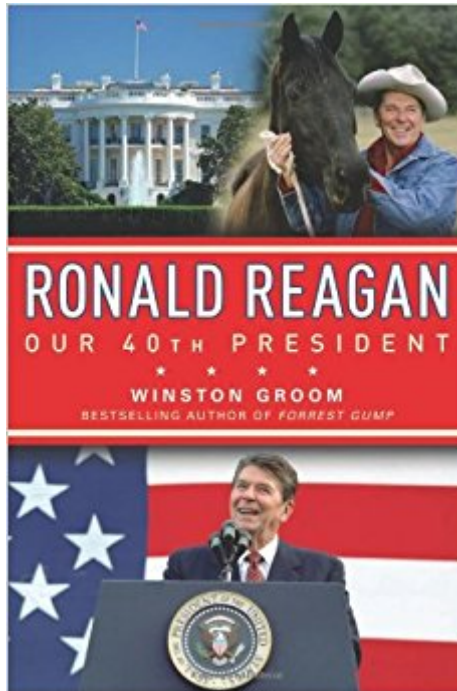




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# Ronald Reagan Our 40th President



## Synopsis

From the author of *Forrest Gump*, *The Aviators*, and *The Generals*...He was one of America's true greats. As president, he changed the world, developing a successful strategy for defeating Communism, toppling the Soviet Union, and liberating Eastern Europe (while hardly firing a shot). And just as important, he restored an America that had found itself mired in a malaise of falling living standards, moral decay, and what seemed like inevitable decline. Though he was our oldest president, Reagan acted as a tonic, rejuvenating America's economy, restoring her confidence, and attracting a majority of young voters won over by his vision of making America once again a shining city on a hill. In this superlative biography for young adults, bestselling author Winston Groom; author of *Forrest Gump*; gives us the full Reagan, from his Midwestern American boyhood, to his early career as a radio sports announcer, to his days as a Hollywood star and his extraordinary political career as a union leader, governor of California, and president of the United States. Covering the gamut of Reagan's dramatic life, *Ronald Reagan: Our 40th President* is essential reading, as inspiring as its subject.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 6 and up

## Customer Reviews

Winston Groom is the author of sixteen previous books, including *Forrest Gump*, *Kearny*, *March*, *Shrouds of Glory*, *Vicksburg: 1863*, and *Conversations with the Enemy*, a Pulitzer Prize

finalist. He lives with his wife and daughter in Point Clear, Alabama.

I chose 5 stars because this book gives a lot of facts and details. My favorite part of the book was when someone tried to kill Ronald Reagan, but he survived. I think everyone should get this book if they like biography books.

This concise biography of Ronald Reagan covers the salient points of his life with dignity & humor. Winston Groom's style is very readable and continues his coverage of historical events. Very highly recommended!

This is a fabulous book for young people and their parents. I read it because I was interested in both the subject, Ronald Reagan, and the writer, Winston Groom. To paraphrase the singer Bob Seger, it is sometimes hard to know what to leave in, and what to leave out, when you are writing a book. Groom knows what to leave in, and what to leave out, in telling the story of Reagan's quite remarkable life as a lifeguard, baseball radio announcer, movie star, union head, GE representative, governor, and president of the United States. To be honest, I thought the first chapter started a tad slow, because it was a kind of summary of some of the momentous issues Reagan faced while in the White House. But then, in the next chapter, when Groom goes back to the beginnings of Reagan's life and starts to tell his life story, the book kicks into gear. I enjoyed this book so much it made me curious to read more of Groom's writing. Though known largely as the author of "Forrest Gump," Groom also writes nonfiction, and I picked up and also thoroughly enjoyed "Kearny's March," a history of the American West, though it's for adults not kids.

Great book on Ronald Reagan without the all bull. Easy read. I am working my way through reading biography of all the presidents.

Winston Groom, forever to be known as the author of *Forrest Gump*, has busied himself with a series of non-fiction books as of late. His latest is this short biography, "Ronald Reagan: Our 40th President." The publisher lists this book as "juvenile nonfiction" but this adult also enjoyed this 148 page biography. This is not a controversial "let's set the record straight" book. I detected no political bias except for the fact that it is a generally friendly book towards Reagan. That being said, Groom covers the lows of Reagan's personal (strained relationships with his children, for example) and political life (Iran Contra - it gets more attention than almost any aspect of his presidency) and

covers them as thoroughly as a book of this size should. This is a great book for high school students because it is easy to read, does not dwell on topics for too long and covers all parts of Reagan's life well, not just his eight years as President. It tells the basics of an extraordinary life (Reagan's more than most, but all presidential lives are extraordinary since there have only been 44 of them). I particularly enjoyed the stories of his days as a sportscaster and his early days in Hollywood. Groom also explains that Reagan's transition from Hollywood actor to politician was not abrupt or even an unnatural move, although I did find it interesting to note that his first response was, "I'm an actor, not a politician." (p. 82) In my real job, when I am not blogging, I am a secondary social studies teacher and I can easily say that if Groom wanted to busy himself writing biographies of all of the recent presidents I would be glad to put them all in my classroom library. This one tells the basics of Reagan's life. Let the student learn that and later on, when they know more, they can start to put value judgments on his actions and choices. That being said, there is a problem with the book. While Groom may know how to tell someone's life story in an interesting way, he seems to have no head for figures. On page 4 he discusses the impact of a horrific 12% inflation rate (the rate when Reagan assumed the presidency) and he incorrectly asserts that a 12% interest rate means that in 8 years the value of a dollar saved 8 years earlier "would be worth exactly zero." That is not correct. A 12% inflation rate means that in 6 years the prices of everything would be double (following the "rule of 72") and that saved dollar would only buy half as much, but it would still have value. On page 144 he states the United States spent \$8 trillion dollars on the Cold War. He states that equals spending \$1 billion per day for 8,000 years. Considering that 1 trillion equals 1,000 billion, it would really equal \$1 billion per day for 8,000 days (about 22 years). So, read this book for what it is - a story well told. And, as always, check the other guy's math. Or, as Reagan noted: "Trust, but verify."

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