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass  
The Jungle Book  
The Velveteen Rabbit

Stuart Little

Bunnacula

The Phantom Tollbooth

Black Beauty

The Tale of Despereaux

The 101 Dalmatians

James and the Giant Peach

Fantastic Mr. Fox

The Mouse and the Motorcycle

The Chronicles of Narnia

The Tale of Peter Rabbit

The Trumpet of the Swan

The Little Prince

Fire Bringer