The Man Who Saved the Union: Ulysses Grant in War and Peace

H. W. Brands
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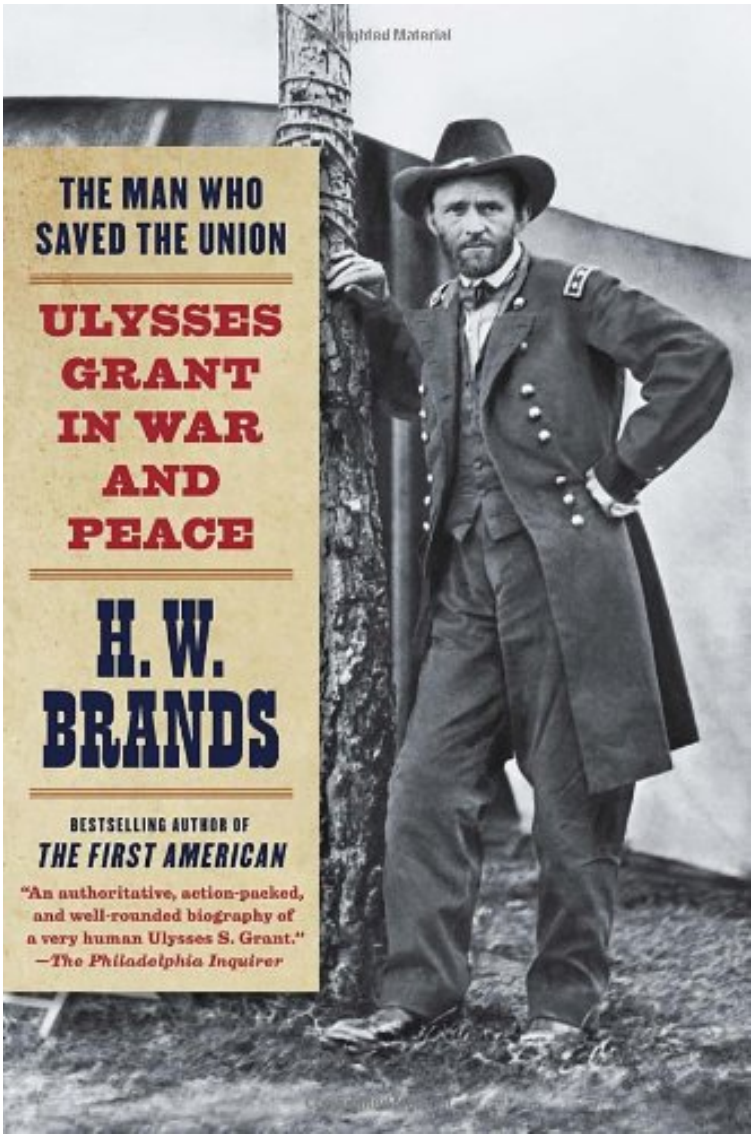

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H. W. Brands : The Man Who Saved the Union: Ulysses Grant in War and Peace before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Man Who Saved the Union: Ulysses Grant in War and Peace:

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biography rich in history. Great reading for anyone interested in the civil war, American politics, military history or leadership. It is also inspirational to those who may be having trouble finding their niche in life. And while the focus is Grant, other characters such as his wife, members of congress, and other military leaders are developed enough to also be of interest.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Grant, Leadership, and Literary Artistry all in one.By George W. CommonsThis wonderful literary artistry portrays the most important American of all time in a very logical and analytical manner. Grant was the pivotal man in the United States of America. In his world there are only a very very few men who have made all the difference in the world. Grant was THE MAN of the United States of America. Grant saved everything. What Grant did is so amazing and so powerful it conjures great emotion on every page of this book. How the events unfolded and how Grant handled them is again aspiring to a very emotional point. Every single page of this fine story is priceless and demonstrates true leadership. Grant lead while others failed and this story spells it out. We are indebted to this fine author and forever God bless Ulysses S Grant. Every person wishing to understand leadership in its very purest form must read this book. Grant is the ultimate American leadership role model for all time. He made all the difference in the world. Every American is forever indebted to Grant.

