

barbarians at the gate meaning

barbarians at the gate meaning is a phrase that has captivated business professionals, historians, and pop culture enthusiasts alike. This comprehensive article explores the origins, definitions, and real-world applications of "barbarians at the gate," delving into its significance in corporate history and its place in modern language. Readers will discover how the term evolved from ancient history to its prominent role in business jargon, thanks to one of the most famous corporate takeovers of all time. The article also examines the phrase's use in contemporary language, offering insights into why it endures as a powerful metaphor. Whether you are interested in business, language, or cultural trends, this guide will provide authoritative and SEO-optimized information on the meaning and relevance of "barbarians at the gate." Read on to uncover the fascinating journey of this evocative expression.

- Understanding the Phrase: "Barbarians at the Gate"
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Understanding the Phrase: "Barbarians at the Gate"

The phrase "barbarians at the gate" refers to outsiders who threaten to invade or disrupt an established order or organization. In its literal sense, it describes a scenario where a fortified city is under siege by invading forces. Metaphorically, it is widely used in business and cultural contexts to represent a looming threat from external competitors, hostile takeovers, or disruptive innovations challenging the status quo. The meaning of "barbarians at the gate" conveys urgency and the need for vigilance against unexpected challenges.

In modern language, the term has evolved to capture any situation where an external force is poised to break through defenses, whether those defenses are corporate, social, or even personal. Its dramatic imagery and historical resonance make it a popular choice for describing high-stakes scenarios in business news, boardrooms, and even politics.

Historical Origins of the Phrase

The roots of "barbarians at the gate" trace back to ancient civilizations, particularly Rome and Greece. Historically, "barbarians" referred to groups considered outsiders or uncivilized by the dominant societies of the time, such as the Romans' perception of Germanic tribes. The "gate" symbolizes the fortified entrance to a city, representing security and civilization.

When these outsiders threatened to breach city gates, it signaled a collapse of order and the imminent danger of invasion. This imagery has endured for centuries, making the phrase a powerful metaphor for existential threats and upheaval.

Symbolism in Ancient History

Throughout history, the image of barbarians at the city gates has represented more than just physical invasion. It has symbolized the clash between established power and disruptive forces. The fall of the Western Roman Empire, for example, is often depicted as a result of barbarian invasions breaching Rome's defenses, marking the end of an era.

The Business Connection: How the Phrase Entered Corporate Jargon

"Barbarians at the gate" became firmly embedded in business vocabulary during the late 20th century. Executives, analysts, and journalists began using it to describe aggressive outsiders seeking to disrupt or take over established companies. The phrase is now synonymous with hostile takeovers, corporate raiders, and high-stakes mergers and acquisitions.

This transformation from a historical metaphor to a business term reflects the high drama, competition, and perceived existential threats that characterize major corporate battles.

Why the Phrase Resonates in Business

- It conveys a sense of urgency and impending crisis.
- It paints a vivid picture of insiders defending against external threats.
- It emphasizes the disruptive impact of competition or change agents.
- It appeals to the narrative of survival and defense in corporate environments.

Case Study: The RJR Nabisco Takeover

The phrase "barbarians at the gate" achieved widespread fame and cemented its place in business culture due to the high-profile leveraged buyout (LBO) of RJR Nabisco in the late 1980s. Chronicled in the bestselling book "Barbarians at the Gate: The Fall of RJR Nabisco," the story details the fierce bidding war for the food and tobacco conglomerate, involving Wall Street heavyweights and corporate raiders.

This takeover became a symbol of 1980s excess, corporate greed, and the ruthlessness of leveraged buyouts. The term "barbarians" was used to describe the financiers and investors challenging the company's management and seeking to take control through aggressive financial maneuvers.

Key Figures in the RJR Nabisco Saga

- Henry Kravis and Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co. (KKR)
- Ross Johnson, CEO of RJR Nabisco
- Other Wall Street investment banks and private equity firms

Impact on Corporate Culture

The RJR Nabisco event and the phrase "barbarians at the gate" have since become shorthand for dramatic corporate showdowns. The story highlighted the vulnerabilities of even the largest companies and introduced a new era of aggressive mergers and acquisitions.

Modern Usage in Business and Beyond

Today, "barbarians at the gate" is used far beyond the boardroom. While it remains popular in business contexts, it also appears in discussions about politics, technology, and social change. The phrase is a go-to metaphor for any scenario involving an external threat or disruptive force.

In the business world, the term is used to describe a range of situations, such as new competitors entering a market, activist investors pushing for change, or technological innovations threatening established industries.

Examples of Modern Usage

- Startups challenging industry leaders

- Technological disruption (e.g., digital transformation)
- Political outsiders entering established systems
- Activist shareholders seeking control or reform

Common Contexts and Variations

The meaning of "barbarians at the gate" adapts to fit different contexts. While its business application is most prominent, it also appears in literature, media, and everyday conversation. The phrase is sometimes used with slight variations to suit specific situations or to add nuance.

Alternate Phrases and Expressions

- "Wolves at the door" - emphasizing danger or predatory threats
- "Storming the gates" - focusing on the act of invasion
- "Enemies at the gates" - a more general term for external threats

Contexts Where the Phrase Is Used

- Corporate defense strategies
- Political discourse
- Media coverage of crises
- Personal situations involving external pressure

Key Takeaways and Lasting Impact

The phrase "barbarians at the gate" remains a powerful and evocative metaphor. Its journey from ancient history to modern corporate slang underscores its versatility and enduring relevance. The term not only describes external threats but also highlights the need for preparedness, adaptability, and strong leadership in the face of disruption.

Understanding the meaning and evolution of "barbarians at the gate" offers valuable insights into language, business dynamics, and cultural change. As industries and societies continue to face new challenges, this phrase will undoubtedly retain its place in both professional and everyday vocabulary.

Trending Questions and Answers About "barbarians at the gate meaning"

Q: What does "barbarians at the gate" mean in business?

A: In business, "barbarians at the gate" refers to external entities, such as hostile investors or competitors, attempting to gain control of or disrupt an established company, often through aggressive tactics like hostile takeovers or market disruption.

Q: Where did the phrase "barbarians at the gate" originate?

A: The phrase originated from historical references to invading groups, considered "barbarians," threatening the gates of ancient cities. It symbolizes the fear of outside forces breaching established defenses.

