

## Disraeli: Or, the Two Lives

Rt. Hon Lord Douglas Hurd, Edward Young

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Benjamin Disraeli was the most gifted parliamentarian of the nineteenth century. A superb orator, writer and wit, he twice rose to become Prime Minister, dazzling many with his famous epigrams along the way. But how much do we really know about the man behind the words? How did this bankrupt Jewish school dropout and trashy novelist reach the top of the Victorian Conservative Party? And why does his reputation continue to have such a hold over British politics today? In this engaging reassessment, Douglas Hurd and Edward Young explore the paradoxes at the centre of Disraeli's 'two lives': a dandy and gambler on the one hand, a devoted servant and favourite Prime Minister of the Queen on the other. A passionately ambitious politician, he intrigued and manoeuvred with unmatched skill to get to - in his own words - 'the top of the greasy pole', but he also developed a set of ideas to which he was devoted. His political achievements are never quite what they seem: he despised the idea of a more classless society, he never used the phrase 'One Nation', and although he passed the Second Reform Act he was no believer in democracy. By stripping away the many myths which surround his career, Douglas Hurd and Edward Young bring alive the true genius of Disraeli in this wonderfully entertaining exploration of his life.



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