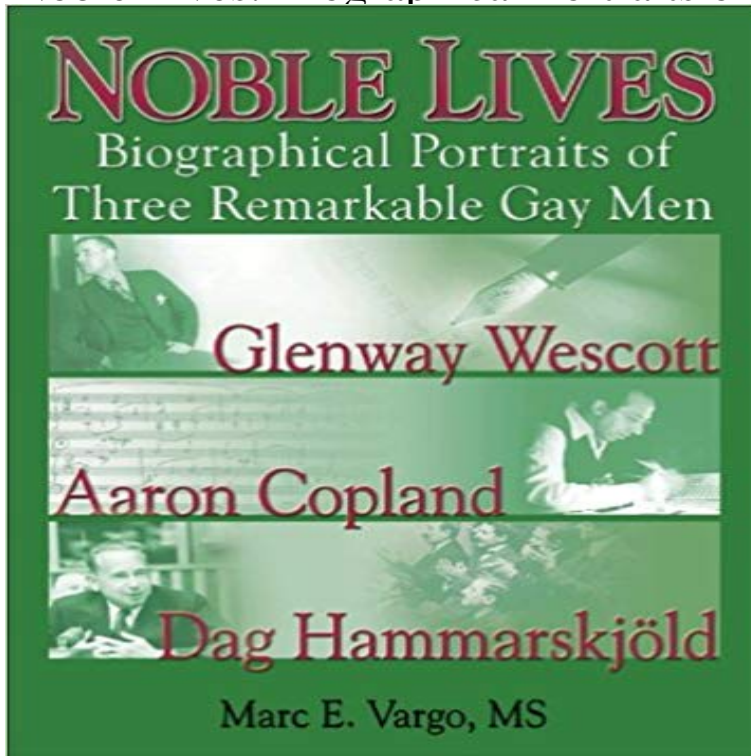


Noble Lives: Biographical Portraits of Three Remarkable Gay Men



Learn the cost of being gay (or perceived as gay) for three historical figures. Noble Lives examines how sexual orientation affected the careers of two historical figures generally accepted as gay, and a third whose sexual identity was in constant question during his lifetime. This unique book features comprehensive biographical accounts of Jazz Age author Glenway Wescott, Academy Award-winning composer Aaron Copland, and Nobel Peace Laureate Dag Hammarskjöld, addressing the relationship between their sexuality and their achievements in literature, the social sciences, musical composition, diplomacy, and global politics. Noble Lives is the first English-language text to thoroughly and objectively explore the troubled sexuality of Sweden's Hammarskjöld, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations. Noble Lives is a colorful and concise read that puts a historical perspective on the public and private lives of three important twentieth-century figures: Glenway Wescott, author and political progressive, he used his life to enlighten society through his persistent efforts to enhance the public's awareness and acceptance of homosexuality. Though his early work (*The Grandmothers*, *The Pilgrim Hawk*) was well-received, Wescott's career suffered from his inability to write honestly from his own experiences as a gay man, and his output was limited by the unwillingness of English-language publishers to release literary works having same-sex themes. He published his last novel in 1945 and for the next 40 years was something of an elder statesman of American literature, dealing with censorship laws, defending controversial members of the literary community, and advancing ideals of freedom of thought and expression. He worked closely in the 1950s with Alfred Kinsey, Director of the Institute for Sex Research at Indiana University, to develop objective research

into gay sexuality. Aaron Copland Hailed by The New York Times as the pioneer of American music, he lived an openly gay life without regret in an era when the general public held neither his sexual orientation nor his Jewish background in high esteem. Copland was accused of promoting gay musicians based on their sexuality rather than their ability and was rumored to be part of a fraternity of gay composers. He overcame the discrimination he faced to receive a Pulitzer Prize, an Academy Award, and presidential medals from three administrations. In the years following his persecution by Sen. Joseph McCarthy and the Senate's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Copland produced his most personal work *The Tender Land*, a musical drama thought by most to be the autobiographical account of a gay man living in conservative times and perceived as a coming-out tale.

Dag Hammarskjöld Despite holding a position of public prominence as Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1953 until his death in 1961, he managed to withhold even the most minor details of his personal life from the world. Even his posthumously published journal, *Markings*, shies away from any mention of his private life. Possibly asexual, probably homosexual, Hammarskjöld was unable to accept his sexuality and lived an unhappy, frustrated life of sexual abstinence, suffering slurs from political figures and the international media. But though he couldn't resolve his own internal conflicts, he was masterful at settling external conflicts as he worked to solve disputes in Palestine, Vietnam, Egypt, and the Congo.

Noble Lives is an invaluable reference source for LGBT readers, providing an understanding and appreciation of those who paved the way during an unenlightened and unforgiving time. It's also an excellent resource for mainstream readers with an interest in biography and the history of the twentieth

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