

## Never Call Retreat: Theodore Roosevelt and the Great War

J. Lee Thompson



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The final years of Theodore Roosevelt's life have long been considered a dark, aberrant period in which a once-great statesman descended into contrarianism and ill health as his legacy was eclipsed by world events. This stirring narrative decisively puts the lie to such depictions of Roosevelt's twilight years, showing the characteristic dignity, intellectual brilliance, and youthful vigor with which he confronted both private hardships and the onset of the First World War.

It was a historical moment eerily reminiscent of our own: violence in the failed state of Mexico bleeding across the border, an insurgency brewing within the Republican party, and an eloquent and charismatic Democratic president facing a global conflict while bedeviled by constant and vitriolic partisan attacks. That president was Woodrow Wilson, and his committed adversary was Theodore Roosevelt, who would wage a personal and political battle against the administration until the day he died. This duel of American titans lies at the center of J. Lee Thompson's history, which is the first modern account of Roosevelt exclusively during the war years. This is a tale of politics and global conflict, but also a private story of true love and familial devotion: the love of Theodore and Edith Roosevelt and the deep bonds of affection they held for all their children—particularly sons Ted, Kermit, Archie, and Quentin, who all served bravely on the front. From public triumphs to personal tragedies, Thompson gives us a long-overdue look at the later life of one of American history's most indelible figures, as well as the inexorable process by which the US was drawn into the greatest war the world had yet seen.

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