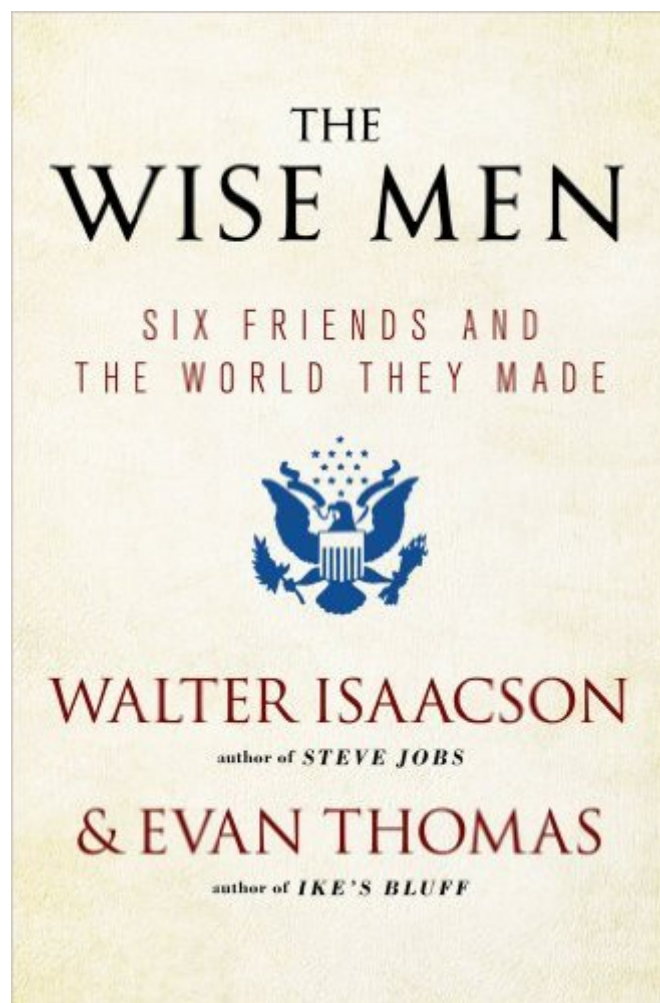


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The Wise Men: Six Friends And The World They Made



Synopsis

With a new introduction by the authors, this is the classic account of the American statesmen who rebuilt the world after the catastrophe of World War II. A captivating blend of personal biography and public drama, *The Wise Men* introduces six close friends who shaped the role their country would play in the dangerous years following World War II. They were the original best and brightest, whose towering intellects, outsize personalities, and dramatic actions would bring order to the postwar chaos and leave a legacy that dominates American policy to this day: Averell Harriman, the freewheeling diplomat and Roosevelt's special envoy to Churchill and Stalin; Dean Acheson, the secretary of state who was more responsible for the Truman Doctrine than Truman and for the Marshall Plan than General Marshall; George Kennan, self-cast outsider and intellectual darling of the Washington elite; Robert Lovett, assistant secretary of war, undersecretary of state, and secretary of defense throughout the formative years of the Cold War; John McCloy, one of the nation's most influential private citizens; and Charles Bohlen, adroit diplomat and ambassador to the Soviet Union.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In a 1996 interview with David Gergen on NPR, one of this book's central characters makes a case for, what I will hazard to suggest, is one of the authors' central views; DAVID GERGEN: Let me ask you this in terms of thinking back over then of that period of American foreign policy in the last forty or fifty years, one of the ironies here is that in an age of information you suggest we have too little wisdom. GEORGE KENNAN: Yes, I do, and one of the things that bothers me about the computer

culture of the present age is that one of the things of which it seems to me we have the least need is further information. What we really need is intelligent guidance in what to do with the information we've got. Thus *The Wise Men* becomes a paean to, as the authors' admit at the outset, "the twentieth-century tradition of an informal brain trust of internationalists who first served Woodrow Wilson at Versailles and returned home to found the Council on Foreign Relations," establishing along the way, "a distinguished network connecting Wall Street, Washington, worthy foundations, and proper clubs." The polemics about where one finds wisdom aside, *The Wise Men* provides a fascinating and uncompromising study of the evolution of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union from the establishment of formal relations during the Roosevelt administration to Vietnam from the perspective of six of its most significant players; Dean Acheson, Charles "Chip" Bohlen, Averell Harriman, George Kennan, Robert Lovett and John McCloy with side trips into electoral politics and the Middle East.

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