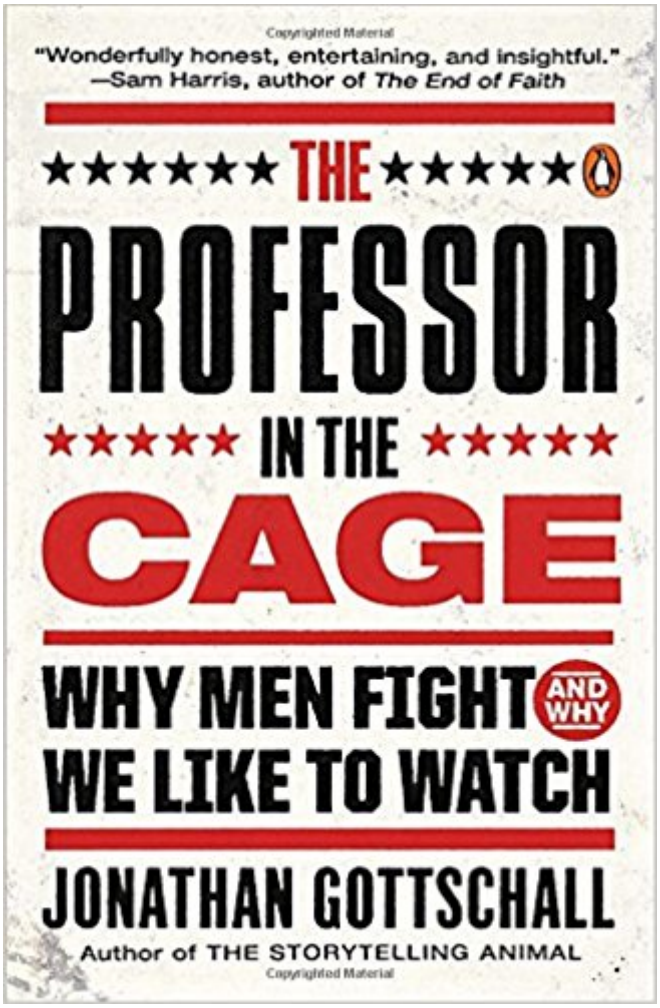
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# The Professor In The Cage: Why Men Fight And Why We Like To Watch




