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TITAN

THE LIFE OF JOHN
D. ROCKEFELLER, SR.

RON CHERNOW



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VINTAGE BOOKS

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*To my brother, Dr. Bart Chernow,
who pulled me back, at the last moment, from the brink,
and to the lovely Valerie*

Two men have been supreme in creating the modern world: Rockefeller and Bismarck. One in economics, the other in politics, refuted the liberal dream of universal happiness through individual competition, substituting monopoly and the corporate state, or at least movements toward them.

—*BERTRAND RUSSELL Freedom Versus Organization, 1814 to 1914*

Something in the nature of J. D. Rockefeller had to occur in America, and it is all to the good of the world that he was tight-lipped, consistent and amazingly free from vulgar vanity, sensuality and quarrelsomeness. His cold persistence and ruthlessness may arouse something like horror, but for all that he was a forward-moving force, a constructive power.

—*H. G. WELLS The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*

When history passes its final verdict on John D. Rockefeller, it may well be that his endowment of research will be recognized as a milestone in the progress of the race. . . . Science today owes as much to the rich men of generosity and discernment as the art of the Renaissance owes to the patronage of Popes and Princes. Of these rich men, John D. Rockefeller is the supreme type.

—*WINSTON CHURCHILL St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 8, 1936*

Rockefeller, you know, is reputed the richest man in the world, and he certainly is the most powerfully suggestive personality I have ever seen. A man 10 stories deep, and to me quite unfathomable. Physionomie de Pierrot (not a spear of hair on head or face) flexible, cunning, quakerish, superficially suggestive of naught but goodness and conscientiousness, yet accused of being the greatest villain in business whom our country has produced.

—*WILLIAM JAMES in a letter to Henry James January 29, 1904*

Acclaim for RON CHERNOW's TITAN

A New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice
A Business Week Best Business Book of the Year
A Time Magazine Book of the Year
An Economist Best Biography of the Year

"Splendid . . . a blue chip biography." —*Newsweek*

"Ron Chernow's portrait of Rockefeller, an eccentric on a heroic scale as well as a genius, is convincing. . . . This is the best biography of the man so far."
—*The Washington Post Book World*

"What a story! An outstanding business biography." —*The New York Observer*

"A triumph of research, understanding and elegant writing." —*Houston Chronicle*

"With uncanny timing, Ron Chernow has written a captivating biography of one of the most famous men in American business history. . . . Business needs more books like *Titan*. —*Newsday*

"Good biographies are hard to find and great ones even rarer. . . . A thoughtful and balanced approach to one of the most significant and controversial lives of the past century . . . spellbinding." —*The Seattle Times*

"A masterful synthesis of research and writing . . . an extraordinary achievement in biography." —*The New Republic*

"It's a thrill to read a biography as good as this one! Ron Chernow's *Titan* is a triumph, a brilliant, riveting, and monumental portrait of a fascinating human being and his age." —Robert A. Caro

"Chernow has written the definitive biographies of two other legendary financial dynasties. . . . Now, with his Rockefeller biography, he has completed an extraordinary trilogy about the towering figures of twentieth

century commerce.” —*Vanity Fair*

“By the time Chernow is finished, the old guy seems utterly human . . . and oddly appealing. . . . A timeless parable of our civilization.” —*San Francisco Chronicle*

“You can read the book as a sympathetic portrait of a complex man, a business history, a legal battle, or simply as a great yarn.” —*Business Week*

“It is hard to imagine a better biography of Rockefeller being written. . . . An enthralling biography of an enthralling person.” —*Chicago Tribune*

“A monumental and mesmerizing biography . . . a fascinating yarn, capturing a man who insisted he could serve God and Mammon.” —*The San Diego Union-Tribune*

“A richly textured and engagingly lively portrait. . . . It is a remarkable story and Chernow tells it with confidence and clarity . . . probably the last word on a genuine titan.” —*Daily News*

“Rockefeller lived one of the great American lives, and Chernow has provided him with one of the great American biographies.” —*The Sunday Times* (London)

“In this splendid biography, justice is finally done to [Rockefeller’s] memory.” —*The Plain Dealer*

“Stunning. . . . Mr. Chernow has confirmed his reputation as a great business historian.” —*The Financial Times*

“A worthy biography of a truly titanic figure.” — *The Economist*

“Chernow’s detailed picture of this ‘implausible blend of sin and sanctity’ is a scrupulously balanced, frequently fascinating and humanizing portrait of a figure of seemingly superhuman energy and ambition.” — *People*

“Altogether splendid.” —*American Heritage*

“Sweeping. . . . Chernow lays out the [Rockefeller] conundrum superbly, delineating the forces that shaped this man and the ways he responded to them.” —*USA Today*

“[Ron Chernow is] America’s best business biographer.” — *Fortune*

“Ron Chernow’s splendid biography of John D. Rockefeller Sr. will stand out as one of the best books of the year. He again proves himself remarkably facile with a huge amount of information. . . . I’d be hard pressed to find a page that isn’t interesting. . . . Chernow succeeds brilliantly.” — *Detroit Free Press*

“Powerful, meticulously researched. . . . Chernow encompasses better than any writer before him the powerful contradictions and polarities in Rockefeller’s character. *Titan* . . . is one of the richest and most rewarding biographies of an American magnate.” —*St. Petersburg Times*

“[No biographer] has been as skilled, or as exhaustive, as Ron Chernow.” —
The Philadelphia Inquirer