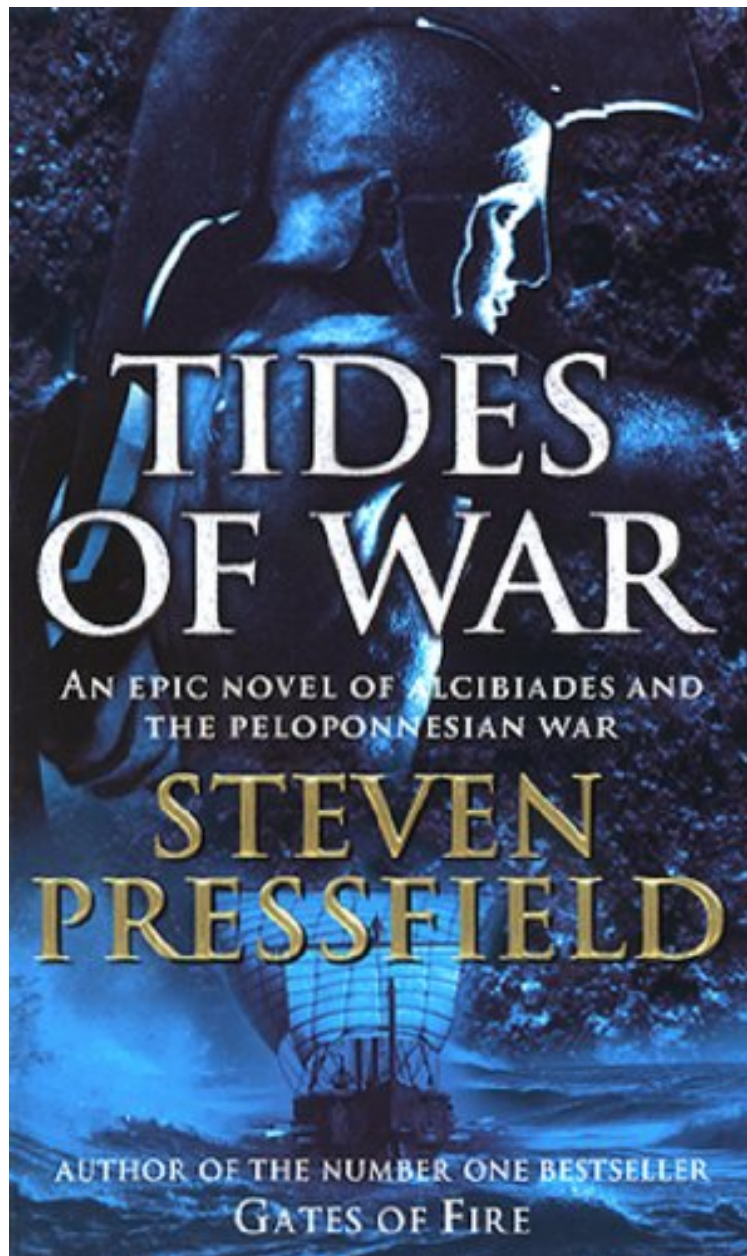


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Tides Of War

Von Steven Pressfield

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Von Steven Pressfield : Tides Of War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tides Of War:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen2 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.

Interesting Attempt, but Disappointing! Von Richard RinnI purchased this book with great anticipation, having very much enjoyed "Gates of Fire". Unfortunately the things which I liked so much in that book are largely missing in this one. The depiction of the hoplite's experience in very personal terms made "Gates of Fire" an engrossing read; as with all great historical fiction (whether the facts are right or not), Pressfield created a detailed and believable world populated by realistic characters with which we could empathize. "Tides of War" has flashes of this (as with the carefully constructed description of the critical action at Syracuse), but most of it is a rather dry, impersonal exposition of chronological history, that--most of the time--does not engage us on a visceral level. I read "Gates of Fire" with so much pleasure that I will probably continue to buy further Pressfield books, but had "Tides of War" been his first endeavour, that would not be the case. Still, not a bad try (given its ambitious story line), but only a middling success!