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## Synopsis

An English professor starts training in mixed martial arts, exploring the science and history behind the violence of men Ã Â When a mixed martial arts (MMA) gym opens across the street from his office, Jonathan Gottschall sees a challenge. Pushing forty, out of shape, and disenchanted with his job as an adjunct English professor, he works up his nerve and finds himself training for an all-out cage fight. He sees it not just as a personal test, but also as an opportunity to answer questions that have intrigued him for years: Why do men fight? And why do so many seemingly decent people love to watch? Ã Â InÃ Â The Professor in the Cage, GottschallÃ¢â ¬â„¢s unlikely journey from the college classroom to the fighting cage drives an important new investigation into the science and history of violence. The surging popularity of MMAÃ¢â ¬â •a full-contact sport in which fighters punch, choke, and kick each other into submissionÃ¢â ¬â •is just one example of our speciesÃ¢â ¬â„¢ insatiable interest both in violence and in the rituals that keep violence in check. From duels to football to the roughhousing of children, humans are masters of what Gottschall calls the monkey dance: a dizzying variety of rule-bound contests that establish hierarchies while minimizing risk and social disorder. GottschallÃ¢â ¬â„¢s unsparing odysseyÃ¢â ¬â •through extremes of pain, occasional humiliation, his wifeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s incredulity, and ultimately his own cage fightÃ¢â ¬â •opens his, and our, eyes to the uncomfortable truth that, as brutal as these contests can be, the world would be a much more chaotic and dangerous place without them.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Publishers Weekly (starred review):With humor, literary allusions, and a casual, unprepossessing style, Gottschall explores such related subjects as duels, bullying, English football, menÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Ã¢â ¬Å“love-hateÃ¢â ¬Â• relationship to war, and violent entertainment from gladiator games to MMA."Joe Rogan, UFC Commentator"A fascinating story...A great f***ing book."Sports Illustrated"The Professor in the Cage [is] a riveting first-person account to the three years that the 40ish, physically unimposing English teacher trained to become an MMA fighter."BiographileÃ¢â ¬Å“The Professor in the Cage is not just Gottschall's story, but a look at the history of violence itselfÃ¢â ¬Â¦ you read Gottschall getting smarter and smarter about his subject as he gets closer and closer to risking his life in the cage.Ã¢â ¬Â•Boston Globe, Best Books of 2015"An out-of-shape English professor in a funk and on the brink of middle age leaves his office, walks across the street to a mixed martial arts gym to train, gets clobbered, does some clobbering, and learns a lot"Washington Post"Like Fight Club but for English Professors....When Gottschall finally enters a cage in Johnstown, PA, exhilaration, pain and confusion spatter all over the mat. I won't give away the outcome, except to say that the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat both make cameos."Men's Fitness"Compelling."Steven Pinker, Johnstone Professor of Psychology, Harvard University; and author of How the Mind Works and The Better Angels of Our Nature:Ã¢â ¬Å“What a charming and illuminating book! With scientific acumen and literary panache, Gottschall immerses himself, and us, in an ancient part of the male psyche. Among the many treats in this book are the history of recreational fighting, a limpid explanation of sexual selection, and a sympathetic portrayal of working-class men thatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s worthy of a great novelist.Ã¢â ¬Â•Sam Harris, author of the New York Times bestsellers The End of Faith, The Moral Landscape, and Waking Up:Ã¢â ¬Å“Jonathan Gottschall has written a wonderfully honest, entertaining, and insightful book about violence, manhood, courage, and the wisdom that can be gleaned from getting punched in the face. If youÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve ever wondered why combat is a perennial source of fascination for us, and whether this fascination can be channeled toward truly productive ends, The Professor in the Cage is the book to read.Ã¢â ¬Â•The Art of Manliness, Best Books of 2015"One of the best books I've read this year, and one of the best books on masculinity I've read...A fascinating and provocative argument...A great story."The National Post, Best Books of 2015English professor turned cage fighter Gottschall walks us through the psychology of violence in this fascinating mix of science, literature, and memoir.Bryan Callen, co-host of The Fighter and the Kid podcast"I read the f**k out of The Professor in the Cage! I found it fascinating because it's something I'm actually obsessed with: Why do men behave the way they do? Why do I behave the way I do?"Buffalo NewsÃ¢â ¬Å“GottschallÃ¢â ¬â„¢s writing proves much smoother and easier to

digest than the mayhem he undertakes in the cage. He buttresses his work, as all academics do, with 35 pages of endnotes and bibliography, attesting to the research he undertook to complement his road to the ring. The reader learns why animals fight, why women donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t, and why eye contact and facial expressions often win bouts before the bell rings.Ã¢â ¬Â•The Writer FileÃ¢â ¬Å“An amazing storyÃ¢â ¬Â¦ Incredibly compelling, and a lot of fun."

Jonathan Gottschall is a distinguished research fellow in the English Department at Washington & Jefferson College. His research has been covered in the New York Times Magazine, the New York Times, Scientific American, the New Yorker, the Atlantic, the Chronicle of Higher Education, and on NPR. His blog, The Storytelling Animal, is featured at Psychology Today. His book, The Storytelling Animal, was a New York Times Book Review EditorsÃ¢â ¬â„¢Ã Â Choice selection and a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize.

Languishing as an adjunct English professor at a small college in Pennsylvania, Jonathan Gottschall undergoes an existential crisis and wants to confront some demons regarding his masculinity, so he embarks on a 15-month MMA journey, training for a cage fight, and meditating on the nature of masculinity, courage, and violence. Gottschall looks at team sports and individual sports in the context of our domination-violent genes, examines our painful world history of sadism and gleeful violence and connects us to the apes who use ritualized violence to establish hierarchies. All of this is done within the discussion of MMA fighting. The analysis is sharp and reminds me of the writings of Sam Harris, and I mean this in a good way. Fast-paced, trenchant, and unflinchingly honest, the prose here provides one of the best discussions of masculinity and our rituals to assert it. Highly recommended.