Q: How did "barbarians at the gate" become associated with corporate takeovers?

A: The phrase became closely linked to corporate takeovers following the famous RJR Nabisco leveraged buyout in the late 1980s, which was chronicled in the book "Barbarians at the Gate." It described aggressive investors challenging company management.

Q: Can "barbarians at the gate" be used outside of business contexts?

A: Yes, the phrase is often used in politics, technology, and social discussions to describe any external threat or disruptive force challenging an established order.

Q: What are some synonyms or variations of "barbarians at the gate"?

A: Common variations include "wolves at the door," "storming the gates," and "enemies at the gates," all of which convey a sense of impending danger from outside sources.

Q: Why is "barbarians at the gate" still relevant today?

A: The phrase remains relevant because it vividly encapsulates the idea of external threats challenging established systems, which is a recurring theme in business, politics, and society.

Q: Who were the main "barbarians" in the RJR Nabisco case?

A: The main "barbarians" were private equity firm KKR (Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co.), led by Henry Kravis, as well as other Wall Street investors competing to take over RJR Nabisco.

Q: How can companies defend against "barbarians at the gate"?

A: Companies often implement defensive strategies such as poison pills, strong corporate governance, and proactive communication with shareholders to deter hostile takeovers or external threats.

Q: Is "barbarians at the gate" considered a negative term?

A: Generally, the phrase has a negative connotation, implying threat or danger, but it can also signify necessary change or disruption, depending on the perspective.

Q: What lessons can be learned from the "barbarians at the gate" metaphor?

A: The metaphor teaches the importance of vigilance, adaptability, and strong leadership in facing external challenges or disruptions in any field.

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Barbarians at the Gate Meaning: Understanding the Iconic Phrase

The phrase "barbarians at the gate" evokes a powerful image: a looming threat, a sense of impending doom, a struggle for survival. But what does it really mean, and where did this evocative expression originate? This post dives deep into the meaning of "barbarians at the gate," exploring its historical context, its modern interpretations, and its relevance in various fields, from business to politics. We'll uncover the nuances of this phrase, providing a comprehensive understanding that will leave you equipped to use and understand it in any context.

The Historical Roots: From Ancient Rome to Modern Metaphors

The phrase's origins lie in ancient Rome. While the precise historical event isn't always pinpointed to a single siege, the imagery resonates with the recurring threat faced by Rome throughout its history from various invading tribes it considered "barbarians." These groups, often from outside the Roman Empire, posed a military and cultural threat to Roman civilization. The phrase captures the feeling of vulnerability and imminent danger faced by a seemingly invincible power, confronted by a force seemingly outside its control.

The "barbarians" weren't necessarily savage or inherently evil; the term reflects the Roman perspective and its self-perception as civilized. The key is the perceived otherness and the resulting fear of the unknown. This understanding of the phrase's historical context is crucial for grasping its modern applications.

Modern Interpretations: Beyond Literal Invasions

Today, "barbarians at the gate" is rarely used to describe literal invasions. Instead, it serves as a potent metaphor applied to various situations where a powerful entity faces a perceived existential threat.

Business and Finance:

In the business world, "barbarians at the gate" frequently refers to hostile takeovers. A company facing a takeover bid by another firm, often perceived as aggressive or predatory, might describe the situation as "barbarians at the gate." This highlights the vulnerability of established businesses to outside forces driven by profit maximization, regardless of the impact on the company's culture, employees, or long-term strategy.

The term often carries a negative connotation, implying unfair or unethical tactics. It suggests a scramble for control, potentially sacrificing long-term vision for short-term gains. The "barbarians" here aren't necessarily violent, but they represent a disruptive force challenging the existing order.

Politics and Social Change:

The phrase can also describe significant social or political upheavals. The rise of populist movements, significant shifts in public opinion, or even unexpected technological advancements could be framed as "barbarians at the gate." These changes, while potentially beneficial, can threaten established power structures and create uncertainty and fear among those in positions of authority. The "barbarians" represent the disruptive forces of change, challenging traditional norms and values.

Beyond Business and Politics:

The metaphorical use extends even further. The phrase can apply to any situation where an established system faces a significant challenge from an unexpected or unwelcome source. This

could be anything from a sudden technological disruption in an industry to a major shift in consumer preferences. The core element remains the perception of an external force threatening a previously stable environment.

The Nuances of the Metaphor:

It's crucial to recognize that the "barbarians at the gate" metaphor is subjective. What one person perceives as a destructive force, another might view as a necessary catalyst for progress. The term often reflects the perspective of those in power, whose established order is threatened. It's a loaded phrase, carrying implicit judgments about the nature of the "barbarians" and the perceived threat they pose.

Conclusion:

Understanding the meaning of "barbarians at the gate" requires acknowledging its historical roots and appreciating its flexible modern applications. While the original imagery invokes a sense of impending doom, its contemporary use allows for a nuanced understanding of various challenges and disruptions. Whether applied to a hostile takeover, a social movement, or a technological revolution, the phrase effectively captures the feeling of vulnerability and uncertainty when faced with significant external pressure.

FAQs:

1. Is the term "barbarians at the gate" always negative? Not necessarily. While it often carries a negative connotation, it can also be used descriptively to highlight a significant challenge, regardless of the outcome.
2. What makes a group or force considered "barbarians" in this context? It's primarily about the perception of the threat. "Barbarians" are those who challenge established power, norms, or values, regardless of their inherent nature.
3. Can the phrase apply to internal threats as well? While traditionally associated with external forces, the metaphor could be extended to describe internal conflicts or disruptions that threaten an organization or system from within.
4. How does the historical context influence the modern understanding of the phrase? Understanding its Roman origins helps clarify the underlying sense of vulnerability and the perceived threat posed by forces outside established structures.
5. What alternatives exist to the phrase "barbarians at the gate" that convey a similar meaning?

