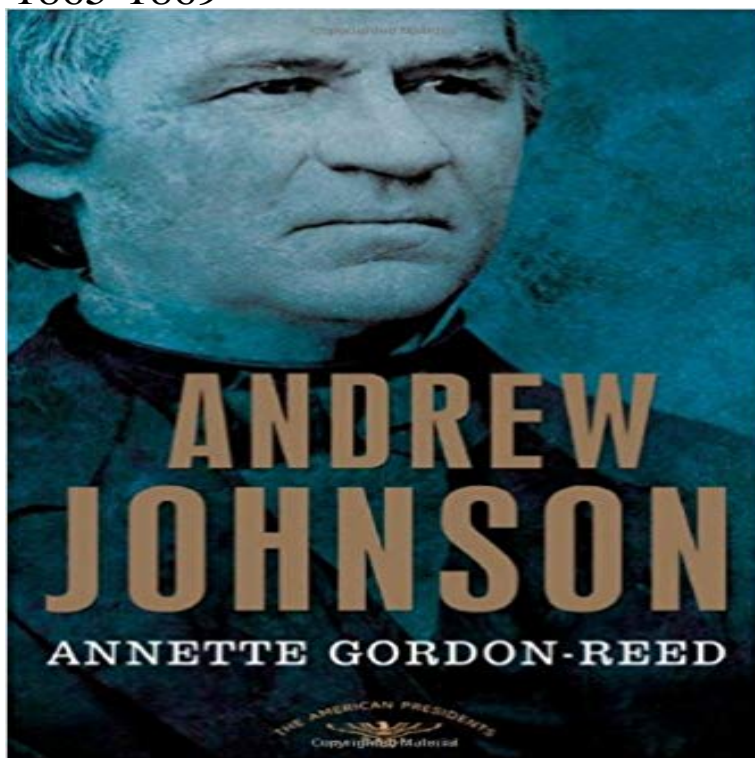


Andrew Johnson: The American Presidents Series: The 17th President, 1865-1869



A Pulitzer Prize-winning historian recounts the tale of the unwanted president who ran afoul of Congress over Reconstruction and was nearly removed from office. Andrew Johnson never expected to be president. But just six weeks after becoming Abraham Lincoln's vice president, the events at Ford's Theatre thrust him into the nation's highest office. Johnson faced a nearly impossible task—to succeed America's greatest chief executive, to bind the nation's wounds after the Civil War, and to work with a Congress controlled by the so-called Radical Republicans. Annette Gordon-Reed, one of America's leading historians of slavery, shows how ill-suited Johnson was for this daunting task. His vision of reconciliation abandoned the millions of former slaves (for whom he felt undisguised contempt) and antagonized congressional leaders, who tried to limit his powers and eventually impeached him. The climax of Johnson's presidency was his trial in the Senate and his acquittal by a single vote, which Gordon-Reed recounts with drama and palpable tension. Despite his victory, Johnson's term in office was a crucial missed opportunity; he failed the country at a pivotal moment, leaving America with problems that we are still trying to solve.

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