Elected in hard times and serving throughout a catastrophic global war, Franklin Delano Roosevelt confronted crises of epic proportions during his record twelve-year tenure as our nation’s chief executive. George McJimsey now provides a fresh account of his much-debated presidency, describing the successes and failures of FDR’s landmark administration and offering a new perspective on the New Deal. A welcome synthesis of the best modern scholarship on the Roosevelt administration, McJimsey’s study portrays Roosevelt as a pluralist leader whose various New Deal programs empowered the American people to combat America’s Great Depression at the grass roots. During the depression, Roosevelt hoped to create a cooperative commonwealth that would create a strong America at home, as later during World War II he sought to create an international order based on allied cooperation and American leadership. McJimsey pays particular attention to the political environment in which Roosevelt’s presidency functioned and how it both created opportunities and limited his choices. Roosevelt, he shows, was often unable to avoid pluralisms pitfalls, as he found he had to work through corrupt city bosses, patronage-hungry congressmen, and profit-driven businessmen. As McJimsey observes, he was repeatedly forced to maneuver and manipulate to hold the reins of power. A separate chapter on Eleanor Roosevelt describes her emergence as a public figure and her advocacy of social causes, exploring how she acted on issues that Franklin hesitated to address. In addition, the book expands on previous treatments of FDR by analyzing important policy issues involving and affecting women and Native Americans. It also sheds new light on the policy changes of 1935 and 1937, the roles of FDR’s close associates, and the ultimate impact of his actions on democracy. Concise and refreshingly balanced, The Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt portrays FDR as an unexpected proponent of decentralization, whose achievements were mixed: while the New Deal lifted the nation, its programs did as much to increase...
competition for special advantage as they did to encourage cooperation for the general welfare, and his wartime diplomacy ultimately failed to prevent the Cold War. The book contributes significantly to ongoing assessments of FDRs presidential record and renews our appreciation of his courage and vision.

My Personal Review:
A wonderful book in which Franklin D. Roosevelt emerges as a pragmatic and astute politician who manages the government with coordinating regional interests. The book conveys Roosevelt's adaptability to use federalism—a division of power between the federal government and local autonomy or grass roots movements—while implementing a massive restructuring of government to alleviate the Depression. Although Roosevelt had much help from advisers, he enforced the New Deal to reform banking, the Agricultural Adjustment Act to aid farmers, the unconstitutional National Recovery Administration, the Public Works Administration, the National Labor Relations Board and many others. Additionally, the author uses the term pluralism to describe Roosevelt's networking of various interest groups in an attempt to coalesce a coherent fiscal policy. Moreover, this book recognizes that competing interests sometimes precluded a successful outcome for New Deal legislation. Nonetheless, the author gives F.D.R. praise for his cautious approach in conducting foreign affairs and, especially, the United States' entry in World War II. The chapter about Eleanor Roosevelt gives the reader a glimpse into her humanitarian concerns for women and African Americans. The excellent bibliography adds a detailed essay about finding out more on this complex historical figure. This book made me feel as if I actually experienced the years during F.D.R.'s presidency and the outstanding writing added to my reading enjoyment.

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