Animals fight; humans fight, too. Women fight; men fight, too. But men are more likely to fight physically and frequently. Some might say men are just asinine in so doing and men ought to be civilized. Jonathan Gotschall, an English professor, argues that men are the way they are owing to many reasons. Better yet, he places himself in the middle of fights to find out why men fight even if death might result. Gottschall had been a wimp, not being able to stand up for himself all his life. He decided to learn MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) to fight for the first time in his life. He states that he had gotten himself in MMA because he wanted to write this book. After having been "food" to other stronger men, the desire to feel like a "man" must have rendered his desire to take up MMA. Gottschall starts the first chapter detailing a duel between Alexander Hamilton and Aron Burr who

were respectively the secretary of treasury and the vice president of the United States of America. The duel was over rumors against Aron Burr. The author brings up a propositional question: Why did the two men have to kill each other over petulant and chagrining words? Withal, could they have resolved the conflict in a peaceful manner? The author points out that there was none other way at that time because what the men fought for were not just humiliating words, but respect. In Men's World, respect means a lot more than just respect. Men fight for respect like animals do. Animals fight for food, sex, territory, and protection, all of which mean life and death. For men, respect is life and death. When a man loses respect from other men, it meant just more than being looked down. Money, women, social status, business, power -- life and death likewise --depended on one's respect at those epoch. This principle still applies to the modern world, by virtue of stable civilized government systems, these extreme duel disappeared. De facto Duel in different form, however, still exists in somewhat uncivilized world of prison. Much violent fighting occurs over a stolen banana. They were not fighting for banana; they fight for respect. Once you let somebody steal your banana, people will pilfer you of your food, money, and rape you in the end. Either you become their food or another "man." Gottischall renders a scientific and well researched statement and kick feminism right in the face. Providing a good number of researches and studies, the author adduce that what masculinity is and argues how masculinity has developed in human. he explains that the masculinity is developed because there were less females and more males. Thus, males compete for reproduction by fighting. Females will be successful in producing offspring without competition or fighting. Risk taking inklings, aggression, competitiveness in males are not invented, rather they have naturally grown in males and because the definitions of masculinity."Masculinity is not a cultural invention. It is not the result of a conspiracy by men against women. It is a real thing that has evolved over millions of years as a response to the built-in competitive realities of male life." Gottschall delves into other psychological, anthropological, biological arguments throughout the book regarding masculinity, fighting, sports, even war throughout the book. The rest of the chapters are well imparting and very educational. His researches culminate in converging with his own anecdotes in fights in later chapters. Gottschall finishes the book by concluding that men fight because fights make men feel great and alive. As Mike Tyson put it, in his bluntly eloquent way, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“other than boxing, everything else is so boring.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• Maybe, men fight because men have been fighting in the entire existing epochs, and generations after generations while evolving. Fighting must be deeply rooted in men's DNA. It is very recently that men are prohibited from fights. School teachers punish boys for fighting; Cops either break up fights or place the fighting citizens in jails; people recommend for psych evaluation for anger management for

aggressive men. Men's instincts are suppressed. Maybe that is why men feel joy when they fight like how their ancestors did all these years.

Research shows that men are drawn to violence, be it the criminal or sporting kind. Why is that? In The Professor in the Cage, english professor Jonathan Gottschall takes us on a personal as well as interdisciplinary tour to answer that question. Using his experience training to be an MMA fighter, as well as looking to research from biology, anthropology, and sociology, Gottschall argues that men are both made and conditioned to fight. WeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve got a fighting spirit inside of us that can be used for good or evil ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • simply depending on how this energy is directed. Gottschall does a great job tying together all the research about manhood and the male fighting instinct in an accessible, enlightening, and entertaining read.

I haven't quite finished yet, but I felt compelled to write a review. This book has successfully combined elements of biography, history, sports, psychology and sociology into an entertaining, thought-provoking and in depth study of man-to-man combat across time and cultures. I'm really pleasantly surprised to have come across it. It addresses (and also conjures more) questions that I have had on masculinity, violence, and courage. Honestly, these have all been areas I've struggled with for most of my life: what it means to be a man, bullying, self-defense, honor/respect, etc. Dr Gotschall present himself as a very relatable (and inspirational) man, and I appreciate that. After all, it takes guts to go from writing and lecturing to ground-and-pound.I highly recommend the book to anyone who has an interest in human nature, masculinity, fighting, sociology or psychology. I look forward to finishing the book soon, and I hope that I can one day weave together art, literature and science as effectively as he has.

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