



The Five of Hearts: An Intimate Portrait of Henry Adams and his Friends 1880-1918

Patricia O'Toole

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In this first biography of an extraordinary circle of friends, Patricia O'Toole re-creates the lives of five remarkable Americans, revealing how they left their mark on the turbulent decades of the late nineteenth century - a time that saw the opening of the American West, the early stirring of feminism, the rise of the robber barons, and the emergence of the United States as a world power. The quintet included Henry Adams, historian and scion of America's foremost political dynasty; his wife, Clover, spirited and witty, a gifted photographer, and tragic victim of depression; John Hay, who began his Washington career as a secretary in Lincoln's White House and ended as secretary of state; his wife, Clara, heiress to an Ohio industrial fortune and the personification of upper-class Victorian morality; and Clarence King, a dashing, charismatic scientist-turned-entrepreneur who never managed to live up to his first triumph - a brilliant geological survey of the West. Calling themselves the Five of Hearts, the friends came together in 1880 at Henry and Clover Adams's home in Washington. They gossiped about politics, discovered their mutual love of painting and literature, and shared the closely guarded secret that the anonymous author of the year's literary sensation, "Democracy" was Adams himself. The Five of Hearts befriended many of their notable contemporaries, from writers Henry James, Mark Twain, Bret Harte, W.D. Howells, Edith Wharton, and Robert Louis Stevenson to painters John LaFarge and John Singer Sargent, architects H.H. Richardson and Stanford White, sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and every president from Abraham Lincoln to Theodore Roosevelt. A natural story-teller who combines the compassion of the biographer with the dispassion of the historian, Patricia O'Toole has created an engaging - and deeply touching - account of the Five of Hearts and the worlds of power, privilege and genius in which they lived.

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