1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. ambitions of war Von karl b. The Peloponnesian Wars have an enduring intrigue, framing as they did the rise of the golden age in Greek arts, architecture, philosophy and science. The rivalry of Athens and Sparta lasted roughly 100 years, commencing in 490 BC with Athens's military consolidation in the victory at Marathon and ending in 404 BC with the defeat of its armada at Aegospotami. It has come to symbolize the competing agencies and ideals in warfare between nations to this day. The first wars to emerge from the mists of mythology to objective analysis and record, they were described in written chronicles by Herodotus and Thucydides. This heralded the transition from the oral, mystical tradition of Homer's heroic poetry to the 'modern' era which formed the bedrock of Greco Roman and then Western civilizations. Into this galaxy of events came the pivotal figure of Alcibiades, who anchors Pressfield's book. He was a student and foil of Socrates in Plato's dialogues, a military leader for Athens, Sparta and Persia; respectively playing agent-provocateur against former allegiances. He lived for conquest and to usurp the established order. Blessed with eloquence, bravery, passion and overarching ambition, he stamped his imprint on history, as much for self glorification as political necessity. Pressfield's book is expansive in scope rather than penetrating. The perspective is colloquial and personal, which skirts the labyrinth of Athenian politics of the time. He has, though, effectively used some of the techniques Thucydides employed in presenting rhetorical argument to elucidate the underpinnings and objectives of the wars, with a modern accessibility. The lush, descriptive writing provides a sweep which tends to engulf the characters in the current of events. Like an epic film, the characters are caught up in a vast tide of conflict, at some cost to providing shading and complexity. Pressfield, however, has provided a reliable, gripping account of the saga. The story is told as a retelling of death row confession, by a captain of marines and assassin of Alcibiades. This added degree of separation, leads to some unnecessary, but not overwhelming, confusion in the narration. The author exhaustively presents the events, strategy as well as the experiences attitudes of common soldiers. The battles of Syracuse and Hellespont are told in tactical, gory detail. This is an entertaining and informative novel, perhaps more in the 'escape' genre than rigorous history or literature, but still providing an illuminating lens on this seminal historical period.

1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Outstanding Von Lars Porsena Several years after the end of the thrice nine year struggle known as the Peloponnesian War, Socrates was awaiting execution in an Athenian prison. In an adjacent cell one Polimedes, soldier, failed farmer, mercenary, political agent, assassin, awaits his own execution. To Jason, his solicitor, Polimedes thinks back upon his life and the extraordinary character of Alcibiades who was his privilege ,or curse, to know. Polimedes recounts the ravages of the plague that prostrated Athens and just as important, the soul-crushing effects on himself and the polis... Abandoning the city Polimedes takes to the life of the mercenary. He acquaints the reader with the essential humors of the soldiers life (sweat, water, blood , tears and some of the earthier fluids) If you've ever had to hump seventy pounds of gear for 12 hours and then hack a hole in the ground with an entrenching tool this will be familiar... After a series of calamitous engagements the Athenian expedition is annihilated. Polimedes is branded as a slave and consigned to the living hell of the quarries. Rescued by Alcibiades, he begins a life bound to him as an agent... Enmeshed again in internal convulsions Polimedes can only extricate himself with the death of Alcibiades. Although 2500 years old the world of classical Greece is called to life. The battle's are vivid and visceral. The shot from slings puncture unprotected flesh like 18th century musket balls, incendiaries fill the air, triremes predatorily skim the seas, timbers sunder, bowels empty on decks, marines sprint to board. One can only marvel at the complexity of the sea-land operations and the intelligence that guided them. Men don't all die in battle. Tetanus and tooth infections carry off heroes. Underlying all of this is an examination of the life of the mind. Alcibiades is used to explore the nature of representative government in all of its glories and ugliness. The structure of the language and syntax is archaic in the best sense of the word. The debates are compelling ;the speeches stirring. It's truly remarkable that they can speak to us across 2500 years. Its' voice is true to the times while remaining accessible to the modern reader. If you've been flogged through or have a nodding acquaintance with Plato's Dialogues, Thucydides, Homer, the tragedians, it will all come flooding back as this volume puts flesh and bone on those disembodied voices. I've noticed that some of the readers (younger I suspect) are disappointed that this is not as viscerally powerful as "Gates of Fire". The bluff and noble Spartans are replaced by the infuriatingly captious, bumptious, fractious, ever acquisitive and inquisitive Athenians. The advice I like to give is: set the book aside in a safe place. Your money was well spent. After some contact with Plato, Thucydides, several years of military service or some life experience return to "Tides". You'll

be surprised how good it got. Probably the best of its' genre.

