

Teddy

Laurence Luckinbill

Eryck Tait, Illustrator

Dead Reckoning (Feb 17, 2021)

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Wide-ranging but intimate, the graphic biography *Teddy* profiles Theodore Roosevelt and his accomplishments.

Adapted from Laurence Luckinbill's one-man play, the book anchors Roosevelt in his final months, after his twenty-one-year-old son was killed in World War I. While giving a speech, Roosevelt looks back on his life, speaking to his audience in a direct style. His fervor for military actions stands in stark contrast to his inner doubts; these conflicting aspects of his personality are gripping and affecting.

The book captures Roosevelt's colorful personality and quirks, like his tendency toward distinct language: he uses words like "flubdub," "mugwump," and "bully." Also depicted is his love for the outdoors, and his constant striving for improvement, as he was determined to live up to his father's ideals. Fascinating insights into Roosevelt's larger motivations arise, such as that "If I had never gone west, I would never have become president." Interesting anecdotes about the Battle of San Juan Hill and the origin of the teddy bear are also included.

Remarkable likenesses of Roosevelt at different stages of his life come through the book's art, as do images of his family members and other famous figures. The book's backgrounds are rendered in sweeping, convincing detail, from the interiors of a government building to those of the Roosevelt residence, and extending to the wide expanses of the American West.

Covering both Roosevelt's formative years and his achievements in the White House, and summarizing the politics of his time, *Teddy* is an excellent graphic biography that serves as a compelling reminder of why Theodore Roosevelt is considered one of the greatest US presidents.

PETER DABBENE (January / February 2021)

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