Ulysses Grant emerges in this masterful biography as a genius in battle and a driven president to a divided country, who remained fearlessly on the side of right. He was a beloved commander in the field who made the sacrifices necessary to win the war, even in the face of criticism. He worked valiantly to protect the rights of freed men in the South. He allowed the American Indians to shape their own fate even as the realities of Manifest Destiny meant the end of their way of life. In this sweeping and majestic narrative, bestselling author H.W. Brands now reconsiders Grant's legacy and provides an intimate portrait of a heroic man who saved the Union on the battlefield and consolidated that victory as a resolute and principled political leader.

Praise for H. W. Brands' The Man Who Saved the Union:Comprehensive, dramatic, and highly readable . . . H.W. Brands has written an authoritative, action-packed, and well-rounded biography of a very human Ulysses S. Grant. Philadelphia InquirerBrands artfully portrays Grant as a man of his times . . . and argues, persuasively, that he played a role in settling the great questions of his time. The Boston GlobeThere is a magnificent unity to this story of Grants leadership in both war and peace that is not found anywhere else. In this compelling narrative, Grant emerges more fascinating than ever before. Doris Kearns Goodwin, author of Team of Rivals, winner of the Pulitzer PrizeBrands paints a vivid landscape of mid-19th-century America, filling his canvas with fascinating characters . . . [The] prose is engaging, almost conversational, and the narrative moves briskly. The Wall Street JournalIn this splendidly written biography, Brands does justice to one of Americas most underrated presidents . . . Brands is both sympathetic and thorough in his examination of Grants life. . . . Brands has provided a valuable service by making clear how much America owes to Ulysses Grant. Dallas Morning NewsThorough, balanced, and a good read . . . Brands deserves great praise for once more attempting to put Ulysses S. Grant where he belongs, in the pantheon of American heroes. The Daily BeastWhat is distinctive about this distinguished biographers new work is its rehabilitation of President Grant, who was not only a great general who wrote memoirs worthy of comparison to Julius Caesars, but a great moral leader who pursued Lincolns agenda of re-unifying the nation and integrating its former slaves into one indivisible nation.Minneapolis Star TribuneAwell-done effort to portray one of the most important and insufficiently appreciated American figures of the 19th century. Richmond Times-DispatchCompelling. . . . An extraordinarily well-written survey of Grants life that aims to rehabilitate his image. . . . [Brands] offers exciting prose and fresh perspective on Grant that will make readers want to learn more. Pittsburgh Post-GazetteA treat for history buffs and anyone else who enjoys a life story well-told. . . . Richly detailed and deeply moving, The Man Who Saved the Unionhas a you-are-there quality thanks to its carefully drawn sketches of people and places. The Christian Science MonitorFascinating. . . . The author describes numerous battles and campaigns in chilling and heartbreaking detail. His management of source material is impeccable as he mixes letters from soldiers with orders, memoranda and official communiqus from Washington. BookreporterOnce again, H. W. Brands has crafted a wonderful portrait of a great leader who endured and prevailed in hours of stress and strain. Brandss U. S. Grant is a compelling figure, a man too often overlooked by history. This book rectifies that with grace and insight. Jon Meacham, author of American Lion, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for biographyToo frequently overshadowed or overlooked, U. S. Grant finally gets his due in H. W. Brands splendid new biography. With verve and his trademark scholarship, Brands vividly brings Grant to life. Here, rendered in all his humanity, is the soldier, statesman, president. Here, too, is a man as much for our time as for his. Jay Winik, author of April 1865 and The Great UpheavalH. W. Brands celebrates Grant the warrior and Grant the president, too long maligned by an unholy alliance of snobs, racists, and partisan historians. A great American gets his full due. Richard Brookhiser, author of James MadisonA skilled American storyteller reminds us of Grants bravery and devotion on the bloody battlefields of the Civil War and as the president who rescued the martyred Lincolns dream in the ugly seasons after the assassination. . . . The inestimable H. W. Brands tells the tale of this very human hero with the verve and insight we expect from a great biographer. John A. Farrell, author of Clarence Darrow: Attorney for the

