

## The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism

### Discussion Questions

1. Name several comparisons between the Progressive Era and today. Would you rather be a member of the working class then or now? Who is a contemporary robber baron in your opinion?
2. What was the role of the press then? What is it now? How do they compare? Who is doing the muckraking (reform minded journalism) of today?
3. Talk about the women in this book. What roles did they take on and play at home and in politics?
4. How has your view of Theodore Roosevelt changed since reading this book? Could a modern president do what he did while in office?
5. This is a story of friendship and rivalry. Which other US presidents have experienced both friendship and rivalry?
6. Goodwin could not have written such an intimate portrait of the two men without their letters to each other and to their wives. How will history be recorded for historians in the next 100 years?
7. Doris Kearns Goodwin has noted that Ida Tarbell knew how to make people come to life on the page. How does Goodwin manage to do the same?
8. Steven Spielberg and Dreamworks, the makers of the movie *Lincoln*, based in part on Goodwin's *Team of Rivals*, have acquired the rights to make a film based on *The Bully Pulpit*. How different would this movie be from *Lincoln*? Whom would you cast for the parts of Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Alice Hathaway Lee Roosevelt, Edith Roosevelt, Nellie Herron Taft (she sneaks cigarettes!), Ida Tarbell, Sam McClure? What scenes from *Bully Pulpit* stick out in your mind as particularly cinematic?
9. The role of government in dealing with the economic and social issues was a central issue during to the Progressive Era as it is today. What do you think Roosevelt would say about the social and economic issue of today?
10. The text of this book is 750 pages. Did the detail incorporated into this volume advance or detract from the story? If you could edit, what would you cut? Is there an untold story here, something you would have liked more of?
11. Doris Kearns Goodwin has confessed that the Progressive Era was her favorite time in history. If she were to write another biography, whom would you like it to be about?