

WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE

MICHAEL SHAARA

THE
KILLER
ANGELS

THE CLASSIC NOVEL *of* THE CIVIL WAR



Praise for

The Killer Angels

“The best Civil War novel ever written ... The descriptions of combat are incomparable; they convey not just the sights but the noise and smell of battle. And the characterizations are simply superb.... Shaara has managed to capture the essence of war, the divided friendships, the madness, and the heroism of fratricidal conflict.”

—STEPHEN B. OATES, author of *With Malice Toward None*

“[Shaara] writes with clarity and power.... His descriptions of the battle scenes are vivid and unsparing.”

—*Newsday*

“Akin to Hemingway ... [and] Stephen Crane’s *Red Badge of Courage*.”

—*The Houston Post*

“A compelling version of what America’s Armageddon must have been like ... surefire storytelling.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“You will learn more from this utterly absorbing book about Gettysburg than from any nonfictional account. Shaara fabulously, convincingly brings characters such as Robert E. Lee to life and makes the conflict all too real.”

—*Forbes*

“Literary wonders will never cease. Would you think it possible that after all the hundreds of books written about the battle of Gettysburg, both fiction and nonfiction, that... [this] novel about the battle could come out fresh, utterly absorbing, with the strong possibility that it may even turn out to be a classic? Well, read Michael Shaara’s ... *The Killer Angels* and find out.”

—*The Frederick News-Post* (Frederick, Maryland)

“Narrated as expertly as though Michael Shaara had been a participant in the battle of Gettysburg.”

—*The Journal Gazette* (Fort Wayne, Indiana)

“It’s at one and the same time an excellent, historical novel, a bitter anti-war tract, and a story filled with an amazing case of beautifully realized characters.”

—*Daily Sun* (Hudson, Massachusetts)

“An approach so fresh it is stunning.”

—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat*

“The *Killers Angels* could well be the best Civil War novel of this decade.”

—*The News Leader* (Richmond, Virginia)

“All in all it is a feast of reading, the best you will find for a long, long time.”

—*The Chattanooga Times*

“What makes Shaara’s novel an admirable effort, and one worth reading, is its sensitiveness to the time-spirit of the era. What it reveals is primarily men in context, men in action, and thought within the changing scenery of events. It is a genuinely appealing book.”

—*The Charlotte Observer*

“This is one of the best novels of the Civil War that I’ve read.”

—*Daily Press* (Newport News, Virginia)

ALSO BY MICHAEL SHAARA

The Broken Place
The Herald
For Love of the Game

MICHAEL SHAARA

THE KILLER ANGELS

THE CLASSIC NOVEL OF THE CIVIL WAR



BALLANTINE BOOKS TRADE PAPERBACKS

NEW YORK

The Killer Angels is a work of historical fiction. Apart from the well-known actual people, events, and locales that figure in the narrative, all names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to current events or locales, or to living persons, is entirely coincidental.

2011 Ballantine Books Trade Paperback Edition

Copyright © 1974 by Michael Shaara

Copyright renewed © 2002 by Jeff M. Shaara and Lila E. Shaara

All rights reserved.

Published in the United States by Ballantine Books, an imprint of The Random House Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc., New York.

BALLANTINE and colophon are registered trademarks of Random House, Inc.

Originally published in hardcover in the United States by David McKay Co., Inc., an imprint of The Random House Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc., in 1974.

eISBN: 978-0-345-51373-1

www.ballantinebooks.com

Cover design: Michael Boland/Boland Design Company

Cover illustration: Gilbert Gaul, *Glorious Fighting*, 1885 (detail)(Collection of the Birmingham Museum of Art/Gift of John Meyer)

Maps by Don Pitcher

v3.1

TO LILA (OLD GEORGE)

... IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED

“When men take up arms to set other men free, there is something sacred and holy in the warfare.”

—WOODROW WILSON

“I hate the idea of causes, and if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country.”

—E.M. FORSTER

“With all my devotion to the Union and the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I have not been able to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home. I have therefore resigned my commission in the Army. ...”

—from a letter of ROBERT E. LEE

Mr. Mason: How do you justify your acts?

John Brown: I think, my friend, you are guilty of a great wrong against God and humanity—I say it without wishing to be offensive—and it would be perfectly right for anyone to interfere with you so far as to free those you willfully and wickedly hold in bondage. I do not say this insultingly.

Mr. Mason: I understand that.