DamnedWith this clear-eyed work, Brands re-examines the great American struggle, this time with Grant at the center. The result is deeper and more complex than much of the giant Lincoln literature, as Brands gives us not just the war but its painful and painstaking aftermath. . . . This is an essential book. Jim Newton, author ofEisenhower: The White House YearsAuthoritative. . . . [Brandss] narrative of Grants military campaigns in particular is lucid, colorful, and focused on telling moments of decision. His Grant emerges as an immensely appealing figure . . . with a keen mind, stout character, and unpretentious manner. The result is a fine portrait of the quintessential American hero. Publishers Weekly, starred reviewAbout the AuthorH. W. Brands is the Dickson Allen Anderson Professor of History at the University of Texas at Austin. A New York Times bestselling author, he was the finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in biography for The First American and again for Traitor to His Class.Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.Excerpted from the Hardcover Edition1.The journey began generations before he was born. His ancestor Mathew Grant crossed the Atlantic from England with the Puritans in the 1630s, and subsequent Grants migrated progressively west: to Connecticut in the seventeenth century, Pennsylvania in the eighteenth, Ohio in the nineteenth. Jesse Grant, of the sixth generation of American Grants, for a time lived in Deerfield, Ohio, with a family named Brown, of whom a son, John, would attempt to start a slave revolt at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in 1859.Jesse Grant never got much formal education and always felt the lack; he vowed that his sons would not suffer similarly. Jesse married Hannah Simpson in 1821; ten months later, on April 27, 1822, Hannah bore a son they named Hiram Ulysses on the partial inspiration of an aunt with a penchant for the classics. The boy attended private schools, since public education hadnt reached Georgetown, in southwestern Ohio, where he grew up. At fourteen he was sent across the Ohio River to Maysville, Kentucky, to boarding school, but the experience didnt take and he returned to Georgetown. At sixteen he enrolled in an academy in Ripley, on the Ohio bank of the Ohio River, with no greater success. He later acknowledged that the failure was his own fault. I was not studious in habit, he said, and probably did not make progress enough to compensate for the outlay for board and tuition.Yet he was no rebel. He was always a steady, serious sort of boy, who took everything in earnest, his mother recalled. Even when he played he made a business of it. For this reason his parents paid attention when he registered his preferences and dislikes. Jesse owned and operated a tannery, in which Ulys, as family and friends called the boy, was expected to work. But he detested the place and what went on there. He would rather do anything else under the sun than work in the tannery, Jesse recounted. Jesse remembered informing Ulys a few times that he would have to grind bark (for the tannic acid it contained). He would get right up without saying a word and start straight for the village, and get a load to haul, or passengers to carry, or something another to do, and hire a boy to come back and grind the bark. Other aspects of tanning were equally distasteful. In the beam room hides were defleshed by being drawn forcefully over beams; Ulys entered only under paternal duress and told his father that as soon as he could support himself he would never go near the smelly place again. Jesse excused him. I dont want you to work at it now if you dont like it and mean to stick to it, Jesse recalled saying.So he let the boy work outdoors. Ulys loved horses and early displayed a gift for riding and managing them. He had the habit of riding our horses to water, standing up on their bare backs, Jesse remembered. He began this practice at about five years old. At eight or nine he would ride them at the top of their speed, he standing upon one foot and balancing himself by the bridle reins. Ulys drove the team that transported wood and other supplies for the tannery; from the age of eleven, when he was big enough to handle a plow, he took charge of all the horse-powered tasks on the family farm.He impressed his father with his self-sufficiency, and Jesse let the boy travel by horse and wagon around southwestern Ohio and into Kentucky. The journeys often involved some aspect of the family business: purchasing supplies, delivering messages or finished products. Ulys especially liked to buy horses and felt much older than his years when he made a good bargain.Sometimes the bargains werent so good. A neighbor had a colt that Ulys, then eight, fancied; the neighbor asked twenty-five dollars for it. Jesse didnt want to spend more than twenty, but Ulys pleaded and persuaded his father to let him offer more if necessary. As the story was later told, the boy approached the neighbor: Papa says I may offer you twenty dollars for the colt, but if you wont take that, I am to offer twenty-two and a half, and if you wont take that, to give you twenty-five. The neighbor laughed