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The Real Fidel Castro

Leycester Coltman

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The Real Fidel Castro Leycester Coltman
Rhetoric during and after the Cold War years has painted starkly contrasting portraits of Cuba's Fidel Castro: an unblemished idealist on the one hand, a ruthless dictator on the other. This book, an intimate and dispassionate biography of the revolutionary leader, shows that neither assessment is true. Leycester Coltman, British ambassador to Cuba in the early 1990s, came as close to personal friendship with Castro as any foreigner was permitted. With frequent contact and regular conversations, Coltman was in a unique position to observe the dictator's personality in both public and private situations. Here he presents a close-up view of the man who for half a century has been loved, admired, feared, and hated, but seldom really understood. Coltman chronicles the events of the Cuban leader's extraordinary life from the political activism of his university days in Havana to periods of exile, imprisonment, and guerilla warfare alongside Che Guevara, to the uncertainties of his old age. Drawing on personal observation and archival sources in Cuba and abroad, Coltman explores the contradiction between the private character and the public reputation, and highlights the complexities of the consummate actor who continues to play a crucial role on the international stage.

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