—from an interview with
JOHN BROWN after his capture

CONTENTS

Cover

Other Books by This Author

Title Page

Copyright

Dedication

Epigraph

LIST OF MAPS

TO THE READER

FOREWORD

THE KILLER ANGELS

MONDAY, JUNE 29, 1863

1. THE SPY
2. CHAMBERLAIN
3. BUFORD
4. LONGSTREET

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 1863: THE FIRST DAY

1. LEE
2. BUFORD
3. LEE
4. CHAMBERLAIN
5. LONGSTREET
6. LEE
7. BUFORD

THURSDAY, JULY 2, 1863: THE SECOND DAY

1. FREMANTLE
2. CHAMBERLAIN
3. LONGSTREET
4. CHAMBERLAIN
5. LONGSTREET
6. LEE

FRIDAY, JULY 3, 1863

1. CHAMBERLAIN
2. LONGSTREET
3. CHAMBERLAIN
4. ARMISTEAD
5. LONGSTREET
6. CHAMBERLAIN

AFTERWORD
About the Author

LIST OF MAPS

Situation June 1863: the routes of the armies
Situation Noon, June 30: Buford enters Gettysburg
Gettysburg
The First Day—dawn: Buford’s defense of Gettysburg
Situation Evening, June 30
Dawn, July 1
Situation at 9:00 A.M., July 1: Buford’s defense
The First Day—11:00 A.M.: situation after the death of Reynolds
The First Day—3:00–4:00 P.M.: attack of Ewell’s Corps on Howard’s flank
Chamberlain’s route to Gettysburg
Situation at the close of the First Day
The Second Day—morning: estimated Union position
The Second Day—morning: Lee’s plan for Longstreet’s assault on the Union
left
Longstreet’s Countermarch
The Second Day—4:00 P.M.: actual line attacked by Longstreet after Sickles’
move forward
The Second Day—5:00 P.M.: defense of Devil’s Den and Little Round Top
Situation at the close of the Second Day
The Third Day—2:30 P.M.: Lee’s plan for Pickett’s Charge

TO THE READER

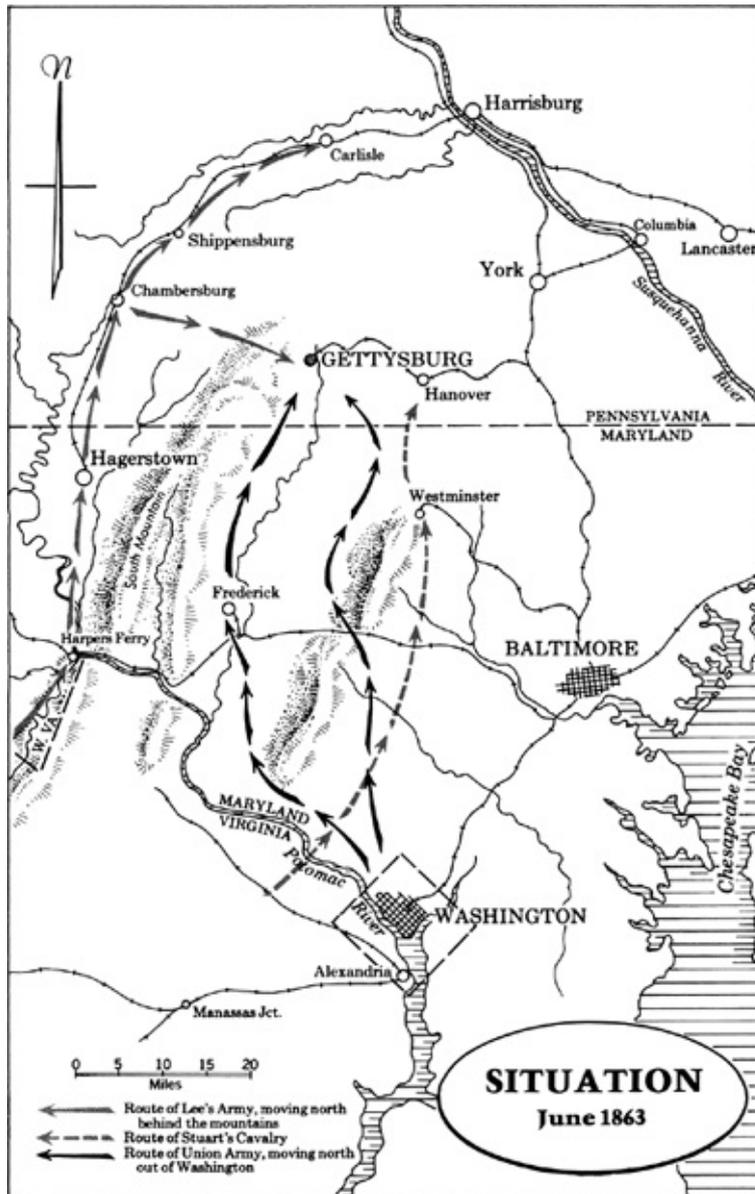
This is the story of the Battle of Gettysburg, told from the viewpoints of Robert E. Lee and James Longstreet and some of the other men who fought there.