Depending on the context, alternatives might include "disruptive forces," "existential threats," "challenging circumstances," or "major paradigm shifts."

barbarians at the gate meaning: Barbarians at the Gate Bryan Burrough, John Helyar, 2009-10-13 #1 New York Times bestseller and arguably the best business narrative ever written, *Barbarians at the Gate* is the classic account of the fall of RJR Nabisco at the hands of a buyout from investment firm KKR. A book that stormed both the bestseller list and the public imagination, a book that created a genre of its own, and a book that gets at the heart of Wall Street and the '80s culture it helped define, *Barbarians at the Gate* is a modern classic—a masterpiece of investigatory journalism and a rollicking book of corporate derring-do and financial swordsmanship. The fight to control RJR Nabisco during October and November of 1988 was more than just the largest takeover in Wall Street history. Marked by brazen displays of ego not seen in American business for decades, it became the high point of a new gilded age and its repercussions are still being felt. The tale remains the ultimate story of greed and glory—a story and a cast of characters that determined the course of global business and redefined how deals would be done and fortunes made in the decades to come. *Barbarians at the Gate* is the gripping account of these two frenzied months, of deal makers and publicity flaks, of an old-line industrial powerhouse (home of such familiar products as Oreos and Camels) that became the victim of the ruthless and rapacious style of finance in the 1980s. As reporters for *The Wall Street Journal*, Burrough and Helyar had extensive access to all the characters in this drama. They take the reader behind the scenes at strategy meetings and society dinners, into boardrooms and bedrooms, providing an unprecedentedly detailed look at how financial operations at the highest levels are conducted but also a richly textured social history of wealth at the twilight of the Reagan era. At the center of the huge power struggle is RJR Nabisco's president, the high-living Ross Johnson. It's his secret plan to buy out the company that sets the frenzy in motion, attracting the country's leading takeover players: Henry Kravis, the legendary leveraged-buyout king of investment firm KKR, whose entry into the fray sets off an acquisitive commotion; Peter Cohen, CEO of Shearson Lehman Hutton and Johnson's partner, who needs a victory to propel his company to an unchallenged leadership in the lucrative mergers and acquisitions field; the fiercely independent Ted Forstmann, motivated as much by honor as by his rage at the corruption he sees taking over the business he cherishes; Jim Maher and his ragtag team, struggling to regain credibility for the decimated ranks at First Boston; and an army of desperate bankers, lawyers, and accountants, all drawn inexorably to the greatest prize of their careers—and one of the greatest prizes in the history of American business. Written with the bravado of a novel and researched with the diligence of a sweeping cultural history, *Barbarians at the Gate* is present at the front line of every battle of the campaign. Here is the unforgettable story of that takeover in all its brutality. In a new afterword specially commissioned for the story's 20th anniversary, Burrough and Helyar return to visit the heroes and villains of this epic story, tracing the fallout of the deal, charting the subsequent success and failure of those involved, and addressing the incredible impact this story—and the book itself—made on the world.

barbarians at the gate meaning: *Waiting for the Barbarians* J. M. Coetzee, 2019-07-02 Four modern classics by the great South African writer, J. M. Coetzee, re-released with stylish new covers and accompanied by introductions from some of Australia's brightest writing talents

barbarians at the gate meaning: *Liar's Poker* Michael Lewis, 2010-03-02 The author recounts his experiences on the lucrative Wall Street bond market of the 1980s, where young traders made millions in a very short time, in a humorous account of greed and epic folly.

barbarians at the gate meaning: *The Big Rich* Bryan Burrough, 2010-03-30 "Full of schadenfreude and speculation—and solid, timely history too." —Kirkus Reviews "This is a portrait of capitalism as white-knuckle risk taking, yielding fruitful discoveries for the fathers, but only sterile speculation for the sons—a story that resonates with today's economic upheaval." —Publishers Weekly "What's not to enjoy about a book full of monstrous egos, unimaginable sums of money, and

the punishment of greed and shortsightedness?" —The Economist Phenomenal reviews and sales greeted the hardcover publication of *The Big Rich*, New York Times bestselling author Bryan Burrough's spellbinding chronicle of Texas oil. Weaving together the multigenerational sagas of the industry's four wealthiest families, Burrough brings to life the men known in their day as the Big Four: Roy Cullen, H. L. Hunt, Clint Murchison, and Sid Richardson, all swaggering Texas oil tycoons who owned sprawling ranches and mingled with presidents and Hollywood stars. Seamlessly charting their collective rise and fall, *The Big Rich* is a hugely entertaining account that only a writer with Burrough's abilities-and Texas upbringing-could have written.

barbarians at the gate meaning: Waiting for the Barbarians Daniel Mendelsohn, 2012-10-16 FINALIST FOR THE NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD AND THE PEN ART OF THE ESSAY AWARD Over the past decade and a half, Daniel Mendelsohn's reviews for *The New York Review of Books*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New York Times Book Review* have earned him a reputation as "one of the greatest critics of our time" (Poets & Writers). In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, he brings together twenty-four of his recent essays—each one glinting with "verve and sparkle," "acumen and passion"—on a wide range of subjects, from *Avatar* to the poems of Arthur Rimbaud, from our inexhaustible fascination with the Titanic to Susan Sontag's *Journals*. Trained as a classicist, author of two internationally best-selling memoirs, Mendelsohn moves easily from penetrating considerations of the ways in which the classics continue to make themselves felt in contemporary life and letters (Greek myth in the Spider-Man musical, Anne Carson's translations of Sappho) to trenchant takes on pop spectacles—none more explosively controversial than his dissection of *Mad Men*. Also gathered here are essays devoted to the art of fiction, from Jonathan Littell's Holocaust blockbuster *The Kindly Ones* to forgotten gems like the novels of Theodor Fontane. In a final section, "Private Lives," prefaced by Mendelsohn's *New Yorker* essay on fake memoirs, he considers the lives and work of writers as disparate as Leo Lerman, Noël Coward, and Jonathan Franzen. *Waiting for the Barbarians* once again demonstrates that Mendelsohn's "sweep as a cultural critic is as impressive as his depth."

barbarians at the gate meaning: The Bonfire of the Vanities Tom Wolfe, 2002-02-21 Vintage Tom Wolfe, *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, the #1 bestseller that will forever define late-twentieth-century New York style. No one has portrayed New York Society this accurately and devastatingly since Edith Wharton (*The National Review*) "A page-turner . . . Brilliant high comedy." (*The New Republic*) Sherman McCoy, the central figure of Tom Wolfe's first novel, is a young investment banker with a fourteen-room apartment in Manhattan. When he is involved in a freak accident in the Bronx, prosecutors, politicians, the press, the police, the clergy, and assorted hustlers high and low close in on him, licking their chops and giving us a gargantuan helping of the human comedy, of New York in the 1980s, a city boiling over with racial and ethnic hostilities and burning with the itch to Grab It Now. Wolfe's novel is a big, panoramic story of the metropolis that reinforces the author's reputation as the foremost chronicler of the way we live in America. Adapted to film in 1990 by director Brian De Palma, the movie stars Tom Hanks, Bruce Willis, Melanie Griffith, and Morgan Freeman.

