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Sommario/riassunto	The theory of statecraft explores practical politics through the strategies and manoeuvres of privileged agents, whereas the theory of democracy dwells among abstract and lofty ideals. Can these two ways of thinking somehow be reconciled and combined? Or is statecraft destined to remain the preserve of powerful elites, leaving democracy to ineffectual idealists? J. S. Maloy demonstrates that the Western tradition of statecraft, usually considered the tool of tyrants and

oligarchs, has in fact been integral to the development of democratic thought. Five case studies of political debate, ranging from ancient Greece to the late nineteenth-century United States, illustrate how democratic ideas can be relevant to the real world of politics instead of reinforcing the idealistic delusions of conventional wisdom and academic theory alike. The tradition highlighted by these cases still offers resources for reconstructing our idea of popular government in a realistic spirit - skeptical, pragmatic, and relentlessly focused on power.