

[PDF] Assassination Vacation

Sarah Vowell - pdf download free book



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Author: Sarah Vowell
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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Starred Review. What do you get when a woman who's obsessed with death and U.S. history goes on vacation? This wacky, weirdly enthralling exploration of the first three presidential assassinations. Vowell (The Partly Cloudy Patriot), a contributor to NPR's This American Life and the voice of teenage superhero Violet Parr in The Incredibles, takes readers on a pilgrimage of sorts to the sites and monuments that pay homage to Lincoln, Garfield and McKinley, visiting everything from grave sites and simple plaques (like the one in Buffalo that marks the place where McKinley was shot) to places like the National Museum of Health and Medicine, where fragments of Lincoln's skull are on display. An expert tour guide, Vowell brings into sharp focus not only the figures involved in the assassinations, but the social and political circumstances that led to

each-and she does so in the witty, sometimes irreverent manner that her fans have come to expect. Thus, readers learn not only about how Garfield found himself caught between the Stalwarts and the Half-Breeds, bitterly divided factions of the Republican party, but how his assassin, Charles Guiteau, a supporter of the Stalwarts and an occasional member of the Oneida Community, "was the one guy in a free love commune who could not get laid." Vowell also draws frequent connections between past events and the present, noting similarities between McKinley's preemptive war against Cuba and the Philippines and the current war in Iraq. This is history at its most morbid and most fascinating and, fortunately, one needn't share Vowell's interest in the macabre to thoroughly enjoy this unusual tour.

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From School Library Journal Adult/High School-Vowell has a perspective on American history that is definitely funny. She visits museums, historic sites, statues, libraries, anything remotely relevant to successful presidential assassins, and a few of those not so successful. This is an amusing way to learn history, but it is also an unusual look at the interconnectedness of things. Robert Todd Lincoln, a.k.a. Jinxy McDeath, was present, or nearly so, at three assassinations-his father's, Garfield's, and McKinley's. To understand Garfield's assassin, the author spends time at the Oneida Colony in upstate New York, a religious commune that preached a combination of free love and the second coming, and connects it with Jonathan Edwards. She tracks the Lincoln conspirators through the process of plot and escape to hanging and imprisonment, even describing Dr. Mudd's enormous contribution when the plague hit the prison island of Dry Tortuga. Garfield's assassin was deeply involved in the redirection of the Republican Party after the Civil War, and McKinley's was an anarchist following, he thought, the tenets of Emma Goldman. There are family anecdotes and real scholarship in this quirky road trip. Teens will get an interesting view of one aspect of American history while picking up odd bits of information about a whole lot more. There is much to enjoy in this discursive yet somehow cohesive book.-*Susan H. Woodcock, Fairfax County Public Library, VA*
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