

[PDF] Tides Of War

Steven Pressfield - pdf download free book

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Description:

After chronicling the Spartan stand at Thermopylae in his audacious , 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, Polymides, 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* --This text refers to the edition.

From Publishers Weekly Perhaps the Peloponnesian War, which lasted 27 years and featured an epic list of people and places, just doesn't lend itself to the six-hour audio format, for not even renowned Shakespearean actor Jacobi's reading gives this novel the sense of personal drama it requires. Pressfield (*Gates of Fire*) focuses his story on Alcibiades, the legendary hero whose strength, beauty and courage embodied ancient Greek ideals. An Athenian trained in Sparta, Alcibiades appears divinely well suited to feed his country's hunger for military victories. But democracy in its nascent stage being no less tainted than in its current manifestation, Alcibiades is feared for his popularity and ultimately exiled on a trumped-up charge. Once in the camp of Athens's enemies, he proves as unmatchable a foe as he could have been a champion. Unfortunately, the pace of this recording, as necessitated by the breadth of events covered in its relatively short length, lends it all the emotional depth of a textbook. And unless listeners have studied their ancient Greek geography, they will find themselves rewinding often to try to keep up with the movements of all the ships and forces. Simultaneous release with the Doubleday hardcover (Forecasts, Mar. 13). (Apr.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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