Stephen Crane once said that he wrote *The Red Badge of Courage* because reading the cold history was not enough; he wanted to know what it was like to *be* there, what the weather was like, what men's faces looked like. In order to live it he had to write it. This book was written for much the same reason.

You may find it a different story from the one you learned in school. There have been many versions of that battle and that war. I have therefore avoided historical opinions and gone back primarily to the words of the men themselves, their letters and other documents. I have not consciously changed any fact. I have condensed some of the action, for the sake of clarity, and eliminated some minor characters, for brevity; but though I have often had to choose between conflicting viewpoints, I have not knowingly violated the action. I have changed some of the language. It was a naïve and sentimental time, and men spoke in windy phrases. I thought it necessary to update some of the words so that the religiosity and naïveté of the time, which were genuine, would not seem too quaint to the modern ear. I hope I will be forgiven that.

The interpretation of character is my own.

MICHAEL SHAARA



FOREWORD
June 1863

I. THE ARMIES

On June 15 the first troops of the Army of Northern Virginia, Robert E. Lee commanding, slip across the Potomac at Williamsport and begin the invasion of the North.

It is an army of seventy thousand men. They are rebels and volunteers. They are mostly unpaid and usually self-equipped. It is an army of remarkable unity, fighting for disunion. It is Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. Though there are many men who cannot read or write, they all speak English. They share common customs and a common faith and they have been consistently victorious against superior numbers. They have as solid a faith in their leader as any veteran army that ever marched. They move slowly north behind the Blue Ridge, using the mountains to screen their movements. Their main objective is to draw the Union Army out into the open where it can be destroyed. By the end of the month they are closing on Harrisburg, having spread panic and rage and despair through the North.

Late in June the Army of the Potomac, ever slow to move, turns north at last to begin the great pursuit which will end at Gettysburg. It is a strange new kind of army, a polyglot mass of vastly dissimilar men, fighting for union. There are strange accents and strange religions and many who do not speak English at all. Nothing like this army has been seen upon the planet. It is a collection of men from many different places who have seen much defeat and many commanders. They are volunteers: last of the great volunteer armies, for the draft is beginning that summer in the North. They have lost faith in their leaders but not in themselves. They think this will be the last battle, and they are glad that it is to be fought on their own home ground. They come up from the South, eighty thousand men, up the narrow roads that converge toward the blue mountains. The country through which they march is some of the most beautiful country in the Union.

It is the third summer of the war.

II. THE MEN

Robert Edward Lee. He is in his fifty-seventh year. Five feet ten inches tall but very short in the legs, so that when he rides a horse he seems much taller. Red-faced, like all the Lees, white-bearded, dressed in an old gray coat and a

gray felt hat, without insignia, so that he is mistaken sometimes for an elderly major of dignity. An honest man, a gentleman. He has no “vices.” He does not drink or smoke or gamble or chase women. He does not read novels or plays; he thinks they weaken the mind. He does not own slaves nor believe in slavery, but he does not believe that the Negro, “in the present stage of his development,” can be considered the equal of the white man. He is a man in control. He does not lose his temper nor his faith; he never complains. He has been down that spring with the first assault of the heart disease which will eventually kill him. He believes absolutely in God. He loves Virginia above all, the mystic dirt of home. He is the most beloved man in either army.

He marches knowing that a letter has been prepared by Jefferson Davis, a letter which offers peace. It is to be placed on the desk of Abraham Lincoln the day after Lee has destroyed the Army of the Potomac somewhere north of Washington.

James Longstreet, Lieutenant General, forty-two. Lee’s second in command. A large man, larger than Lee, full-bearded, blue-eyed, ominous, slow-talking, crude. He is one of the first of the new soldiers, the cold-eyed men who have sensed the birth of the new war of machines. He has invented a trench and a theory of defensive warfare, but in that courtly company few will listen. He is one of the few high officers in that army not from Virginia.

That winter, in Richmond, three of his children have died within a week, of a fever. Since that time he has withdrawn, no longer joins his men for the poker games he once loved, for which he was famous.