and received his full price.Grant remembered the incident sixty years later, not fondly. This transaction caused me great heart-burning, he said. The story got out among the boys of the village, and it was a long time before I heard the end of it. Boys enjoy the misery of their companions, at least village boys in that day did, and in later life I have found that all adults are not free from the peculiarity.In his eighteenth year Ulysses looked forward to leaving school, but Jesse had other plans. An acquaintance and former friend, Thomas Hamer, represented Georgetowns district in Congress; the friendship had foundered in the breakup of the old Republican party of Thomas Jefferson and the emergence of the Democratic and Whig parties. The Democrats favored Andrew Jackson and opposed the Bank of the United States, while the Whigs backed Henry Clay and supported the national bank. Thomas Hamer was a Jackson man, Jesse Grant a Clay man, and sharp political words led to a personal rupture.Yet Jesse needed Hamers help six years later when he learned that a West Point cadet from the district had to withdraw from the military academy. Jesse wanted Ulysses to receive the nomination in the young mans place. He approached Ohio senator Thomas Morris but was informed that Hamer held the right of appointment. Jesse suspended his hostility toward Hamer long enough to ask him to nominate Ulysses.Hamer was willing to move beyond their differences; moreover, with the nomination deadline swiftly

approaching, he had no other nominee. He put Ulysses forward.Only at this point did Jesse apprise his son of what he had been doing on his behalf. Ulysses, I believe you are going to receive the appointment, he said. What appointment? Ulysses asked. West Point, Jesse answered.Ulysses was less grateful than Jesse thought fitting. The young man didnt know much about the military academy, but what he thought he knew disposed him against it. I had a very exalted idea of the aquirements necessary to get through, he recalled later. I did not believe I possessed them, and could not bear the idea of failing.One thing alone, the prospect of a journey, made the appointment appealing. I had always a great desire to travel, he explained. He had ventured as far as a horse could conveniently take him from Georgetown, and the prospect of crossing the eastern mountains was alluring. Going to West Point would give me the opportunity of visiting the two great cities of the continent, Philadelphia and New York. His curiosity overcame his fear and he agreed to go.Yet even as he imagined what he would see in the big cities, he secretly hoped fate would spare him from actually becoming a cadet. When these places were visited, he recalled, I would have been glad to have had a steamboat or railroad collision, or any other accident happen, by which I might have received a temporary injury sufficient to make me ineligible, for a time, to enter the Academy.The journey was everything he hoped for, save the accident. Steamboats had arrived on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers about the time Grant was born; by 1839 they had transformed the economy of Americas central valley, permitting travelers and cargoes to move upriver almost as easily as down. Grant boarded a steamboat at Ripley and rode three days to Pittsburgh. Many travelers on the Ohio in that period remarked the difference in development between the thriving Ohio side of the river, where free farmers tilled the fields and free workers manned the wharves, and the languishing Kentucky and Virginia side, where slaves, with no stake in their labors, did the toiling. If the young Grant noticed the difference, he didnt record it.At Pittsburgh he switched to a canal boat. Canals had served the American East since the eighteenth century; during the first third of the nineteenth century they penetrated the interior, with the Erie Canal, completed in 1825, connecting the Hudson River to the Great Lakes and launching New York City to commercial primacy. The narrow-beamed canal boats, pulled by horses or mules on canal-side towpaths, were slow but sure. No mode of conveyance could be more pleasant, when time was not an object, Grant wrote of his own trip. His vessel was comfortable, and the artificial waterway afforded excellent views of the western Pennsylvania landscape. For Grant, the slowness of travel was a mark in the canals favor. I had rather a dread of reaching my destination.At Harrisburg he encountered the revolutionary transport technology of the era. American railroads were younger than Grant, but their effect on locomotion was evident the moment he stepped aboard. We travelled at least eighteen miles an hour, when at full speed, he remembered, and made the whole distance averaging probably as much as twelve miles an hour. This seemed like annihilating space....I thought the perfection of rapid transit had been reached.He stepped off the train at Philadelphia, which entranced him so much that he spent five