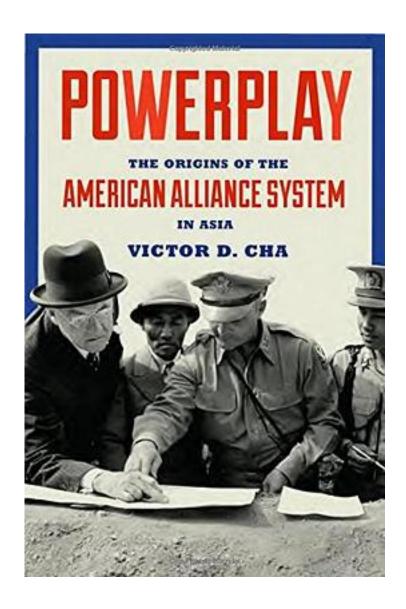
Powerplay



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I was a woman who was in the fight place
at the fight time. During the spring of my second year at

Harvard Business Schooli¼Œ I had thirty-two job offers from

br >investment-banking firmsi¼Œ management-consulting firms
br >and Fortune 500 companies. It was a time when corpo-

- rations were hungry for bfight-eyed, ambitious young
 MBAs and especially eager for women. My only major
dilemma at the timei¼Œ and it was an enviable onei¼Œ was
whether to work for the formidable i'4 to blue-blooded Morgan < br > Stanley investment-banking firm or the more aggressive

-and dynamic Goldmanii¼Œ Sachs. I was weighing the pros

-and cons of these over a can of Campbell s Chunky Soup

-when the phone rang.
 The calleri¼Œ an older mani¼Œ identified himself as J. Leslie
Rollinsii/4Œ a recruiter for several of the Fortune 500 com-
panies and a former assistant dean at the Harvard Busi-
ness School. He said he had a very interesting job he
br > wanted to discuss with me and wouldn t I like to meet
 him in downtown Boston to discuss the details? Actually
 I d just come from an interview at the renowned Boston
 Consulting Group and dreaded another taxi fide into town.
 I had enough offers to retire on and thought I might cause
 a mutiny at school if I received one more (the Business
 Mary Cunningham //5
School was a pretty competitive place). My calleri¼Œ how-
everi¼Œ was not to be deterred. He said my professors had
br >described me as one of their best students. In facti¼Œ he
>saidi¼Œ one of the Harvard deans had told himi¼Œ \"Mary Cun-
>ningham has the best chance of being the first female
graduate of the Harvard Business School to become the
chairman of a non-cosmetics company.\" Wouldn t I just
give him an hour? If only because I was curious, and
because I felt I had better not refuse the invitation of a
br>former Harvard dean, I agreed. But it would have to be
br >a very good offer to make me turn down a \$55,00ŏ-a-year
starting salary in New York.
 For the students at Harvard Business Schooli¼Œ there
was no higher calling than investment banking. It was the
fastest and least painful route to the top. A few years at
Morgan Stanley and a conscientious MBA from Harvard
could become a chief financial officer by age thirty. The
fast track appealed to me but I had deeper urgings as well.
br >My strict Catholic upbringing made me take seriously my
br >mission \"to do good\" and yet at the same time instilled
in me a longing to carry this conviction into the real world.
I thought business was the perfect answer. I could try to
be a force for good in the business world. Growing up in

he sixties had only reinforced this desire. At the same
br>time I could get a taste of the action too. It was a novel
br>approach and one that sometimes antagonized my class-
mates. You just couldn t be ambitious and high-minded < br > at the same time. < br > The fact that I was successful didn t helta much either.
The day I was admitted to the Century Clubii¼Œ an elite
organization for Harvard students considered the most
br >promising by ;heir professorsi¼Œ was the day I lost many ot
my friends.t

作者介绍:

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