They call him “Old Pete” and sometimes “The Dutchman.” His headquarters is always near Lee, and men remark upon the intimacy and some are jealous of it. He has opposed the invasion of Pennsylvania, but once the army is committed he no longer opposes. Yet he will speak his mind; he will always speak his mind. Lee calls him, with deep affection, “my old war horse.” Since the death of Stonewall Jackson he has been Lee’s right hand. He is a stubborn man.

George Pickett, Major General, forty-two. Gaudy and lovable, longhaired, perfumed. Last in his class at West Point, he makes up for a lack of wisdom with a lusty exuberance. In love with a girl half his age, a schoolgirl from Lynchburg named LaSalle Corbelle, to whom he has vowed ne’er to touch liquor. Received his appointment to West Point through the good offices of Abraham Lincoln, a personal friend, and no one now can insult Abe Lincoln in Pickett’s presence, although Lincoln is not only the enemy but the absolute utterest enemy of all.

On the march toward Gettysburg Pickett’s Virginia Division is by a trick of fate last in line. He worries constantly that he will miss the last great battle of the war.

Richard Ewell, Lieutenant General, forty-six. Egg-bald, one-legged, recently married. (He refers to his new wife absentmindedly as “Mrs. Brown.”) Eccentric, brilliant, chosen out of all Lee’s officers to succeed to a portion of Stonewall Jackson’s old command. But he has lost something along with the

leg that a soldier sometimes loses with the big wounds. He approaches Gettysburg unsure of himself, in command of twenty thousand men.

Ambrose Powell Hill, Major General, thirty-seven. Has risen to command the other part of Jackson's old corps. A moody man, often competent, bad-tempered, wealthy, aspires to a place in Richmond society, frets and broods and fights with superiors. He wears a red shirt into battle. He should be a fine soldier, and sometimes is, but he is often ill for no apparent reason. He does not like to follow orders. At Gettysburg he will command a corps, and he will be sick again.

Lewis Armistead, Brigadier General, forty-six. Commander of one of George Pickett's brigades. They call him "Lo," which is short for Lothario, which is meant to be witty, for he is a shy and silent man, a widower. Descended from a martial family, he has a fighter's spirit, is known throughout the old army as the man who, while a cadet at the Point, was suspended for hitting Jubal Early in the head with a plate. Has developed over long years of service a deep affection for Winfield Scott Hancock, who fights now with the Union. Armistead looks forward to the reunion with Hancock, which will take place at Gettysburg.

Richard Brooke Garnett, Brigadier General, forty-four. Commands the second of Pickett's brigades. A dark-eyed, silent, tragic man. Followed Jackson in command of the old Stonewall Brigade; at Kerns-town he has made the mistake of withdrawing his men from an impossible position. Jackson is outraged, orders a court-martial which never convenes. Jackson dies before Garnett, accused of cowardice, can clear his name and redeem his honor, the honor which no man who knows him has ever doubted. He comes to Gettysburg a tortured man, too ill to walk. He believes that Jackson deliberately lied. In that camp there is nothing more important than honor.

J. E. B. Stuart, Lieutenant General, thirty. The laughing banjo player, the superb leader of cavalry who has ridden rings around the Union Army. A fine soldier, whose reports are always accurate, but a man who loves to read about himself in the Richmond newspapers. His mission that month is to keep Lee informed of the movement of the Union Army. He fails.

Jubal Early, Major General, forty-six. Commander of one of Ewell's divisions. A dark, cold, icy man, bitter, alone. Left the Point to become a prosecuting attorney, to which he is well suited. A competent soldier, but a man who works with an eye to the future, a slippery man, a careful soldier; he will build his reputation whatever the cost. Dick Ewell defers to him. Longstreet despises him. Lee makes do with the material at hand. Lee calls him "my bad old man."

These men wore blue:

Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, Colonel, thirty-four. He prefers to be called "Lawrence." A professor of rhetoric at Bowdoin University, sometime professor of "Natural and Revealed Religion," successor to the chair of the famed Professor Stowe, husband to Harriet Beecher. Tall and rather handsome, attractive to women, somewhat boyish, a clean and charming

person. An excellent student, Phi Beta Kappa, he speaks seven languages and has a beautiful singing voice, but he has wanted all his life to be a soldier. The university will not free him for war, but in the summer of 1862 he requests a sabbatical for study in Europe. When it is granted he proceeds not to France but to the office of the Governor of Maine, where he receives a commission in the 20th Regiment of Infantry, Maine Volunteers, and marches off to war with a vast faith in the brotherhood of man. Spends the long night at Fredericksburg piling corpses in front of himself to shield him from bullets. Comes to Gettysburg with that hard fragment of the Regiment which has survived. One week before the battle he is given command of the regiment. His younger brother Thomas becomes his aide. Thomas too has yearned to be a soldier. The wishes of both men are to be granted on the dark rear slope of a small rocky hill called Little Round Top.

