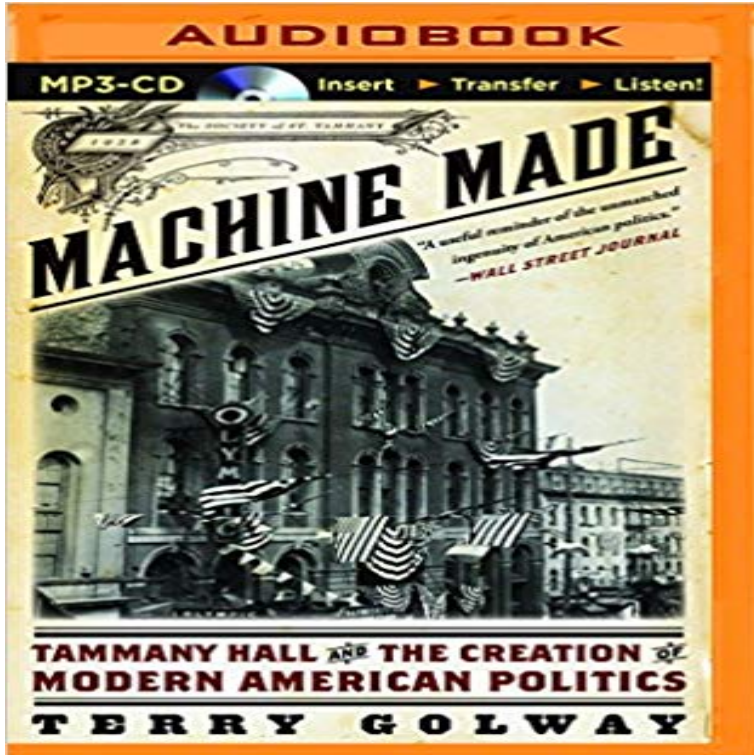


Machine Made: Tammany Hall and the Creation of Modern American Politics



A major, surprising new history of New York's most famous political machine? Tammany Hall? revealing, beyond the vice and corruption, a birthplace of progressive urban politics. For decades, history has considered Tammany Hall, New York's famous political machine, shorthand for the worst of urban politics: graft, crime, and patronage personified by notoriously corrupt characters. Infamous crooks like William Boss Tweed dominate traditional histories of Tammany, distorting our understanding of a critical chapter of American political history. In *Machine Made*, historian and New York City journalist Terry Golway convincingly dismantles these stereotypes; Tammany's corruption was real, but so was its heretofore forgotten role in protecting marginalized and maligned immigrants in desperate need of a political voice. Irish immigrants arriving in New York during the 19th century faced an unrelenting onslaught of hyperbolic, nativist propaganda. They were voiceless in a city that proved, time and again, that real power remained in the hands of the mercantile elite, not with a crush of ragged newcomers flooding its streets. Haunted by fresh memories of the horrific Irish potato famine in the old country, Irish immigrants had already learned an indelible lesson about the dire consequences of political helplessness. Tammany Hall emerged as a distinct force to support the city's Catholic newcomers, courting their votes while acting as a powerful intermediary between them and the Anglo-Saxon Protestant ruling class. In a city that had yet to develop the social services we now expect, Tammany often functioned as a rudimentary public welfare system and a champion of crucial social reforms benefiting its constituency, including workers compensation, prohibitions against child labor, and public pensions for widows with children. Tammany figures

also fought against attempts to limit immigration and to strip the poor of the only power they had?the vote.

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