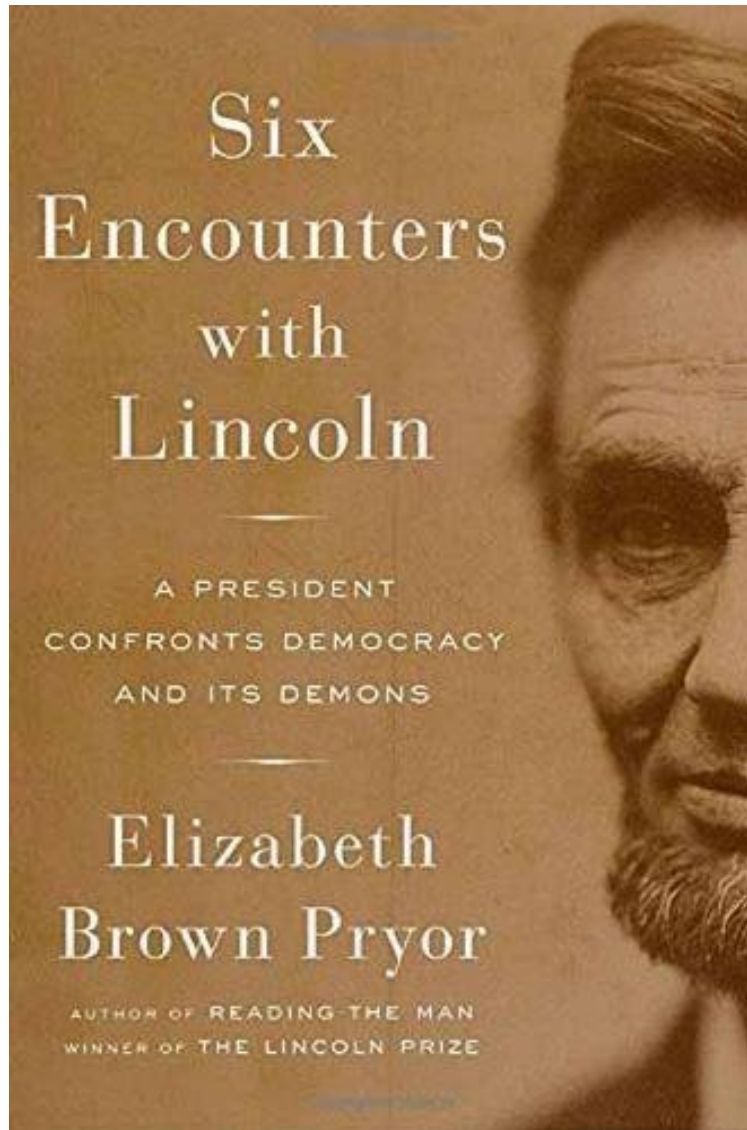


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## Six Encounters with Lincoln: A President Confronts Democracy and Its Demons

*Elizabeth Brown Pryor*  
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**Elizabeth Brown Pryor : Six Encounters with Lincoln: A President Confronts Democracy and Its Demons**  
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Fascinating reading. . .this book eerily reflects some of today's key issues. The New York Times Book Review From an award-winning historian, an engrossing look at how Abraham Lincoln grappled with the challenges of leadership in an unruly democracy An awkward first meeting with U.S. Army officers, on the eve of the Civil War. A conversation on the White House portico with a young cavalry sergeant who was a fiercely dedicated abolitionist. A tense exchange on a navy ship with a Confederate editor and businessman. In this eye-opening book, Elizabeth Brown Pryor examines six intriguing, mostly unknown encounters that Abraham Lincoln had with his constituents. Taken together, they reveal his character and opinions in unexpected ways, illustrating his difficulties in managing a republic and creating a presidency. Pryor probes both the political demons that Lincoln battled in his ambitious exercise of power and the demons that arose from the very nature of democracy itself: the clamorous diversity of the populace, with its outspoken demands. She explores the trouble Lincoln sometimes had in communicating and in juggling the multiple concerns that make up being a political leader; how conflicted he was over the problem of emancipation; and the misperceptions Lincoln and the South held about each other. Pryor also provides a fascinating discussion of Lincoln's fondness for storytelling and how he used his skills as a raconteur to enhance both his personal and political power. Based on scrupulous research that draws on hundreds of eyewitness letters, diaries, and newspaper excerpts, *Six Encounters with Lincoln* offers a fresh portrait of Lincoln as the beleaguered politician who was not especially popular with the people he needed to govern with, and who had to deal with the many critics, naysayers, and dilemmas he faced without always knowing the right answer. What it shows most clearly is that greatness was not simply laid on Lincoln's shoulders like a mantle, but was won in fits and starts.

Praise for *Six Encounters with Lincoln*: Fascinating reading on its own terms, *Six Encounters with Lincoln* nevertheless confronts readers with startlingly relevant questions. . .the notion that democracy involves compromises resonates today. The New York Times Book Review Pryor is particularly adept at conveying the impossibility of Lincoln's task: to represent a profoundly fractured country in which, as one of Lincoln's friends put it, the eyes of the whole nation will be upon you while unfortunately the ears of one half of it will be closed to anything you say. --The Wall Street Journal This history aims at deconstructing Lincoln's mythic reputation as the Great Emancipator to arrive at a more nuanced view . . . Pryor paints a provocative historical portrait while testing common assumptions about an American icon. The New Yorker In her meticulously researched study of these little-known but arresting encounters with Lincoln, Elizabeth Pryor teases out their meaning with cool discrimination, sensitivity, and a vivid pen. She exposes a human president sometimes blundering, graceless, socially awkward, obstinate, intolerant struggling to cope in time of war with the fluid messiness of democratic government. Iconoclastic, unsentimental, and hard-headed, this is a brilliant work that is bound to provoke animated scholarly discussion. -Richard Carwardine, author of *Lincoln: A Life of Purpose and Power* A daring, provocative, and exceptionally important book that convincingly challenges many of the assumptions on which Abraham Lincoln's greatness are based. Elizabeth Brown Pryor examines Lincoln's often startling behavior in heretofore little-known but highly revealing encounters, and from them she expertly weaves a larger narrative of his fitful progress as the beleaguered leader of a nation at war. The research is truly prodigious, the writing graceful and assured. I highly recommend *Six Encounters with Lincoln* to readers seeking a truly fresh perspective on the sixteenth president and believe it to be one of the most significant works on Lincoln of this generation. -Peter Cozzens, author of *The Earth Is Weeping: The Indian Wars for the American West* Deeply researched, telling moments in the life of arguably the most written-about man in history. . .gets beyond the hagiographic portrayals of Lincoln, allowing rare glimpses of the man as vulnerable, clumsy, inarticulate, and very human. . .Kudos to Pryor for offering readers something fresh about our 16th president no small feat. Kirkus (starred) Pryor's impressive final book will be of great appeal to Lincoln aficionados. . .What makes the encounters particularly fascinating is that the participants recorded them at the time, so they remain uncolored by the sentimentality of post-assassination remembrance. Publishers Weekly About the Author Elizabeth Brown Pryor (1951-2015) combined careers as an award-winning historian and a senior diplomat in the American Foreign Service. She was the author of the biography *Clara Barton: Professional Angel*, considered the authoritative work on the founder of the American Red Cross, and *Reading the Man: A Portrait of Robert E. Lee Through His Private Letters*, which won the 2008 Lincoln Prize, the 2007 Jefferson Davis Award, the 2008 Richard B. Harwell Book Award, and the 2007 Richard S. Slatten Award for Excellence in Virginia Biography.