



The Long Recessional: The Imperial Life of Rudyard Kipling

David Gilmour

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A major new biography of Rudyard Kipling

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was a unique figure in British history, a great writer as well as an imperial icon whose life trajectory matched that of the British Empire from its zenith to its final decades. Kipling was in his early twenties when his first stories about Anglo-Indian life vaulted him into celebrity. He went on to be awarded the Nobel Prize, and to add more phrases to the language than any man since Shakespeare, but his conservative views and advocacy of imperialism damaged his critical reputation -- while at the same time making him all the more popular with a general readership. By the time he died, the man who incarnated an era for millions was almost forgotten, and new generations must come to terms in their own way with his enduring but mysterious powers.

Previous works on Kipling have focused exclusively on his writing and on his domestic life. Here, the distinguished biographer David Gilmour not only explains how and why Kipling wrote, but also explores the themes of his complicated life, his ideas, his relationships, and his views on the Empire and the future. Gilmour is the first writer to explore Kipling's public role, his influence on the way Britons saw themselves and their Empire. His fascinating new book, based on extensive research (especially in the underexplored archives of the United States), is a groundbreaking study of a great and misunderstood writer.

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