barbarians at the gate meaning: Barbarian Days William Finnegan, 2015-07-21 **Winner of the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Autobiography** Included in President Obama's 2016 Summer Reading List "Without a doubt, the finest surf book I've ever read . . ." —*The New York Times Magazine* *Barbarian Days* is William Finnegan's memoir of an obsession, a complex enchantment. Surfing only looks like a sport. To initiates, it is something else: a beautiful addiction, a demanding course of study, a morally dangerous pastime, a way of life. Raised in California and Hawaii, Finnegan started surfing as a child. He has chased waves all over the world, wandering for years through the South Pacific, Australia, Asia, Africa. A bookish boy, and then an excessively adventurous young man, he went on to become a distinguished writer and war reporter. *Barbarian Days* takes us deep into unfamiliar worlds, some of them right under our noses—off the coasts of New York and San Francisco. It immerses the reader in the edgy camaraderie of close male friendships forged in challenging waves. Finnegan shares stories of life in a whites-only gang in a tough school in

Honolulu. He shows us a world turned upside down for kids and adults alike by the social upheavals of the 1960s. He details the intricacies of famous waves and his own apprenticeships to them. Youthful folly—he drops LSD while riding huge Honolua Bay, on Maui—is served up with rueful humor. As Finnegan's travels take him ever farther afield, he discovers the picturesque simplicity of a Samoan fishing village, dissects the sexual politics of Tongan interactions with Americans and Japanese, and navigates the Indonesian black market while nearly succumbing to malaria. Throughout, he surfs, carrying readers with him on rides of harrowing, unprecedented lucidity. *Barbarian Days* is an old-school adventure story, an intellectual autobiography, a social history, a literary road movie, and an extraordinary exploration of the gradual mastering of an exacting, little-understood art.

barbarians at the gate meaning: Critical Theory and Educational Research Peter McLaren, James M. Giarelli, 1995-03-30 Applies European critical theory to North American educational research.

barbarians at the gate meaning: The Great Mental Models, Volume 1 Shane Parrish, Rhiannon Beaubien, 2024-10-15 Discover the essential thinking tools you've been missing with The Great Mental Models series by Shane Parrish, New York Times bestselling author and the mind behind the acclaimed Farnam Street blog and "The Knowledge Project" podcast. This first book in the series is your guide to learning the crucial thinking tools nobody ever taught you. Time and time again, great thinkers such as Charlie Munger and Warren Buffett have credited their success to mental models—representations of how something works that can scale onto other fields. Mastering a small number of mental models enables you to rapidly grasp new information, identify patterns others miss, and avoid the common mistakes that hold people back. The Great Mental Models: Volume 1, General Thinking Concepts shows you how making a few tiny changes in the way you think can deliver big results. Drawing on examples from history, business, art, and science, this book details nine of the most versatile, all-purpose mental models you can use right away to improve your decision making and productivity. This book will teach you how to: Avoid blind spots when looking at problems. Find non-obvious solutions. Anticipate and achieve desired outcomes. Play to your strengths, avoid your weaknesses, ... and more. The Great Mental Models series demystifies once elusive concepts and illuminates rich knowledge that traditional education overlooks. This series is the most comprehensive and accessible guide on using mental models to better understand our world, solve problems, and gain an advantage.

barbarians at the gate meaning: *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* Julian Jaynes, 2000-08-15 National Book Award Finalist: "This man's ideas may be the most influential, not to say controversial, of the second half of the twentieth century."—Columbus Dispatch At the heart of this classic, seminal book is Julian Jaynes's still-controversial thesis that human consciousness did not begin far back in animal evolution but instead is a learned process that came about only three thousand years ago and is still developing. The implications of this revolutionary scientific paradigm extend into virtually every aspect of our psychology, our history and culture, our religion—and indeed our future. "Don't be put off by the academic title of Julian Jaynes's *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*. Its prose is always lucid and often lyrical...he unfolds his case with the utmost intellectual rigor."—The New York Times "When Julian Jaynes . . . speculates that until late in the twentieth millennium BC men had no consciousness but were automatically obeying the voices of the gods, we are astounded but compelled to follow this remarkable thesis."—John Updike, *The New Yorker* "He is as startling as Freud was in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and Jaynes is equally as adept at forcing a new view of known human behavior."—American Journal of Psychiatry

barbarians at the gate meaning: *Greed and Glory on Wall Street* Ken Auletta, 2015-09-29 The inside account of a financial meltdown that reshaped Wall Street In 1983, Lew Glucksman, then co-CEO of the heralded investment bank Lehman Brothers, demanded the resignation of chairman Pete Peterson, with whom he had long argued over how to manage the company. Shockingly, Peterson, who had taken charge a decade earlier and led Lehman from near collapse to record

profits, agreed to step down. In this meticulously researched volume, Ken Auletta details the turmoil, infighting, and power struggles that brought about Peterson's departure and the eventual sale of one of Wall Street's oldest and most prestigious firms. Set against the backdrop of the 1980s stock exchange, where hotshot young traders made and lost millions in a single afternoon, the story of Lehman's fall is a suspenseful battle of wills between bankers, traders, and executives motivated by greed, envy, and ego. Auletta, who conducted hundreds of hours of interviews and was granted access to private company records, has crafted a thorough, enduring, and engaging account of pivotal events that continued to influence this storied financial institution until its ultimate demise in 2008.

