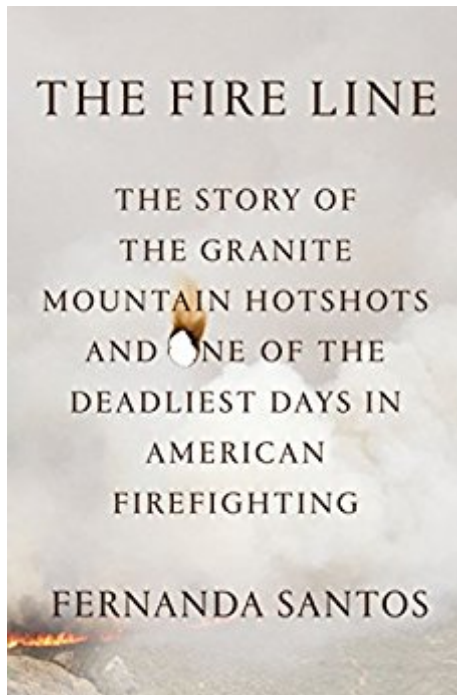




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The Fire Line: The Story Of The Granite Mountain Hotshots



Synopsis

“In Fernanda Santos’s expert hands, the story of 19 men and a raging wildfire unfolds as a riveting, pulse-pounding account of an American tragedy; and also as a meditation on manhood, brotherhood and family love. The Fire Line is a great and deeply moving book about courageous men and women. Hector Tobar, author of Deep Down Dark: The Untold Stories of 33 Men Buried in a Chilean Mine and the Miracle that Set Them Free. When a bolt of lightning ignited a hilltop in the sleepy town of Yarnell, Arizona, in June of 2013, setting off a blaze that would grow into one of the deadliest fires in American history, the twenty men who made up the Granite Mountain Hotshots sprang into action. An elite crew trained to combat the most challenging wildfires, the Granite Mountain Hotshots were a ragtag family, crisscrossing the American West and wherever else the fires took them. The Hotshots were loyal to one another and dedicated to the tough job they had. There’s Eric Marsh, their devoted and demanding superintendent who turned his own personal demons into lessons he used to mold, train and guide his crew; Jesse Steed, their captain, a former Marine, a beast on the fire line and a family man who wasn’t afraid to say “I love you” to the firemen he led; Andrew Ashcraft, a team leader still in his 20s who struggled to balance his love for his beautiful wife and four children and his passion for fighting wildfires. We see this band of brothers at work, at play and at home, until a fire that burned in their own backyards leads to a national tragedy. Impeccably researched, drawing upon more than a hundred hours of interviews with the firefighters’ families, colleagues, state and federal officials, and fire historians and researchers, New York Times Phoenix Bureau Chief Fernanda Santos has written a riveting, pulse-pounding narrative of an unthinkable disaster, a remarkable group of men and the raging wildfires that threaten our country’s treasured wild lands. The Fire Line is the winner of the 2017 Spur Award for Best First Nonfiction Book, and Spur Award Finalist for Best Western Contemporary Nonfiction.

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Customer Reviews

I remember very clearly the day this tragedy unfolded and it was a horrifying story and it seemed so sad at the time that these brave young men died in such a horrific way. From the start I wondered how such a thing could have happened. I know that there are procedures in place that ensure the safety of woodland fire firefighters like the Granite Mountain Hotshots. They are trained over and over to avoid the very situation they found themselves in during the Yarnell fire. So what happened? It was this question that I hoped to have answered when I ordered this book. And while the book is compelling, well written and informative, I'm not any wiser as to what caused this accident. It's obvious that this author put her heart and soul into this book and I'm sure that it was a painful process.. especially her time spent with the families of the men who were lost. And I wouldn't hesitate to recommend this book to anyone who is interested in this sad event. But if you are expecting to learn who or what was to blame for this, you may be disappointed. The book is thoughtfully written and my impression is that Santos makes a concerted effort not to point fingers or assign blame which is commendable but it leaves the reader feeling by the end of the book that something is missing and it's the answer to the question why.... why did this happen, how could it have been prevented, or could it have been? Was anything learned from this tragedy that will keep it from happening again? Sadly we are still left to ponder these questions. Four stars for Fernanda Santos and *The Fire Line: The Story of the Granite Mountain Hotshots and One of the Deadliest Days in American Firefighting*.

This was a good read and the author did a top-notch job of revealing the human element of this

tragedy. She's a journalist and she went straight for the heart--the "people stories"--which is what good journalists do. There were several errors that a good book editor should have caught, and I was disappointed that there was no analysis of the investigations into what actually happened and if there were errors in command decisions, etc. Having been around the fire service for almost four decades, this book raises some important questions--rarely asked--about insurance coverage and other "worst case scenarios" for individuals engaged in an occupation that is, at the same time, noble, exciting and exceedingly hazardous. I read the book slowly, deliberately. Now I want to visit the scene to see for myself, and reflect. This book goes on my shelf next to John and Norman MacLean's fire books...no higher compliment.

I am sitting here still trying to comprehend the magnitude of this loss...Fernanda Santos has captured the very essence of these 19 firefighters. From a gripping prologue that pulls you in, to the thoughtful details of each man's story, Santos crafts a narrative that compels you to keep reading long after you should turn off the lights for the night. The question everyone "wants to know" is who is to blame....and that question is extensively covered. Santos is the Phoenix bureau chief for the New York Times and originally covered the story, her skills in investigative journalism shine as she pieces together the complex puzzle of how the situation occurred. Not only is *The Fire Line* well researched, Santos is able to share technical firefighting and weather jargon in a way that is easy to understand--and thus allowing the reader to consequently make their own determination of what truly happened that fateful day. Combined with the deft handling of the individual hotshot's stories, Santos has created a memorial that truly honors the lives that were lost and cherishes those who were left behind. I highly recommend this book.

I'm reading "The Fire Line: The Story of the Granite Mountain Hotshots and One of the Deadliest Days in American Firefighting" by Fernanda Santos. It's about the 20-man firefighting crew wiped out by the Yarnell Hill Fire in Arizona in 2013. The worst wildlands firefighting disaster since 1933. One man survived being elsewhere as a lookout. There's been several books on the 2013 Yarnell Hill Fire and after checking them all out I chose this one as being the most complete and a very well told detailed story. I am very much impressed with the writing, completeness, and pacing. This book is as good as any battle narrative and should serve as a model of such books as well as other disaster books. If you read it you will see that fighting a wildland fire is very much like a military operation in all aspects at all echelons, there's just no guns, but there's an even more dangerous and unrelenting enemy.

I just finished "The Fire Line" and I am so impressed! It was very apparent that this was a labor of love for Fernanda. I imagine that she felt these 19 Hotshots calling her name to tell their story. I don't typically gravitate towards non-fiction b/c fiction tends to be more exciting, but she was able to tell the story in a way that grabs the reader and doesn't let go. I felt like I knew these men and their families - I found myself rooting for them even though I knew the fatal ending. I admired their brotherhood, values, manners, and deep rooted need to serve others. They really do make me want to "Be Better". I will say, the last 50 pages are hard to get through (esp. when you're on a full flight and you have to keep stopping to breathe so you don't burst out into tears), but obviously critical to the story. Thank you for writing this book - it was powerful and the extensive research and passion put into this work is evident. I would not be surprised if this turns into a movie (seriously). I think we are due for another movie like this (haven't seen one since "Backdraft") AND this one is based on a true story. (Sadly)

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