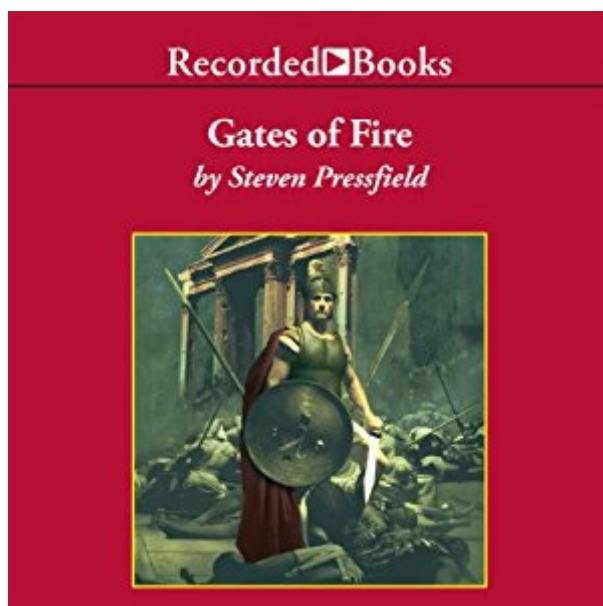


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Gates Of Fire: An Epic Novel Of The Battle Of Thermopylae



Synopsis

Gates of Fire puts you at the side of valiant Spartan warriors in 480 BC for the bloody, climactic battle at Thermopylae. There, a few hundred of Sparta's finest sacrificed their lives to hold back the invading Persian millions. The time they bought enabled the Greeks to rally - saving, according to ancient historian Herodotus, "Western democracy and freedom from perishing in the cradle." How did the Spartans accomplish this superhuman feat? This is what the King of Persia hopes to learn from the sole Spartan survivor. The squire's story indeed reveals the incredible rigors of Spartan training - and more importantly, how the whole culture fostered the mindset of fearlessness. Steven Pressfield has skillfully combined scholarship and storytelling to bring the whole world of ancient Sparta brilliantly to life. George Guidall's dramatic delivery enhances the richness and feeling of this inspired recreation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There are no words in the English language that can truly capture my feelings about this book. I read it, at least, a couple of times a year. Steven Pressfield is a great writer, but with Gates of Fire, he reaches a pitch of sublimity that rivals the gods. OK, enough with the hero worship. Seriously, this book is amazing. As a former Marine, and a bit of a classics buff, Gates of Fire speaks to me on so many levels. It's one of the absolute best portrayals in fiction, of the ideals of duty, patriotism, and manly honor. It's also highly realistic in its depiction of the psyche of the warrior. But I think, most importantly, it's just a great story; full of action, adventure, unrequited love, sacrifice, honor,

joy, pain, humor and sadness. Other's may disagree, but if you're a fan of military history or fiction, or even if you're just interested in Classical Western History, you will love this book.

I enjoyed the book, but found it somewhat slow at times. The last couple of chapters truly made up for some of the slowness in the other chapters. I have friends who swear by this book as Mr. Pressfield's best, but I liked "Killing Rommel" and "The Profession" more. I will have to order "The Legend of Bagger Vance" to see how that holds up.

Very few authors inspire men, and warriors alike, like Pressfield. In my opinion, this is his greatest novel to date. The story can sell itself, but Pressfield brings a human touch. As a Marine Corps combat veteran, civilian life leaves much to be desired in terms of honor and integrity. When I become frustrated with the world, I turn to this novel and remember a time when a man's word meant something. It re-focuses me on ideals that should be inherent in all people. I've read it more than 50 times and take away something new every time. To me, it's a self-help book as much as an epic novel of courage and sacrifice. I highly recommend it to everyone that I meet. I have it on my book shelf right next to The Art of War, The Emperor's Handbook and With The Old Breed. I also recommend his book The Warrior Ethos. It is a quick and easy read that is packed with ideals that are long lost in society today.

This story grabs the reader from the start and keeps going strong to the end. Even when you know the ending, the author holds your interest. The author's choice to tell the story as the first person narrative of a Greek surviving participant explaining Spartan heroism and martial prowess to the Emperor Xerxes works well and helps immerse the reader in the tale. Lots of good historical information and insight into the Spartan culture. I cannot overstate how much I enjoyed the overall story and especially the dramatic action of the climax.

I have to admit I almost gave up on this book in the first 25 pages. It is written in a simulated "ancient" style, as a narrative that was supposed to have been written thousands of years ago, which took some getting used to. And the first part of the book lists a lot of people and cities in and around ancient Greece that are hard to read and impossible to pronounce (I like to sound the names out in my head). But I labored on because I had heard so many good things about the book, and I'm glad I did. It turned into a very interesting fictional story which simultaneously teaches about historical events. One slightly annoying thing was how distances were described: Sometimes in the

imperial/American system (feet, miles, etc.), and sometimes in the metric system (meters, kilometers, etc.), even though I don't think either of those systems of measurement were in existence back then. Don't get me wrong, I don't know how the author was supposed to convey the measurements in a way the reader can understand without using a modern system of measurement, but he could have at least been consistent by sticking with one or the other. I do have to commend the author for conveying an air of authenticity by using that "ancient" writing style I referred to before. While it was a little offputting at first, I quickly grew accustomed to it, and I was impressed that a modern author could pull it off so convincingly. The book is fairly even handed in describing war, which is a significant part of the book. He manages to both glorify the warriors for their bravery, and denounce war itself for its brutality. Overall a good book which I recommend.

This unique mix of history , philosophy and a great novel set against the backdrop of one of the greatest battles in history got what it deserved , a great writer. Pressfield captures the culture of the times and the special role played by the warriors. He's created and woven into the history of the era a great novel, filled with culture, history and adventure. It's a really refreshing read thanks to his skill and attention to both the detail of history and the skills of a great writer. It's an inspiring tale with lessons for today. It is not an accident that Pressfield is the only author with two books on the Marine Corps Commandants reading list. This is a classic exploration of the warrior culture . Highly recommended.

I am a retired Classics professor, but still doing some teaching and writing full time. I read this novel a few years ago, so I have not answered the detailed questions. Nevertheless I have recommended this book to many friends. Normally I am not impressed by historical novels in my field, but Pressfield is both a fine scholar and a fine writer. Even if you have read Herodotus, this book is a great, gripping, and faithful companion to The Father of History--actually he should be the Grandfather of History.

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