barbarians at the gate meaning: The Fear of Barbarians Tzvetan Todorov, 2010-10-15 The relationship between Western democracies and Islam, rarely entirely comfortable, has in recent years become increasingly tense. A growing immigrant population and worries about cultural and political assimilation—exacerbated by terrorist attacks in the United States, Europe, and around the world—have provoked reams of commentary from all parts of the political spectrum, a frustrating majority of it hyperbolic or even hysterical. In *The Fear of Barbarians*, the celebrated intellectual Tzvetan Todorov offers a corrective: a reasoned and often highly personal analysis of the problem, rooted in Enlightenment values yet open to the claims of cultural difference. Drawing on history, anthropology, and politics, and bringing to bear examples ranging from the murder of Theo van Gogh to the French ban on headscarves, Todorov argues that the West must overcome its fear of Islam if it is to avoid betraying the values it claims to protect. True freedom, Todorov explains, requires us to strike a delicate balance between protecting and imposing cultural values, acknowledging the primacy of the law, and yet strenuously protecting minority views that do not interfere with its aims. Adding force to Todorov's arguments is his own experience as a native of communist Bulgaria: his admiration of French civic identity—and Western freedom—is vigorous but non-nativist, an inclusive vision whose very flexibility is its core strength. The record of a penetrating mind grappling with a complicated, multifaceted problem, *The Fear of Barbarians* is a powerful, important book—a call, not to arms, but to thought.

barbarians at the gate meaning: Digging Deeper Dietmar Sternad, James J. Kennelly, Finbarr Bradley, 2017-09-08 What is the primary purpose of business? The standard answer is 'making profits,' but some visionary entrepreneurs and leaders fundamentally disagree. Instead of just making money, they choose instead to "dig deeper" and make a difference through creating real value - improving the lives of others even as they find deeper meaning in their own. These leaders build enterprises that provide identity and a sense of purpose, create positive relationships and a place to learn and thrive, embed sustainability in all that they do, and strive to improve the quality of life of all of their stakeholders. Although not their primary focus, they also make healthy profits, as their unique approach to value creation provides them with a sustainable competitive edge. *Digging Deeper* is a book full of inspiring stories that illustrate that there is an alternative to a myopic and narrow capitalism that trades in inequalities, exploitation, collective burnout and negative consequences for our shared natural environment. Remarkable examples from all over the world vividly demonstrate how enterprises can create real value through focusing on what the authors call the 6 Ls: long-term orientation, lasting relationships, local roots, limits recognition, developing a learning community and taking leadership responsibility seriously in its very best sense. *Digging Deeper* liberates the term "value" from the tight chains in which the global financial community has bound it and demonstrates that businesses can contribute to a better life for all - if their leaders can go beyond viewing enterprises as single-purpose money-making machines and develop purpose-driven enterprises that create real value for all.

barbarians at the gate meaning: Ethics through Corporate Strategy Daniel R. Gilbert, 1996-09-19 *Ethics Through Corporate Strategy* is a daring challenge to anyone who uses the customary language of business in America. It is daring because Daniel Gilbert argues that we should discard two popular ways of linking business and ethics. It is challenging, because Gilbert proceeds from the premise that everyone who uses a language of business is responsible for the

ethical implications of that way of talking. This work is one demonstration of how we can relocate conversations about business in the larger conversation that we know as liberal education.

barbarians at the gate meaning: The Blade Itself Joe Abercrombie, 2009-06-18 'Delightfully twisted and evil' GUARDIAN 'Highly recommended ... seek it out' Joe Hill Inquisitor Glotka, a crippled and increasingly bitter relic of the last war, former fencing champion turned torturer extraordinaire, is trapped in a twisted and broken body - not that he allows it to distract him from his daily routine of torturing smugglers. Nobleman, dashing officer and would-be fencing champion Captain Jezal dan Luthar is living a life of ease by cheating his friends at cards. Vain, shallow, selfish and self-obsessed, the biggest blot on his horizon is having to get out of bed in the morning to train with obsessive and boring old men. And Logen Ninefingers, an infamous warrior with a bloody past, is about to wake up in a hole in the snow with plans to settle a blood feud with Bethod, the new King of the Northmen, once and for all - ideally by running away from it. But as he's discovering, old habits die really, really hard indeed... ..especially when Bayaz gets involved. A bald old man with a terrible temper and a pathetic assistant, he could be the First of the Magi, he could be a spectacular fraud, but whatever he is, he's about to make the lives of Glotka, Jezal and Logen a whole lot more difficult...

barbarians at the gate meaning: Alaric the Goth: An Outsider's History of the Fall of Rome Douglas Boin, 2020-06-09 Denied citizenship by the Roman Empire, a soldier named Alaric changed history by unleashing a surprise attack on the capital city of an unjust empire. Stigmatized and relegated to the margins of Roman society, the Goths were violent "barbarians" who destroyed "civilization," at least in the conventional story of Rome's collapse. But a slight shift of perspective brings their history, and ours, shockingly alive. Alaric grew up near the river border that separated Gothic territory from Roman. He survived a border policy that separated migrant children from their parents, and he was denied benefits he likely expected from military service. Romans were deeply conflicted over who should enjoy the privileges of citizenship. They wanted to buttress their global power, but were insecure about Roman identity; they depended on foreign goods, but scoffed at and denied foreigners their own voices and humanity. In stark contrast to the rising bigotry, intolerance, and zealotry among Romans during Alaric's lifetime, the Goths, as practicing Christians, valued religious pluralism and tolerance. The marginalized Goths, marked by history as frightening harbingers of destruction and of the Dark Ages, preserved virtues of the ancient world that we take for granted. The three nights of riots Alaric and the Goths brought to the capital struck fear into the hearts of the powerful, but the riots were not without cause. Combining vivid storytelling and historical analysis, Douglas Boin reveals the Goths' complex and fascinating legacy in shaping our world.

barbarians at the gate meaning: Barbarians Inside the Gates--and Other Controversial Essays Thomas Sowell, 1999 In this latest collection of his always provocative essays, Thomas Sowell once again demonstrates why he is one of the most thoughtful, readable, and controversial thinkers of our time. With his usual unrelenting candor, Sowell cuts through the stereotypes, popular mythology, and mush surrounding the critical issues facing our nation today.

