

Chapter 1 : - Selected Letters of Oscar Wilde (Oxford Paperbacks) by Oscar Wilde

Selected Letters and Journals (Oxford Letters & Memoirs), Burney, Fanny, Used; G Email to friends Share on Facebook - opens in a new window or tab Share on Twitter - opens in a new window or tab Share on Pinterest - opens in a new window or tab.

I have only read the first volume, which takes the reader up to the fall of Vicksburg. Actually, up to Shiloh, I was rating the Memoirs much higher. Grant or Twain for him could write some really clean, uncluttered prose. His sharp eye for telling and economical detail certainly must have been attractive to Hemingway. One aspect of Memoirs that surprised me is that they are hardly as egoless as many have portrayed them. Grant does indeed come across as a humble, straightforward guy, but then again, he almost never dwells on himself in any deep way. You do see flashes when he discusses his politics -- and his dislike for the "rebellion. You also sense a thin skin. This sensitivity really jumps out at you when he discusses Shiloh. Essentially he got caught with his pants down, as the Confederates launched a berserker attack that almost swamped the Union troops. Grant tries to wave this off, insisting that the battle was never in any real doubt. He then disparages the Confederate General, Albert Johnson, as being overrated and vacillating. I tend to agree with him on the first point, but his loss along with his coordinating eye, certainly damaged the Confederate chances on the first day. Grant also insists in a contradictory way that Shiloh was "the severest battle fought at the West during the war, and but few in the East equalled it for hard, determined fighting. But there are a number of more savage and bloodier battles yet to come. Even a casual reader of Civil War history knows this. As far as I can tell, history records that the Union lost slightly more men than the Confederates. But the Union also won the battle, so why the hyper sensitivity? How this plays out over the course of both volumes, I can only guess from what I understand, he was no fan of Lee. What follows, other than some smaller battles and maneuvering, is the Vicksburg campaign. You would need detailed maps of the day to make any sense of what Grant is no doubt accurately describing. The point, I gather, is the slow strangulation of Vicksburg. The terrain, a swampy impossibility, was the main opponent. Grant successfully coordinated a complicated land and water campaign, against a smaller sized opponent who got little help -- other than a piecemeal kind -- from other Confederate forces. A brutal campaign where numbers and time mattered, and not battle field finesse. One gets the sense that Grant resented that interpretation. At West Point we studied many generals and my own personal area of interest has always been the Civil War. He was also a horse whisperer. I think his unique brain, which is shown in these letters, was the key to his unique leadership and calmness. I feel Grant has been greatly under-rated as a General. January 1, Mike These memoirs, completed while Grant was dying of throat cancer, and published with the help of Mark Twain, succeeded in two ways: Grant writes well, with an economy of style which is perhaps eviden These memoirs, completed while Grant was dying of throat cancer, and published with the help of Mark Twain, succeeded in two ways: Grant writes well, with an economy of style which is perhaps evidence of an attitude towards prose as a means of transport or a method of delivery and not an art. The passages are direct, and cleanly composed with humility, empathy, and subtle wit -- like one of those chairs you buy from a rural craftsman that will still be around long after the hands that made it and the ass that first rode it are in the grave. From such a vantage one may acquire great power because the lever of history tilts in your favor. However, one may become deluded by this apparent command of the flux, and identify them self as the source of worldly change -- as an agent of fate or the god who commands. To magnify ones ego to such ridiculous proportion is an error. Others pass through the maelstrom changed in a different way: While reading this people would ask me what mention Grant made of his drinking problem. Like most of his personal life, very little, almost none. Someone else asked me who wrote them. The writing is clean, graceful, blunt, and lucid. While reading it, I kept thinking that the North may have won the war because Grant was such a good writer. What I mean is that the clarity of his prose shines through so brightly, and it does the same even in his orders during the war. Of course, it is not enough for orders to be clear, they must also be effective. I wish I had come across this book thirty years ago, so that I could have studied it as an example of simple, concise and powerful writing. At the same time, this is one of the least personal of

memoirs that I have read. The material covered is basically Grant the soldier and general. There is a short preamble about his family and roots, and a passing nod to his wife. Thankfully, for me at least, those are all good enough subjects. From its contents, the main thing I took away from this book is how little a general thinks about fighting itself. Instead, thoughts go towards troop disposition, morale, and above all, supplies. As a result, the commanding generals almost necessarily think of their units as pieces, and to a certain extent stop thinking of them as men. I think this habit of thinking simply goes with the territory, and I also think it probably makes possible the incredibly horrible decisions that the generals must make. Grant struck me as being considerably more humble than I would have thought possible in a general. His praise for Sherman seems unbounded, and Sheridan gets only slightly less effusive treatment. For the most part, he does not brag about his own accomplishments. Rather, he is quick to give credit to his underlings, but always in a way that seems fair and well considered. The one person to whom Grant seems incapable of being generous is Lee. He debunks the numbers. At several points, he notes how Lee must have been deceived. He rarely gives Lee credit for any fine military move. And there is one anecdote that seems to make Lee seem like an unfeeling bastard. Grant wrote Lee proposing a temporary truce to allow both sides to collect their wounded and dead. Lee haggled over the terms of the truce for a few days. In the meantime, the wounded basically all bled out, and by the time they had arrived at terms, both sides could only go out to collect their dead. Who was the heartless butcher? The book is packed with very detailed descriptions of campaigns and troop movements. For me, there were too many. And I completely understand why they are there. My Library of America edition also has perhaps the most useless maps. They might just as well have put a map of the U. I highly recommend this book if you have any interest in the Civil War, or American History, or even if you just want to see the difference between the clarity of thinking at that time and what passes for thought among politicians today.

January 1, Franco Paz American Anti-hero: A review of his memoirs. At the tail end of his life, however, Ulysses S. Grant possessed something that he did not have before: To the men of his own time, Ulysses S. Grant was the most famous, celebrated and respected American of his generation. Crowds of people swarmed the streets to cheer for him wherever he went. During his American Anti-hero: During his world tour, twenty thousand working Englishmen went out into the streets to cheer for the General of Freedom, the one who had single handedly defeated the armies of slavery and set free thousands of men, women and children. His book proves that this he was not, and that it was not merely doggedness and persistence that allowed him to be the hero of the Civil War and savior of the Union, but also his towering intellect and genius strategic sense. This book is not merely his story, but a relevant account of the most tumultuous time in American history, coming from the man who played the most pivotal role in it, a man whose legacy has perhaps unjustly been tarnished by time. Moreover, he maintains that the American Civil War was an outgrowth of the Mexican War, more specifically the annexation of more southern states and the spread of slavery that this action represented. It is good that he is seemingly very objective, and that for every fault he finds in a rival he can also find virtue. Of President Taylor, a General at the time, he says: These are qualities more rarely found than genius or physical courage. F Smith, he said: His insight, coupled with his towering intellect, strategic sense and spare, concise writing make this book an unparalleled read. It comes from having been written by the most celebrated, respected American of his generation, a true military genius who was there when the events depicted happened, and he tells us what he saw exactly how he saw it. Grant is the genius; the reader is merely along for the ride. Grant was picked by Lincoln as his General because he was a fighter. He was not prone to heroics, but neither was he prone to cowardice. He confined himself to saying as little as possible in front of his men, and he was known for not speaking unless he had something to say. In his Memoirs, he found his voice and a story worth telling, and he told it the only way he knew how: I have never been one of them. That said, this book was completely fascinating from start to finish. Grant could write-- I mean really write.

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Chapter 9 : Book Review: Memoirs and Selected Letters by Ulysses S. Grant | Mboten

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