



# The Conquest of New Spain

*Bernal Diaz del Castillo*

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## **The Conquest of New Spain** Bernal Diaz del Castillo

You don't have to be a history lover to enjoy Bernal Diaz del Castillo's firstperson narrative "The Conquest of New Spain." His personal tale about being a conquistador during the fall of the Aztec empire is filled with beautiful imagery, frightful battles, and unspoken orders that occurred during the 1500's. The account also describes the Aztec culture with profound detail and insight; Castillo was amazed at the wonders of the Aztecs, yet he never forgot why he came to New Spain in the first place: "to serve God, and to also get rich." Besides Castillo's descriptions, "The Conquest of New Spain" is singular in that it gives an unflattering account of Herman Cortes, the leader of the expedition to Mesoamerica. History has generally praised Cortes for his leadership ability and strong army of conquistadors, but Castillo paints Cortes as a man who cheated his soldiers out of the glory they deserved. Many soldiers found themselves no richer than before they arrived, and Castillo blames this on Cortes having taken his soldiers' share of the Aztec riches. Castillo waited until he was over eighty years old to complete his narrative. He wanted the truth of the fateful expedition to be fully exposed and complete, and "The Conquest of New Spain" was Castillo's way of making sure that the story of the common soldier was told in vivid detail.

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