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the stability of the financial system itself. The dramatic story of Long-Term's fall is now a chilling harbinger of the crisis that would strike all of Wall Street, from Lehman Brothers to AIG, a decade later. In his new Afterword, Lowenstein shows that LTCM's implosion should be seen not as a one-off drama but as a template for market meltdowns in an age of instability—and as a wake-up call that Wall Street and government alike tragically ignored. Praise for *When Genius Failed* "[Roger] Lowenstein has written a squalid and fascinating tale of world-class greed and, above all, hubris."—BusinessWeek "Compelling . . . The fund was long cloaked in secrecy, making the story of its rise . . . and its ultimate destruction that much more fascinating."—The Washington Post "Story-telling journalism at its best."—The Economist

barbarians at the gate meaning: Public Enemies Bryan Burrough, 2009-04-29 In *Public Enemies*, bestselling author Bryan Burrough strips away the thick layer of myths put out by J. Edgar Hoover's FBI to tell the full story—for the first time—of the most spectacular crime wave in American history, the two-year battle between the young Hoover and the assortment of criminals who became national icons: John Dillinger, Machine Gun Kelly, Bonnie and Clyde, Baby Face Nelson, Pretty Boy Floyd, and the Barkers. In an epic feat of storytelling and drawing on a remarkable amount of newly available material on all the major figures involved, Burrough reveals a web of interconnections within the vast American underworld and demonstrates how Hoover's G-men overcame their early fumbles to secure the FBI's rise to power.

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barbarians at the gate meaning: Locked Gates Howard West, 2021-01-13 Answers long misunderstood. *Locked Gates* unearths an impressive amount of evidence of previously unrecognized technological advancements of the ancient past. Evidence based on myths and legends of the Middle East and confirmed through modern technology sources, such as astrophysical evidence provided by NASA, geological substantiation provided by the science journals such as *NATURE*, and countless main steam science documents. Think of Howard West's book as your ball of thread similar to the thread that lead Theseus out of the darkness of Minotaur's Labyrinth.

barbarians at the gate meaning: Engaging the Other: 'Japan' and Its Alter-Egos, 1550-1850 Ronald P. Toby, 2019-01-21 In *Engaging the Other: "Japan and Its Alter-Egos", 1550-1850* Ronald P. Toby examines new discourses of identity and difference in early modern Japan, a discourse catalyzed by the "Iberian irruption," the appearance of Portuguese and other new, radical others in the sixteenth century. The encounter with peoples and countries unimagined in earlier discourse provoked an identity crisis, a paradigm shift from a view of the world as comprising only "three countries" (*sangoku*), i.e., Japan, China and India, to a world of "myriad countries" (*bankoku*) and peoples. In order to understand the new radical alterities, the Japanese

were forced to establish new parameters of difference from familiar, proximate others, i.e., China, Korea and Ryukyu. Toby examines their articulation in literature, visual and performing arts, law, and customs.

barbarians at the gate meaning: The Fall of the Roman Empire Peter Heather, 2007-06-11 Shows how Europe's barbarians, strengthened by centuries of contact with Rome on many levels, turned into an enemy capable of overturning and dismantling the mighty Empire.

barbarians at the gate meaning: The British Barbarians Grant Allen, 2004-10 Which every reader of this book is requested to read before beginning the story. This is a Hill-top Novel. I dedicate it to all who have heart enough, brain enough, and soul enough to understand it. What do I mean by a Hill-top Novel? Well, of late we have been flooded with stories of evil tendencies: a Hill-top Novel is one which raises a protest in favour of purity.

barbarians at the gate meaning: Straight to Hell John LeFevre, 2015-07-14 The hilarious New York Times bestseller “sharply observes the lives of globe-trotting, overindulging investment bankers” (Entertainment Weekly). “Some chick asked me what I would do with 10 million bucks. I told her I’d wonder where the rest of my money went.” —@GSElevator For three years, the notorious @GSElevator Twitter feed offered a hilarious, shamelessly voyeuristic look into the real world of international finance. Hundreds of thousands followed the account, Goldman Sachs launched an internal investigation, and when the true identity of the man behind it all was revealed, it created a national media sensation—but that’s only part of the story. Where @GSElevator captured the essence of the banking elite with curated jokes and submissions overheard by readers, *Straight to Hell* adds John LeFevre’s own story—an unapologetic and darkly funny account of a career as a globe-conquering investment banker spanning New York, London, and Hong Kong. *Straight to Hell* pulls back the curtain on a world that is both hated and envied, taking readers from the trading floors and roadshows to private planes and after-hours overindulgence. Full of shocking lawlessness, boyish antics, and win-at-all-costs schemes, this is the definitive take on the deviant, dysfunctional, and absolutely excessive world of finance. “Shocking and sordid—and so much fun.” —Daily News (New York) “LeFevre’s workplace anecdotes include tales of nastiness, sabotage, favoritism, sexism, racism, expense-account padding, and legally questionable collusion.” —The New Yorker

barbarians at the gate meaning: Class Paul Fussell, 1992 This book describes the living-room artifacts, clothing styles, and intellectual proclivities of American classes from top to bottom.

barbarians at the gate meaning: Red Notice Bill Browder, 2015-02-03 Freezing Order, the follow-up to *Red Notice*, is available now! “[Red Notice] does for investing in Russia and the former Soviet Union what *Liar’s Poker* did for our understanding of Salomon Brothers, Wall Street, and the mortgage-backed securities business in the 1980s. Browder’s business saga meshes well with the story of corruption and murder in Vladimir Putin’s Russia, making *Red Notice* an early candidate for any list of the year’s best books” (Fortune). “Part John Grisham-like thriller, part business and political memoir.” —The New York Times This is a story about an accidental activist. Bill Browder started out his adult life as the Wall Street maverick whose instincts led him to Russia just after the breakup of the Soviet Union, where he made his fortune. Along the way he exposed corruption, and when he did, he barely escaped with his life. His Russian lawyer Sergei Magnitsky wasn’t so lucky: he ended up in jail, where he was tortured to death. That changed Browder forever. He saw the murderous heart of the Putin regime and has spent the last half decade on a campaign to expose it. Because of that, he became Putin’s number one enemy, especially after Browder succeeded in having a law passed in the United States—The Magnitsky Act—that punishes a list of Russians implicated in the lawyer’s murder. Putin famously retaliated with a law that bans Americans from adopting Russian orphans. A financial caper, a crime thriller, and a political crusade, *Red Notice* is the story of one man taking on overpowering odds to change the world, and also the story of how, without intending to, he found meaning in his life.