John Buford, Major General, thirty-seven. A cavalry soldier, restless and caged in the tamed and political East, who loves the great plains and the memory of snow. A man with an eye for the good ground, already badly wounded and not long to live, weary of stupidity and politics and bloody military greed. At Thorofare Gap he held against Longstreet for six hours, waiting for help that never came. Too good an officer for his own advancement, he rides a desk in Washington until luck puts him back in the field, where he is given two brigades of cavalry and told to trail Lee's army. He is first into Gettysburg, where he lifts up his eyes to the hills. He is a man who knows the value of ground.

John Reynolds, Major General, forty-two. Perhaps the finest soldier in the Union Army. Like Lee before him, a former commander of West Point, a courteous man, military, a marvelous horseman, another gentleman. His home is not far from Gettysburg. He has fallen in love late in life, but the girl is Catholic and Reynolds has not yet told his Protestant family, but he wears her ring on a chain around his neck, under his uniform. Early that month he is called to Washington, where he is offered command of the army. But he has seen the military results of maneuvering by armchair commanders Halleck and Stanton, and he insists that the army cannot be commanded from Washington, that he cannot accept command without a free hand. He therefore respectfully declines. The honor passes to George Meade, who is not even given the option but ordered to command. And thus it is John Reynolds, not Meade, who rides into Gettysburg on the morning of the First Day.

George Gordon Meade, Major General, forty-seven. Vain and bad-tempered, balding, full of self-pity. He takes command of the army on a Sunday, June 28, two days before the battle. He wishes to hold a Grand Review, but there turns out not to be time. He plans a line of defense along Pipe Creek, far from Gettysburg, in the unreal hope that Lee will attack him on ground of his own choosing. No decision he makes at Gettysburg will be decisive, except perhaps the last.

Winfield Scott Hancock, Major General, thirty-nine. Armistead's old friend. A magnetic man with a beautiful wife. A painter of talent, a picture-book

general. Has a tendency to gain weight, but at this moment he is still young and slim, still a superb presence, a man who arrives on the battlefield in spotlessly clean linen and never keeps his head down. In the fight to come he will be everywhere, and in the end he will be waiting for Lew Armistead at the top of Cemetery Hill.

—

All that month there is heat and wild rain. Cherries are ripening over all Pennsylvania, and the men gorge as they march. The civilians have fled and houses are dark. The armies move north through the heat and the dust.

MONDAY,
JUNE 29, 1863

Mine eyes have seen the glory ...

THE SPY

He rode into the dark of the woods and dismounted. He crawled upward on his belly over cool rocks out into the sunlight, and suddenly he was in the open and he could see for miles, and there was the whole vast army below him, filling the valley like a smoking river. It came out of a blue rainstorm in the east and overflowed the narrow valley road, coiling along a stream, narrowing and choking at a white bridge, fading out into the yellowish dust of June but still visible on the farther road beyond the blue hills, spiked with flags and guidons like a great chopped bristly snake, the snake ending headless in a blue wall of summer rain.

The spy tucked himself behind a boulder and began counting flags. Must be twenty thousand men, visible all at once. Two whole Union Corps. He could make out the familiar black hats of the Iron Brigade, troops belonging to John Reynolds's First Corps. He looked at his watch, noted the time. They were coming very fast. The Army of the Potomac had never moved this fast. The day was murderously hot and there was no wind and the dust hung above the army like a yellow veil. He thought: there'll be some of them die of the heat today. But they are coming faster than they ever came before.

He slipped back down into the cool dark and rode slowly downhill toward the silent empty country to the north. With luck he could make the Southern line before nightfall. After nightfall it would be dangerous. But he must not seem to hurry. The horse was already tired. And yet there was the pressure of that great blue army behind him, building like water behind a cracking dam. He rode out into the open, into the land between the armies.

There were fat Dutch barns, prim German orchards. But there were no cattle in the fields and no horses, and houses everywhere were empty and dark. He was alone in the heat and the silence, and then it began to rain and he rode head down into monstrous lightning. All his life he had been afraid of lightning but he kept riding. He did not know where the Southern headquarters was but he knew it had to be somewhere near Chambersburg. He had smelled out the shape of Lee's army in all the rumors and bar talk and newspapers and hysteria he had drifted through all over eastern Pennsylvania, and on that day he was perhaps the only man alive who knew the positions of both armies. He carried the knowledge with a hot and lovely pride. Lee would