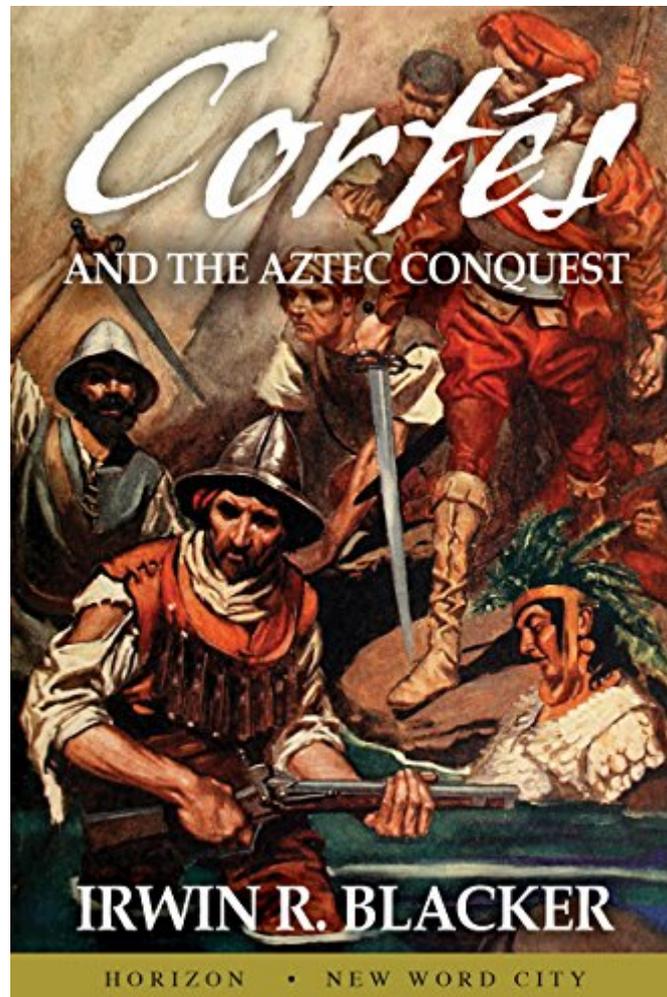


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# Cortés And The Aztec Conquest



## Synopsis

In three years, the Spanish conquistador Hern n Cort s, leading a few hundred Spanish soldiers, overcame a centuries-old empire that could put tens of thousands of warriors on the field. Even after his god-like reputation had been shattered, and his horses and cannons were no longer regarded as supernatural, his ruthless daring took him on to victory. Yet in the end, his prize was not the gold that he had sought, but the destruction of the entire Aztec civilization.

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## Customer Reviews

At the entrance to the National Museum of the U.S. Navy, there is a small cannon carried by Cortes's soldiers all the way to the Mexican capital through the jungle. It helped them accomplish one of the most extraordinary feats in history - the conquest of the mighty Aztec empire by a relatively small force of Spanish conquistadors. Ever since seeing that 500-year-old artifact, I had been looking for a book that would tell that amazing story, and so I was delighted to find this book that covers Cortes and his era in a concise manner with lots of interesting details. The book begins with a helpful chapter on the first two expeditions sent out to the west from Cuba during

which the Spanish discovered the Maya, Yucatan, and the southern coast of Mexico. The second chapter tells how young Cortes was picked to lead the third expedition by Governor Velasquez, and the dramatic story of how Cortes ignored the recall and arrest orders of the governor (who realized too late that the ambitious Cortes was becoming a force unto himself). The book is a quick read, well written and paced. Perhaps that's because the author, Irwin Blacker, wrote screenplays for television shows. He also published 22 fiction and nonfiction books according to The New York Times, including *Elements of Screenwriting: A Guide for Film and Television Writing*.

The material is flatly and extremely simply presented often with references to contexts without any real exploration of those contextual issues. No sources are listed that date after the early 1960s - over 50 years ago. There are no maps of the activities, marches, or battles and the visual accompaniments are extremely limited. Even a simple topographical map of Mexico is not provided although a written description is. Considering the price, this book is no bargain. While this book can be used as a source for a high school or freshman college report on the Mexican Conquest; it, by itself, is not a sufficiently rich resource to get a student a grade beyond a B - at kindest.

I was disappointed in this work. It is true that relatively little is known about some of the details of Cortes' conquest of the Aztec empire, but the author omits many of the details that are known, and gives little information about tactics used by both sides. The fact that Cortes was able to prevail while running a fever most of the time and commanding only about 400 troops armed with weapons that were not actually much better than those of the Aztecs, even when Montezuma could, and did, put over 5000 troops at once in the field to oppose him is barely discussed. Cortes' ability to make alliances with other tribes previously conquered by the Aztecs and his use of tactics are remarkable, and are not well described. The author's comments on the lack of respect for such an important historical character in Mexico are interesting, but an expansion on why this is so would have made for a better work.

This short history of Cortes conquest of Mexico is a quick but interesting read. While many modern historians have jumped on the bandwagon of political correctness that brands all Europeans who came to the New World as racist imperialists this book tries to remain neutral and give at least a glimpse of the perspective of both sides. Neither the Spanish nor the Aztecs were angels. The Aztecs were in fact major oppressors of the tribes they had conquered prior to the arrival of the Spanish. The Spanish were driven not by a desire to relieve those captive tribes of oppressive

Aztec rule but rather a desire to gain riches. This book describes in fascinating detail the battles they fought until the incredibly-outnumbered Cortes eventually prevailed.

The sequence of events as just a few Conquistadors fought the great Aztec empire and won. They also had as allies the surprising effect of the horses they brought with them as well as the diseases that also were in their blood.

This is a nice, short account of the history of the Spanish conquest of Mexico, with nothing in particular to recommend it, and nothing much to fault it. It's a good refresher, but does not have any redeeming qualities beyond that.

Clear and concise outline of the events and principal actors. Very condensed, not meant to be exhaustive. Lucid and workmanlike.

I have always had an interest in the Aztec and their downfall. This is a very good start. I found the maneuvering of Cortes fascinating. He outmaneuvered those within and the enemy at this time  
The Aztec

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