barbarians at the gate meaning: Enemy at the Gates William J. Craig, 2015-09-29 A New York Times bestseller that brings to life one of the bloodiest battles of World War II—and the beginning of

the end of the Third Reich. On August 5, 1942, giant pillars of dust rose over the Russian steppe, marking the advance of the 6th Army, an elite German combat unit dispatched by Hitler to capture the industrial city of Stalingrad and press on to the oil fields of Azerbaijan. The Germans were supremely confident; in three years, they had not suffered a single defeat. The Luftwaffe had already bombed the city into ruins. German soldiers hoped to complete their mission and be home in time for Christmas. The siege of Stalingrad lasted five months, one week, and three days. Nearly two million men and women died, and the 6th Army was completely destroyed. Considered by many historians to be the turning point of World War II in Europe, the Soviet Army's victory foreshadowed Hitler's downfall and the rise of a communist superpower. Bestselling author William Craig spent five years researching this epic clash of military titans, traveling to three continents in order to review documents and interview hundreds of survivors. *Enemy at the Gates* is the enthralling result: the definitive account of one of the most important battles in world history. It became a New York Times bestseller and was also the inspiration for the 2001 film of the same name, starring Joseph Fiennes and Jude Law.

barbarians at the gate meaning: Den of Thieves James B. Stewart, 2012-11-20 A #1 bestseller from coast to coast, *Den of Thieves* tells the full story of the insider-trading scandal that nearly destroyed Wall Street, the men who pulled it off, and the chase that finally brought them to justice. Pulitzer Prize-winner James B. Stewart shows for the first time how four of the eighties' biggest names on Wall Street—Michael Milken, Ivan Boesky, Martin Siegel, and Dennis Levine—created the greatest insider-trading ring in financial history and almost walked away with billions, until a team of downtrodden detectives triumphed over some of America's most expensive lawyers to bring this powerful quartet to justice. Based on secret grand jury transcripts, interviews, and actual trading records, and containing explosive new revelations about Michael Milken and Ivan Boesky, *Den of Thieves* weaves all the facts into an unforgettable narrative—a portrait of human nature, big business, and crime of unparalleled proportions.

barbarians at the gate meaning: The Fate of the West Bill Emmott, 2017-04-27 When faced with global instability and economic uncertainty, it is tempting for states to react by closing borders, hoarding wealth and solidifying power. We have seen it at various times in Japan, France and Italy and now it is infecting much of Europe and America, as the vote for Brexit in the UK has vividly shown. This insularity, together with increased inequality of income and wealth, threatens the future role of the West as a font of stability, prosperity and security. Part of the problem is that the principles of liberal democracy upon which the success of the West has been built have been suborned, with special interest groups such as bankers accruing too much power and too great a share of the economic cake. So how is this threat to be countered? States such as Sweden in the 1990s, California at different times or Britain under Thatcher all halted stagnation by clearing away the powers of interest groups and restoring their societies' ability to evolve. To survive, the West needs to be porous, open and flexible. From reinventing welfare systems to redefining the working age, from reimagining education to embracing automation, Emmott lays out the changes the West must make to revive itself in the moment and avoid a deathly rigid future.

barbarians at the gate meaning: Heroes and Villains Angela Carter, 2011-02-03 Sharp-eyed Marianne lives in a white tower made of steel and concrete with her father and the other Professors. Outside, where the land is thickly wooded and wild beasts roam, live the Barbarians, who raid and pillage in order to survive. Marianne is strictly forbidden to leave her civilized world but, fascinated by these savage outsiders, decides to escape. There, beyond the wire fences, she will discover a decaying paradise, encounter the tattooed Barbarian boy Jewel and go beyond the darkest limits of her imagination. Playful, sensuous, violent and gripping, *Heroes and Villains* is an ambiguous and deliriously rich blend of post-apocalyptic fiction, gothic fantasy, literary allusion and twisted romance.

barbarians at the gate meaning: The Irish Edge Finbarr Bradley, James J. Kennelly, 2013 An argument for Irish businesses to focus more on Ireland's inimitable advantages of culture, authenticity, and place while competing in the global marketplace.

barbarians at the gate meaning: *The Accidental Investment Banker* Jonathan A. Knee, 2006-08-15 Jonathan A. Knee had a ringside seat during the go-go, boom-and-bust decade and into the 21st century, at the two most prestigious investment banks on Wall Street--Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley. In this candid and irreverent insider's account of an industry in free fall, Knee captures an exhilarating era of fabulous deal-making in a free-wheeling Internet economy--and the catastrophe that followed when the bubble burst. Populated with power players, back stabbers, celebrity bankers, and godzillionaires, here is a vivid account of the dramatic upheaval that took place in investment banking. Indeed, Knee entered an industry that was typified by the motto first-class business in a first-class way and saw it transformed in a decade to a free-for-all typified by the acronym IBG, YBG (I'll be gone, you'll be gone). Increasingly mercenary bankers signed off on weak deals, knowing they would leave them in the rear-view mirror. Once, investment bankers prospered largely on their success in serving the client, preserving the firm, and protecting the public interest. Now, in the financial supermarket era, bankers felt not only that each day might be their last, but that their worth was tied exclusively to how much revenue they generated for the firm on that day--regardless of the source. Today, most young executives feel no loyalty to their firms, and among their clients, Knee finds an unprecedented but understandable level of cynicism and distrust of investment banks. Brimming with insight into what investment bankers actually do, and told with biting humor and unflinching honesty, *The Accidental Investment Banker* offers a fascinating glimpse behind the scenes of the most powerful companies on Wall Street.

barbarians at the gate meaning: *The Fate of Rome* Kyle Harper, 2017-10-02 How devastating viruses, pandemics, and other natural catastrophes swept through the far-flung Roman Empire and helped to bring down one of the mightiest civilizations of the ancient world Here is the monumental retelling of one of the most consequential chapters of human history: the fall of the Roman Empire. *The Fate of Rome* is the first book to examine the catastrophic role that climate change and infectious diseases played in the collapse of Rome's power—a story of nature's triumph over human ambition. Interweaving a grand historical narrative with cutting-edge climate science and genetic discoveries, Kyle Harper traces how the fate of Rome was decided not just by emperors, soldiers, and barbarians but also by volcanic eruptions, solar cycles, climate instability, and devastating viruses and bacteria. He takes readers from Rome's pinnacle in the second century, when the empire seemed an invincible superpower, to its unraveling by the seventh century, when Rome was politically fragmented and materially depleted. Harper describes how the Romans were resilient in the face of enormous environmental stress, until the besieged empire could no longer withstand the combined challenges of a "little ice age" and recurrent outbreaks of bubonic plague. A poignant reflection on humanity's intimate relationship with the environment, *The Fate of Rome* provides a sweeping account of how one of history's greatest civilizations encountered and endured, yet ultimately succumbed to the cumulative burden of nature's violence. The example of Rome is a timely reminder that climate change and germ evolution have shaped the world we inhabit—in ways that are surprising and profound.

