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The Killer Angels by Michael Schaara, Ballantine Books, 1996

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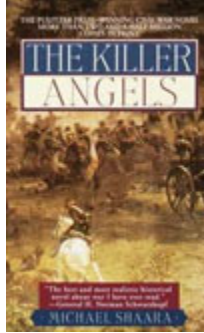
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Recommended Readings



The Killer Angels

by Michael Shaara

Reviewed by Richard McGowan

After reading *The Killer Angels*, I made it my business to visit the beautiful and moving monument for Congressional Medal of Honor winners. I had to read the name "Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain," one of the most accomplished Americans to have ever lived.

Schaara's *The Killer Angels*, the Pulitzer Prize-winning narrative of the Battle at Gettysburg, tells why Chamberlain is, quite possibly, the single most important soldier of the Civil War. Along the way, though, we meet many others, including Robert E. Lee and Lee's "Old Warhorse," James Longstreet; John Buford, "never to receive recognition for his part in choosing the ground and holding it, and in so doing saving not only the battle but perhaps the war," and George Pickett, who said bitterly of Lee, "That man destroyed my Division."

The Killer Angels, therefore, is not simply an account of a battlefield. While military strategy and tactics unfold in the book's pages, the narrative accounts of the generals, field officers, and soldiers turn Gettysburg into a flesh-and-blood endeavor involving people.

Schaara's book, meticulously researched and written, would have a place on the shelf of any American historian by virtue of its account of military maneuvers. It belongs on the shelf of any serious reader by virtue of its characterizations of the principal figures in the Civil War's most famous battle.

Were a person only to learn about Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain in reading *The Killer Angels*, that would be, by itself, reason enough to read this book.

-Richard McGowan is an instructor of Business Ethics at Butler University.