days exploring nearly every street and alley, visiting the sites associated with the landmark events of Americas founding, attending the theater and generally acting the young man with pocket money and no desire to leave.New York held him less long, in part because he feared he had spent too much money in Philadelphia. But there was also less to see in New York; its urban glory remained prospective. After three days he headed north to West Point and arrived there at the end of May 1839.The academy wasnt expecting him, at least not under his given name. Congressman Hamer knew him as Ulysses and assumed this was his first name. For some reason Hamer recorded Grants middle initial as S, apparently from the family name, Simpson, of Grants mother. In consequence the academys registry listed the new cadet as U. S. Grant.Grant accepted Ulysses as a first name, having used it as such since he learned to talk. But he clung to Hiram, which he now adopted as a middle name.The academy was unmoved. He had been appointed as U. S. Grant, and so he remained in the academys records. Grants classmates drew the inevitable connection to Uncle Sam and started calling him Sam Grant. Grant signed his papers Ulysses H. Grant or U. H. Grant until the weight of the armys authority wore him down and he became U. S. Grant in his own hand.His introduction to cadet life didnt diminish his ambivalence toward a military education. I slept for two months upon one single pair of blankets, he wrote McKinstry Griffith, a cousin, at the end of the summers encampment that served as orientation to the academy. I tell you what, coz, it is tremendous hard. Suppose you try it by way of experiment for a night or two. The drilling was tedious and the discipline vexing. The more he reflected on what he had gotten himself into, the deeper his spirits sank. When the 28th of August came--the date for breaking up camp and going into barracks--I felt as though I had been at West Point always, he later recalled, and that if I stayed to graduation, I would have to remain always.The autumn scarcely improved his mood. We have tremendous long and hard lessons to get in both French and Algebra, he told his cousin in late September. Though the cadets nominally earned twenty-eight dollars per month, he had yet to see any of it. The rules of daily life could be maddening. If we want anything from a shoestring to a coat, we must go to the commandant of the post and get an order for it. He missed the girls he knew from Ohio. I have been here about four months and have not seen a single familiar face or spoken to a single lady. I wish some of the pretty girls of Bethel were here just so I might look at them.The code of conduct was rigid and enforced by a system of black marks. They give a man one of these black marks for almost nothing, Grant explained. If he gets 200 a year they dismiss him. A cadet from New York had received eight black marks for not attending church one Sunday and was confined to his room besides. Grant shook his head. We are not only obliged to go to church but must march there by companies. This is not exactly republican.The uniforms struck Grant as ludicrous. If I

were to come home now with my uniform on..., he wrote Griffith, you would laugh at my appearance....My pants sit as tight to my skin as the bark to a tree, and if I do not walk military--that is, if I bend over quickly or run--they are very apt to crack with a report as loud as a pistol. My coat must always be buttoned up tight to the chin....It makes me look very singular. If you were to see me at a distance, the first question you would ask would be, Is that a fish or an animal?Yet there were compensations. The cadets received visits from important officials. Martin Van Buren had followed Andrew Jackson in the White House, and though Van Buren lacked the war record of the hero of New Orleans, he was president, the only one Grant had encountered thus far.Winfield Scott was even more impressive. Scott had covered himself with blood and glory in the War of 1812, and unlike Jackson, who had left the military for politics, he had remained in the army. By 1839 he was the ranking American general and the model, in the eyes of Grant and the other cadets, of what a soldier should be. With his commanding figure, his quite colossal size and showy uniform, I thought him the finest specimen of manhood my eyes had ever beheld, and the most to be envied, Grant recalled.Visits like Scotts combined with his own adjustment to the ways of the military to make Grant think the academy wasnt so bad after all. There is much to dislike but more to like, he wrote Griffith. On the whole I like the place very much, so much that I would not go away on any account. His teachers emphasized the usefulness of the education he was receiving, and he drew some conclusions of his own. The fact is if a man graduates here he is safe for life, let him go where he will. I mean to study and stay if it be possible. If I cannot--very well, the world is wide.