



## Gettysburg: A Novel of the Civil War

By Newt Gingrich, William R. Forstchen

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**Gettysburg: A Novel of the Civil War** By Newt Gingrich, William R. Forstchen

The Civil War is the American Iliad. Lincoln, Stonewall Jackson, Grant, and Lee still stand as heroic ideals, as stirring to our national memory as were the legendary Achilles and Hector to the world of the ancient Greeks. Within the story of our Iliad one battle stands forth above all others: Gettysburg.

Millions visit Gettysburg each year to walk the fields and hills where Joshua Chamberlain made his legendary stand and Pickett went down to a defeat which doomed a nation, but in defeat forever became a symbol of the heroic Lost Cause. As the years passed, and the scars healed, the debate, rather than drifting away has intensified. It is the battle which has become the great "what if," of American history and the center of a dreamscape where Confederate banners finally do crown the heights above the town.

The year is 1863, and General Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia are poised to attack the North and claim the victory that would end the brutal conflict. But Lee's Gettysburg campaign ended in failure, ultimately deciding the outcome of the war.

Launching his men into a vast sweeping operation, of which the town of Gettysburg is but one small part of the plan, General Lee, acting as he did at Chancellorsville, Second Manassas, and Antietam, displays the audacity of old. He knows he has but one more good chance to gain ultimate victory, for after two years of war the relentless power of an industrialized north is wearing the South down. Lee's lieutenants and the men in the ranks, imbued with this renewed spirit of the offensive embark on the Gettysburg Campaign that many dream "should have been." The soldiers in the line, Yank and Reb, knew as well that this would be the great challenge, the decisive moment that would decided whether a nation would die, or be created, and both sides were ready, willing to lay down their lives for their Cause.

An action-packed and painstakingly researched masterwork by Newt Gingrich and William Forstchen, *Gettysburg* stands as the first book in a series to tell the story of how history could have unfolded, how a victory for Lee would have changed the destiny of the nation forever. This is a novel of true heroism and glory in America's most trying hour.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This well-executed alternative history imagines a Confederate victory at Gettysburg. Former House speaker Gingrich (Contract with America) and historical fiction author Forstchen (Down to the Sea) create a plausible scenario: Robert E. Lee resolves to command, rather than merely coordinate, the efforts of that gaggle of prima donnas known as the high command of the Army of Northern Virginia. Thus, when he leads them into battle against the Army of the Potomac at Gettysburg, he does not commit his soldiers to a desperate head-butting on the ground chosen by the Union's General Meade. Instead, he maneuvers around the Union flank, placing his tightly run army between Meade and Washington, D.C., scooping up Union supplies and forcing Meade to launch desperate attacks with disastrous results for the Union cause. The authors show thorough knowledge of the people, weapons, tactics and ambience of the Civil War, though their portrayals of historical figures like Lee, Meade, James Longstreet and Richard Ewell betray a certain bias (the Confederate men are noble and wise, the Union leaders hot-tempered and vindictive). The novel has a narrative drive and vigor that makes the climactic battle scene a real masterpiece of its kind (it's not for the weak of stomach). The military minutiae probably makes the book inaccessible to anyone who's not a Civil War buff or military fiction fan, but those two sizable groups will find this a veritable feast.

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From [Booklist](#)

The 1863 Battle of Gettysburg, the universally acknowledged turning point in the Civil War, by which the forces of Robert E. Lee were turned back from their invasion of Northern territory and from which the Confederacy was never to recover, is endlessly studied, most recently in the definitive, compelling *Gettysburg* by Stephen Sears [BKL My 1 03]. Historian and former speaker of the House of Representatives Gingrich and cowriter Forstchen, a veteran author of historical fiction, present an alternative version of this famous and consequential battle; in their intriguing scenario, General Lee finds success in routing the Union army. The authors' thorough understanding of what *did* actually happen at that fateful confrontation obviously stands behind their imaginative revision; what went right for the Union army and wrong for the Confederate forces is believably switched here. How the real turn of events could have turned out otherwise is carefully offered in vivid battle descriptions and well-considered alternative strategies. Readers should be forewarned, though: they may come away from this exciting novel believing events really *did* happen this way. *Brad Hooper*

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Review

"Two respected historians, one horrific battle - and the challenging question of "what if...?" Sure to become a Civil War classic to be read and remembered."

- W.E.B. Griffin, author of *Final Justice*

"*Gettysburg* is a creative, clever, and fascinating 'what if?' novel that promises to excite and entertain America's legions of Civil War buffs."

- James Carville

"As historical fiction this stands beside *The Killer Angels*. As an alternative history of Gettysburg, it stands alone. The mastery of operational history enables the authors to expand the story's scope. The larger-scale,

more fluid battle of Gettysburg described is internally consistent, a logical consequence of the novel's challenging major premise. The narrative is so clear that the action can be followed without maps. And the characters are sometimes heartbreakingly true to their historical originals."

- Dennis Showalter, former president of the Society of Military Historians

"The novel *Gettysburg* puts forth a highly plausible and exciting scenario of a Confederate victory in the Pennsylvania campaign of 1863. The authors exhibit an in-depth knowledge of not only technical details, but also the various personalities of the leaders and how they could have reacted had things gone quite differently from history as we know it."

- Don Troiani, noted Civil War artist

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