



Affection and Trust: The Personal Correspondence of Harry S. Truman and Dean Acheson, 1953-1971

Harry S. Truman, Dean Acheson

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In this riveting collection, published for the first time, we follow Harry S. Truman and Dean Acheson, two giants of the post-World War II period, as they move from an official relationship to one of candor, humor, and personal expression. Together they were primarily responsible for the Marshall Plan and NATO, among other world-shaping initiatives. And in these letters, spanning the years from when both were newly out of office until Acheson's death at the age of seventy-eight, we find them sharing the often surprising and always illuminating opinions, ideas, and feelings that the strictures of their offices had previously kept them from revealing.

Adapting easily to their private lives, they nonetheless felt a powerful need to keep in touch as they viewed with dismay what they considered to be the Eisenhower administration's fumbling of foreign affairs, the impact of Joseph McCarthy, John Foster Dulles's foreign policy, and the threat of massive nuclear retaliation. Adlai Stevenson's poor campaign of 1956, Eisenhower's second-term mishaps, family events, speaking engagements, and Truman's difficulties writing his memoirs are all fodder for their conversations. In 1960 their skeptical stance toward John F. Kennedy (and his father's influence) turned them toward Lyndon Johnson. After Kennedy won they discussed Acheson's reluctant involvement in the Cuban missile crisis, his missions to de Gaulle and Prime Minister Macmillan, and the Allied position in Berlin.

Unbuttoned, careless of language, unburdened by political ambition or vanity, Truman and Acheson show their own characters and loyalty to each other on every page. Truman, a Missouri farmer with the unpolished but sharp intellect of the largely self-educated man, clearly understands that in Acheson he has a friend with a rare gift for providing unhesitant and truthful counsel. Acheson, well-educated, urbane, and well-off, understands which traits in Truman's complex character to love and admire and when to admonish, instruct, and tease him. Both men share a deep and abiding patriotism, a quality that truly stands out in today's world.

A remarkable book that brings to light the very human side of two of the most important statesmen of the twentieth century.

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