

An Incautious Man: The Life of Gouveneur Morris (Lives of the Founders)

Ms. Melanie Randolph Miller

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In An Incautious Man, historian Melanie Miller provides a succinct but sophisticated recounting of the life of one of our lesser-known but most engaging Founding Fathers: Gouverneur Morris. One of George Washington's "surrogate sons," Morris played a profound role in ensuring the success of the American Revolution and the creation of the Constitution. Miller provides readers a look behind the closed doors of the Constitutional Convention, where Morris's crystalline but passionate eloquence gave the debate a vitality that remains both enthralling and keenly meaningful for those of us whose lives have been decisively shaped by the results of that deliberation.

In 1792, Morris replaced Thomas Jefferson as the American minister to France. His experience there during the Terror is unparalleled in diplomatic history. As Miller tells it, Morris's time in France is a story of conspiracy to help the king escape, of friends imprisoned and murdered, of seized ships and complex problems that had no precedent in the young nation's history. Upon his return to the U.S., Morris served a brief stint in the Senate before going on to secure the building of the Erie Canal and to direct the design of the Manhattan network of streets we know today.



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