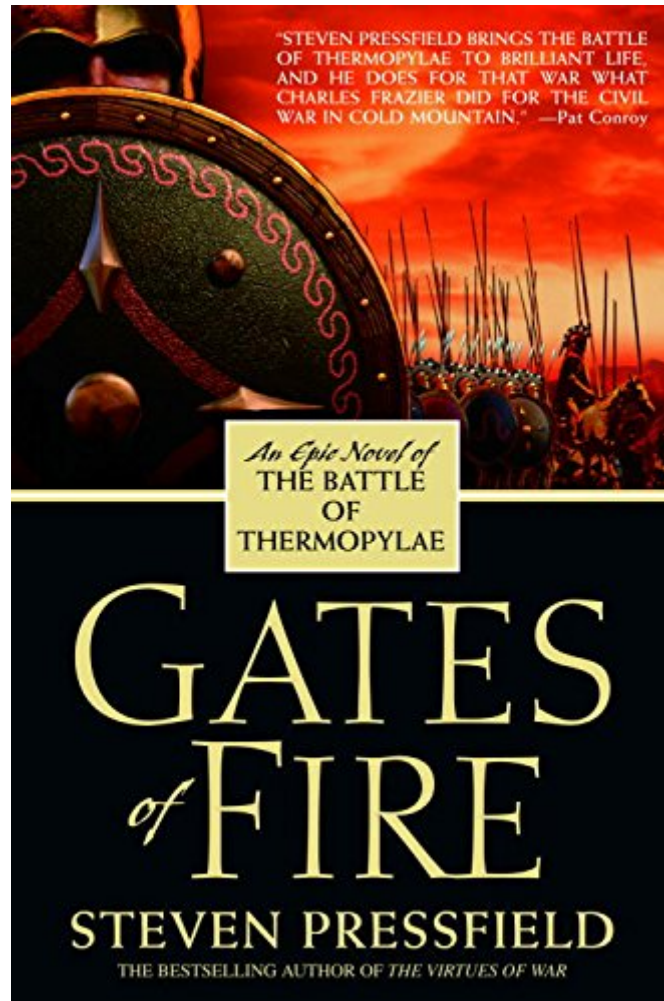




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Gates Of Fire



Synopsis

BONUS: This edition contains an excerpt from Steven Pressfield's *The Profession*. The national bestseller! At Thermopylae, a rocky mountain pass in northern Greece, the feared and admired Spartan soldiers stood three hundred strong. Theirs was a suicide mission, to hold the pass against the invading millions of the mighty Persian army. Day after bloody day they withstood the terrible onslaught, buying time for the Greeks to rally their forces. Born into a cult of spiritual courage, physical endurance, and unmatched battle skill, the Spartans would be remembered for the greatest military stand in history--one that would not end until the rocks were awash with blood, leaving only one gravely injured Spartan squire to tell the tale....

Book Information

File Size: 2189 KB

Print Length: 402 pages

Publisher: Bantam (January 30, 2007)

Publication Date: January 30, 2007

Language: English

ASIN: B000NJL7QO

Text-to-Speech: Not enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #17,546 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #111

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Customer Reviews

A week after finishing, I still can't get it out of my head. Mostly told from the perspective of a man who chose to become a Spartan Helot (i.e. slave) and "squire", it definitely provides an idealized picture of Spartan society. The novel definitely tends to understate some of the less savory aspects of Spartan society. That being said, the novel is more interested in exploring why 300 of them would choose to stand and fight when they knew to do so would mean certain death. Wonderful read... far

better than The 300.

One of the best books on why Soldier's fight, the warrior mentality, and the horrors of war. This book was mandatory reading for one of my classes, and it is still one of my favorite books many years later.

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.

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