



## In the Arena

*Booth Tarkington*

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# In the Arena

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*"I speak of politics as a game, and in some ways it is," he says to me.*

"But there are times when it looks to me more like a series of combats, hand-to-hand fights for life -- and fierce struggles between men and strange powers! You buy your newspaper and that's your ticket to the amphitheater.

"But the distance is hazy and far; there are clouds of dust and you can't see clearly. To make out just what is going on, you have to get down in the arena yourself! Once you're in it, the view you'll have and the fighting that will come your way will more than repay you. Still, I don't think we ought to go in with the idea of being repaid.

*"But you have to get down -- in the arena!"*

Booth Tarkington (1869-1946), two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize, pursued politics early in his career, serving as a member of the Indiana House of Representatives. His observations of the cynicism and corruption of lawmakers inspired not only his first novel, *The Gentleman from Indiana*, but also his more accomplished work of six years later, *In the Arena*.

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