Kurzbeschreibung Alcibiades - mercurial soldier and charismatic commander without peer on land and sea, a man whom fortune always favoured. Raised as a ward of Pericles, later a protégé of Socrates, and compared to Achilles by the adoring Athenian masses, he was to become the key figure in the Peloponnesian War - the tumultuous 27-year civil war between Athens and Sparta that would devastate Greece in the last quarter of the 5th century BC. At the outset, for all his Spartan upbringing, Alcibiades remained loyal to Athens. But his popularity - and his arrogance - fuelled the bitter resentment of rivals who secured his death warrant on a charge of treason. Encouraged to flee for his life (and showing masterful pragmatism for which he joined the enemy, the Spartans, and went on to lead their legendary scarlet-cloaked ranks from one military triumph to the next. What became clear to the opposing states was that whoever had Alcibiades at the head of their army would control Greece. It was Aristophanes once wrote that Athenians 'love, hate and cannot do without him' and to the end, their glory and downfall were shared. Recounted by one Polemides, a seasoned soldier accused of assassinating the great leader, *Tides of War* is an epic, thrilling retelling of ancient, near-forgotten history. From devastating battles on land and sea to the vicious political infighting and backstabbing in the city of Athena herself, Steven Pressfield again succeeds in bringing historical precision and human scale to those dark, dangerous times, and paints an extraordinary portrait of this remarkable man whose fortunes were to mirror the ebb and flow of the tides of war....

If readers of epic historical fiction are influenced in their literary choices by successful films in the genre, then the timing of Steven Pressfield's *Tides of War* could not be better, with the cinematic release of Ridley Scott's *Gladiator*. Ironically, the very qualities that distinguish Scott's movie are here in greater concentration: tremendous historical sweep; strong, well-defined characters and bloody confrontations. The one area in which Pressfield definitely possesses the edge, though, is the fierce intelligence and rigorous authenticity of his remarkable book. As a picture of the ancient world, it is nigh unbeatable but it is the characterisation of the soldier protagonist Alcibiades (who becomes a central figure in the war between Athens and Sparta) that is Pressfield's greatest achievement. Alcibiades is a brilliantly wrought conflation of ancient and modern sensibilities, the perfect conduit into this savage world. On the battlefield, Alcibiades has never known defeat but his success has created ill feeling among his political opponents in Athens. A trumped-up charge of treason forces him to flee to Sparta, where he engineers a series of military triumphs. However, his heart lies in Athens and, through a series of savage confrontations (both on the battlefield and in the equally dangerous political arena), he moves inexorably towards his unwritten destiny. It will be no surprise to the readers of the equally impressive *Gates of Fire* that this exuberant panoply of a far-off age is so luminously rendered. --Barry Forshaw .com

After chronicling the Spartan stand at Thermopylae in his audacious *Gates of Fire*, Steven Pressfield once again proves that it's all Greek to him. In *Tides of War*, he tells the tale of Athenian soldier extraordinaire Alcibiades. Despite the vaunted claims for Periclean democracy, he is undoubtedly first among equals--a great warrior and an impressive physical specimen to boot: "The beauty of his person easily won over those previously disposed, and disarmed even those who abhorred his character and conduct." He is also a formidable orator, whose stump speeches are paradoxically heightened by what some might consider an impediment: Even his lisp worked in Alcibiades' favor. It was a flaw; it made him human. It took the curse off his otherwise godlike self-presentation and made one, despite all misgivings, like the fellow. This tale of arms and the man requires two narrators. One, Jason, is an aging noble who serves as a sort of recording angel of the Athenian golden age. The other, Polemides, was long Alcibiades' right-hand man, yet is now imprisoned for his murder. As they were in his previous novel, Pressfield's battle scenes are extraordinarily vivid and visceral. This time, however, many of these elemental clashes take place on water. "As far as sight could carry, the sea stood curtained with smoke and paved with warcraft. Immediately left, a battleship had rammed one of the vessels in the wall; all three of her banks were backing water furiously, to extract and ram again, while across the breach screamed storms of stones, darts, and brands of such density that the air appeared solid with steel and flame." In addition to his gift for rendering patriotic gore, the author excels at quieter but no less deadly forms of combat. As Alcibiades' star rises and falls and rises again, we are escorted directly into the snakepit of Athenian realpolitik. Bathing us in the details of a distant era, Pressfield is largely convincing. But it must be said that his diction exhibits a sometimes comical variegation, sliding from Homeric rhetoric to tough-guy speak to the sort of casual Anglicisms we might expect from Evelyn Waugh's far-from-bright young things. No matter. *Tides of War* conquers by sheer storytelling prowess, reminding us that war was--and is--a highly addictive version of hell. --Darya Silver