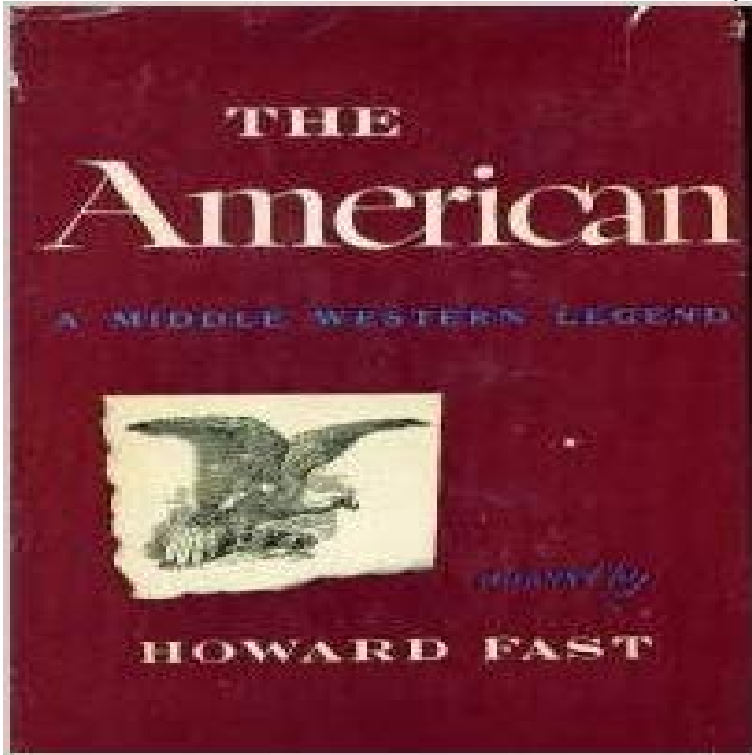


The American: A Middle Western Legend



THE AMERICAN is a novel which tells the story of John Peter Altgeld of Illinois, a latter-day Lincoln, who sacrificed money and health and political power to become the champion of democracy and the foe of greed and corruption. Here is the story of his farm boyhood, of his Civil War experiences in the Army, and of his masterful struggles to become a successful lawyer and politician. But it is then that his real story begins and that he emerges as the last indigenous American hero, for, as Governor of Illinois, he pardoned the convicted Hay-market anarchists and touched off an epochal struggle between the forces of democracy and the powers-that-be. Altgeld was ultimately defeated, but not before he captured the Democratic Party from Grover Cleveland, defied every newspaper in the land, and won an abiding place in the hearts of the American people. In his last dramatic fighting days he reaches the stature of greatness and stands forth, truly, as The American who comes out of the direct line and the tradition of Jefferson and Jackson and Lincoln. In THE AMERICAN, Howard Fast, a young novelist of great achievements, has written his best and warmest book. It is such a theme as Dreiser might have tackled, yet freshly presented with force, with poetic intensity, and with broad humanity. The result is the portrait of a wonderful figure in American history, told against the background of Americas coming of age.

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