



The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession

By Peter L. Bernstein

Download now

Read Online 

The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession By Peter L. Bernstein

Incorporating myth, history and contemporary investigation, Bernstein tells the story of how human beings have become intoxicated, obsessed, enriched, impoverished, humbled and proud for the sake of gold. From the past to the future, Bernstein's portrayal of gold is intimately linked to the character of humankind.

 [Download The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession ...pdf](#)

The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession

By Peter L. Bernstein

The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession By Peter L. Bernstein

Incorporating myth, history and contemporary investigation, Bernstein tells the story of how human beings have become intoxicated, obsessed, enriched, impoverished, humbled and proud for the sake of gold. From the past to the future, Bernstein's portrayal of gold is intimately linked to the character of humankind.

The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession By Peter L. Bernstein Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #633701 in Books
- Published on: 2004-10-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 11.72" h x 1.00" w x 8.75" l, 3.56 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 304 pages

 [Download The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession By Peter L. Bernstein

Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

In the first chapter of his book *The Power of Gold*, Peter Bernstein quotes the immortal words of King Ferdinand of Spain, who once declared: "Get gold, humanely if possible, but at all hazards--get gold." As ensuing chapters reveal, man's obsession with finding, keeping, selling, and evaluating gold has rarely been a humane adventure and has always been a hazardous one. Digging deeply into history's treasury of torrid tales and complicated deals, Bernstein examines gold's lure with an economist's passion for quantification, a historian's eye for detail, and a sociologist's feel for its consequence.

Useless as a metal for most practical purposes, gold originally held value as decoration and adornment for the wealthy ancients. Later, it was minted and used as coins by the Lydians in 635 B.C. That, Bernstein goes on to reveal, put gold on a path from the concrete to the abstract, from evidence of wealth to the standard behind wealth in other forms, and finally to the tenuous place it holds in today's virtual world of credit cards and computer chips. Along the way lie wild stories of lives destroyed, fortunes won and quickly lost, and values transformed: the massacre by the Spanish invader Pizarro, whose small band of men decimated the formidable army of Emperor Atahualpa, "the Inca," through more duplicity than military skill; the roller-coaster ride of the 1890s, when the rippling impact of the Baring Brothers bank crisis in Britain sent the isolated United States into an economic meltdown; and the surplus of the Gold Coast natives of Timbuktu, who willingly traded their gold for much-needed salt, ounce for ounce.

Bernstein is a great storyteller. His accounts of mythological, ancient, and recent history ooze with odd and entertaining details that bring each successive tale of obsession to life. If not for his skill, the sheer volume of events collected here--presented more anecdotally than systematically--would be overwhelming. In the end, though, it is Bernstein's fascination with the power of gold to entangle and entrap its possessors, and its ultimate ability to change the course of entire eras and civilizations, that makes his book as fascinating as it is informative. A dense but entertaining read. --S. Ketchum

From Publishers Weekly

"[T]he quest for gold" has been "gluttonous," says Bernstein, tracing the metal's impact on human myth and history: gold has inspired art, battles, conquests and discoveries, including Columbus's trip to the New World, where he hoped to secure enough gold to buy back the Holy Sepulcher from the Muslims. Bernstein makes clear the metal's virtues: it's so malleable that one ounce can be stretched into a 50-foot wire or pounded into 100 square feet, and it lasts forever (4,500-year-old Egyptian dental work, he notes, is good enough for today's mouths). Bernstein's gift for storytelling with just the right touch of acerbic wit (on the myth of Jason and the Golden Fleece, he summarizes, "The story does not have a happy ending, because Jason was a compulsive social climber") and his presentation of the paradox of how and why such a soft and simple metal has been afforded such value help make this work a winning account of human obsession, comprehensive, entertaining and enlightening. A knowledge of economics might help during the last third of the book, when Bernstein moves from ancient times to modern day and describes the economic chaos that followed WWI. By then gold was no longer the domain of legend; it had become a commodity, the standard against which powerful nations measure their wealth. But Bernstein, author of the bestselling *Against the Gods: The Remarkable Story of Risk*, livens up his intricate economic discussion with tales such as the one about the Harvard Business School professor who got into trouble with his dean for withdrawing his gold from the Harvard Trust Company during a gold standard-related panic in 1933. As the title promises, Bernstein does deliver a page-turning history of the not-so-heavy metal and its influence on people through

the ages. \$250,000 ad/promo; first serial to Worth. (Oct.)

Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

A master historian at the peak of his art here recounts the timeless story of our obsession with gold. Mixing myth, legend, and historical fact, Bernstein (Against the Gods presents an enthralling look at the people, places, and events that have evoked desperation and frustration in human behavior. Starting with a broad palette of colorful characters, Pharaoh Hatshepsut, King Midas, Alexander the Great, Emperor Justinian, the Inca Emperor Atahualpa, Martin Luther, Kublai Khan, Sir Isaac Newton, and Charles De Gaulle, the author recounts the sequence of events that led to gold becoming the international monetary standard in the 19th Century only to fall to obscurity amid the collapse of the Bretton Woods System in 1971. At its root, this is the story of people so blinded in their pursuit of gold that they could not comprehend the difference between useless metal and real wealth. Recommended for both public and academic libraries.

Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Latosha Page:

Information is provisions for folks to get better life, information presently can get by anyone at everywhere. The information can be a understanding or any news even a concern. What people must be consider any time those information which is inside former life are challenging to be find than now is taking seriously which one is appropriate to believe or which one the actual resource are convinced. If you obtain the unstable resource then you get it as your main information you will see huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen with you if you take The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession as your daily resource information.

Roger Lee:

Hey guys, do you wants to finds a new book to see? May be the book with the title The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession suitable to you? Typically the book was written by renowned writer in this era. The particular book untitled The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession is the one of several books that everyone read now. This particular book was inspired many men and women in the world. When you read this e-book you will enter the new dimension that you ever know before. The author explained their concept in the simple way, consequently all of people can easily to recognise the core of this publication. This book will give you a great deal of information about this world now. So you can see the represented of the world within this book.

Audrey Rivas:

Many people spending their time frame by playing outside having friends, fun activity having family or just watching TV 24 hours a day. You can have new activity to invest your whole day by examining a book. Ugh, do you think reading a book can definitely hard because you have to bring the book everywhere? It alright you can have the e-book, having everywhere you want in your Smart phone. Like The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession which is obtaining the e-book version. So , why not try out this book? Let's view.

Earl Quintana:

Is it anyone who having spare time in that case spend it whole day through watching television programs or just resting on the bed? Do you need something new? This The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession can be the solution, oh how comes? The new book you know. You are so out of date, spending your extra time by reading in this completely new era is common not a geek activity. So what these guides have than the others?

Download and Read Online The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession By Peter L. Bernstein #AS5186NCFHK

Read The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession By Peter L. Bernstein for online ebook

The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession By Peter L. Bernstein Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession By Peter L. Bernstein books to read online.

Online The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession By Peter L. Bernstein ebook PDF download

The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession By Peter L. Bernstein Doc

The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession By Peter L. Bernstein MobiPocket

The Power of Gold: The History of an Obsession By Peter L. Bernstein EPub