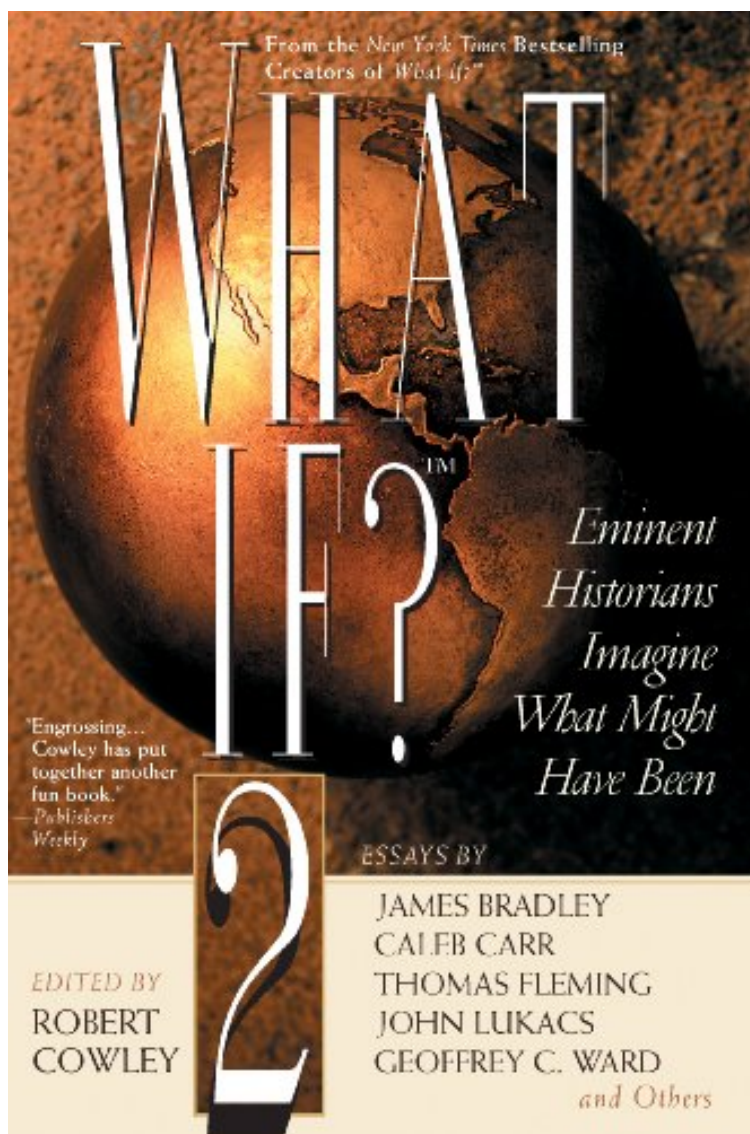


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What If? II



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Description : Description du produit There is no surer way to feel the danger or the good fortune of our collective past than to contemplate those moments when the world's future hung in the balance. Our brightest historians speculate on some of these intriguing crossroads and the ways in which our lives might have been changed for the better -- or the worse. These unabridged essays range across the full span of history. Geoffrey Parker describes ramifications that might have included a divided Reformation movement, a strengthened Catholic leadership, and no European settlements in the Americas. And Caleb Carr argues that we could have been spared the horrific last six months of World War II in Europe if Eisenhower had seized his chance to destroy the Nazis in the fall of 1944. This all-star list of award-winning and bestselling authors includes Lance Morrow, Andrew Roberts, Cecelia Holland, Theodore F. Cook and others.

Prsentation de l'diteurWhat if Lincoln didn't abolish slavery? What if an assassin succeeded in killing FDR

in 1933? This volume presents 25 intriguing "what if..." scenarios by some of today's greatest historical minds-including James Bradley, Caleb Carr, James Chace, Theodore F. Cook, Jr., Carlos M.N. Eire, George Feifer, Thomas Fleming, Richard B. Frank, Victor Davis Hanson, Cecelia Holland, Alistair Horne, David Kahn, Robert Katz, John Lukacs, William H. McNeill, Lance Morrow, Williamson Murray, Josiah Ober, Robert L. O'Connell, Geoffrey Parker, Theodore K. Rabb, Andrew Roberts, Roger Spiller, Geoffrey C. Ward, and Tom Wicker..com Many armchair historians have spent hours daydreaming of what might have been if some turning point in history had gone another way. The appeal of the What If? books is that editor Robert Cowley gets professional historians to concentrate on these imaginative questions. The first volume focused entirely on military matters; What If? 2 leans heavily but not exclusively in that direction. Victor Davis Hanson wonders about the consequences for Western philosophy if Socrates had died in battle, Thomas Fleming ponders a Napoleonic invasion of North America, and Caleb Carr argues the Second World War lasted longer than it should have because George Patton's superiors restrained their energetic general. More than two dozen contributors offer bold speculation: If the Chinese had committed themselves to ocean exploration, asks Theodore F. Cook Jr., might they have discovered the New World and even prevented "the worst horrors of the Atlantic Slave Trade [by halting] Portuguese expansion along the African coast at this early date?" Other times they are pleasantly modest: In one of the book's best sections, John Lukacs describes the fantasy of Teddy Roosevelt defeating Woodrow Wilson in the 1912 election--and decides the long- term effects would not have been great. Like its predecessor, What If? 2 is delicious mind candy for readers willing to believe there's nothing inevitable about what has come before us. --John Miller

From Publishers Weekly Like its predecessor (also edited by Cowley), this is an engrossing collection of essays on counterfactual history. Each contributor examines a pivotal event, then considers the ramifications had the event come out differently. In some cases the ramifications are so monumental that their effects are more obvious than intriguing. For example, if Socrates had died in battle during the Peloponnesian War, Victor Davis Hanson suggests, democracy, Christianity and Western thought as a whole would be radically different. Similarly, had Pontius Pilate pardoned Jesus the book's most fascinating premise Christianity would have developed in entirely new directions, according to Carlos M.N. Eire. Other essays depend, to diminished effect, on nonevents, such as Theodore F. Cook Jr. explaining what the incredible Chinese navy would have accomplished in the Atlantic and the New World had the Ming emperors not turned inwards. Most authors, however, have teased out some incredibly tiny detail in history and demonstrated how that one stitch holds the whole fabric together. Most notably, Robert L. O'Connell explains how one bureaucrat may have kept Germany from winning WWI by hindering a program of unrestricted submarine warfare. James Bradley writes about a ragtag group of Australian soldiers during WWII who held back thousands of well-trained Japanese forces on the Kokoda Trail in New Guinea and by this Thermopylae-like action prevented the enemy from taking Port Moresby and, thus, Australia; had the defenders failed, "the entire calculus of the Pacific War" would have changed. And Robert Katz explores what would have happened had Pius XII protested the Holocaust, which he twice had a chance to do. Cowley has put together another fun book, although his introductions to each essay give away too much of the game. Illus. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.