barbarians at the gate meaning: *Thinking About History* Sarah Maza, 2017-09-18 What distinguishes history as a discipline from other fields of study? That's the animating question of Sarah Maza's *Thinking About History*, a general introduction to the field of history that revels in its eclecticism and highlights the inherent tensions and controversies that shape it. Designed for the classroom, *Thinking About History* is organized around big questions: Whose history do we write, and how does that affect what stories get told and how they are told? How did we come to view the nation as the inevitable context for history, and what happens when we move outside those boundaries? What is the relation among popular, academic, and public history, and how should we evaluate sources? What is the difference between description and interpretation, and how do we balance them? Maza provides choice examples in place of definitive answers, and the result is a book that will spark classroom discussion and offer students a view of history as a vibrant, ever-changing field of inquiry that is thoroughly relevant to our daily lives.

barbarians at the gate meaning: *Days of Rage* Bryan Burrough, 2016-04-05 *The Weathermen*.

The Symbionese Liberation Army. The FALN. The Black Liberation Army. The names seem quaint now, but there was a stretch of time in America when there was on average more than one significant terrorist act in the U.S. every week. The FBI combated these groups and others as nodes in a single revolutionary underground, dedicated to the violent overthrow of the American government. Thus began a decade-long battle between the FBI and these homegrown terrorists, compellingly and thrillingly documented in *Days of Rage*.

barbarians at the gate meaning: Cultural Criminology Jeff Ferrell, Keith Hayward, Jock Young, 2008-09-25 Winner of the ASC Distinguished Book Award for International Research! 'Beautifully written and superbly conceived, with illustrations and examples that combine theory and practice across a range of disciplines, Cultural Criminology should be read by anyone – academics and smart readers alike – interested in crime, media, culture and social theory. Bravo to Ferrell, Hayward and Young on a tour de force that is at once cool and classic! Cultural Criminology will influence the field for a very long time to come.' - Professor Lynn Chancer, Hunter College, CUNY, USA 'This is not just a book on the present state and possible prospects of our understanding of crime, criminals and our responses to both. However greatly criminologists might benefit from the authors' illuminating insights and the new cognitive vistas their investigations have opened, the impact of this book may well stretch far beyond the realm of criminology proper and mark a watershed in the progress of social study as such.' - Zygmunt Bauman, Emeritus Professor, University of Leeds, UK 'Cultural Criminology offers a fresh new perspective on both criminality and criminal justice. It outlines the cultural hegemony of the powerful while also documenting the growing resistance to mindless criminalization and mass incarceration. Artfully written, the authors also document the work of those consciously creating a new political space to challenge the increasingly global, security society that seems inextricably tied up with late capitalism.' - Meda Chesney-Lind, University of Hawaii at Manoa 'Creative, challenging and controversial: a manifesto for mean times' - Tony Jefferson, Visiting Presidential Scholar, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, USA Here is the definitive book on cultural criminology. Lively, innovative, engaging and accessible, Cultural Criminology draws together the work of three of the leading international figures in the field today. The book traces the history, current configuration, methodological innovations and future trajectories of cultural criminology, mapping its terrain for students and academics interested in this exciting field. The book highlights and analyses issues of representation, meaning and politics in relation to crime and criminal justice, covering areas such as: - Crime and the media - Everyday life and everyday transgression - Popular culture - Consumerism - Globalisation - Social control The use of vignettes, case studies and visual material throughout the text brings the subject to life. Cultural Criminology is indispensable to students, lecturers and researchers in criminology, sociology, cultural studies and media studies. Jeff Ferrell is Professor of Criminal Justice at Texas Christian University and Visiting Professor at the University of Kent. Keith Hayward is Director of Studies for Criminology/ Senior Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Kent. Jock Young is Professor of Sociology at the University of Kent and Distinguished Professor at John Jay College, CUNY. For more information about the authors and cultural criminology, see <http://www.culturalcriminology.org>

barbarians at the gate meaning: Unsettling the World Jeanne Morefield, 2022-04-29 *Unsettling the World* is the first book-length treatment of Edward Said's influential cultural criticism from the perspective of a political theorist. Arguing that the generative power of Said's thought extends well beyond *Orientalism*, the book explores Said's writings on the experience of exile, the practice of "contrapuntal" criticism, and the illuminating potential of worldly humanism. Said's critical vision, Morefield argues, provides a fresh perspective on debates in political theory about subjectivity, global justice, identity, and the history of political thought. Most importantly, she maintains, Said's approach offers theorists a model of how to bring the insights developed through historical analyses of imperialism and anti-colonialism to bear on critiques of contemporary global crises and the politics of American foreign policy.

barbarians at the gate meaning: A Source Book for Mediaeval History Oliver J. Thatcher,

Edgar Holmes McNeal, 2019-11-22 A Source Book for Mediæval History is a scholarly piece by Oliver J. Thatcher. It covers all major historical events and leaders from the Germania of Tacitus in the 1st century to the decrees of the Hanseatic League in the 13th century.

barbarians at the gate meaning: Before They Are Hanged Joe Abercrombie, 2009-06-18 'As brilliant as its predecessor' SF REVU Bitter and merciless war is coming to the frozen north. It's bloody and dangerous and the Union army, split by politics and hamstrung by incompetence, is utterly unprepared for the slaughter that's coming. Lacking experience, training, and in some cases even weapons the army is scarcely equipped to repel Bethod's scouts, let alone the cream of his forces. In the heat-ravaged south the Gurkish are massing to assault the city of Dagoska, defended by Inquisitor Glokta. The city is braced for the inevitable defeat and massacre to come, preparations are made to make the Gurkish pay for every inch of land ... but a plot is festering to hand the city to its beseigers without a fight, and the previous Inquisitor of Dagoska vanished without trace. Threatened from within and without the city, Glokta needs answers, and he needs them soon. And to the east a small band of malefactors travel to the edge of the world to reclaim a device from history - a Seed, hidden for generations - with tremendous destructive potential. A device which could put a end to war, to the army of Eaters in the South, to the invasion of Shanka from the North - but only if it can be found, and only if its power can be controlled ...

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