



Woodrow Wilson: USA (Makers of the Modern World)

Brian Morton

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Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924). It is September 1919 - a meeting hall in a small mid-Western city. A thin man is speaking to a sceptical audience about peace. He has already met the city fathers and has been warned that 'out here' what happens in Europe means very little. Even the late war scarcely impinged on the place, though it had been recognised that it hadn't been altogether good for trade and one or two local boys had died on the fields of France in the very last days of the conflict. The speaker was obviously impassioned, with a preacher's cadence to his voice, and particularly so when he promoted the idea of an international League of Nations to guarantee future peace and ensure that the war into which America had been lured in 1917 really was 'a war to end all wars'. It is noticed that the man is sweating and pale and that he pauses frequently to dab his lips. The price of his campaign for peace - and peace conducted with principle - seems to be a terrible struggle between strong belief on the one hand and failing reserves on the other. Woodrow Wilson will live for another five years, but his battle to convince America to join the League is lost and much of the vigour that marked his time as President of his country, as president of Princeton University, even as an enthusiastic college football coach, was left behind in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. This book will look at the life of Wilson, from his early years during the American Civil War, through his academic and political career and America's involvement in the First World War, to Wilson's role at Versailles, including the construction of his Fourteen Points, his principles for the reformation of Europe, and the consequences of Versailles for America and on later conflicts.

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