



Defending Your Castle: Build Catapults, Crossbows, Moats, Bulletproof Shields, and More Defensive Devices to Fend Off the Invading Hordes

By William Gurstelle

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Your home is your castle, but could it withstand an attack by Attila and the Huns, Ragnar and the Vikings, Alexander and the Greeks, Genghis Khan and the Mongols, or Tamerlane and the Tartars? Engineer William Gurstelle, author of the bestselling Backyard Ballistics, poses this fascinating question to modern-day garage warriors and shows how to build an arsenal of ancient artillery and fortifications aimed at withstanding these invading hordes. Each chapter introduces new bad actors in the history of warfare, details their conquests, and features weapons and fortifications to defend against them—culminating, by the end of the book, in a fully fortified home. Clear step-by-step instructions, diagrams, and photographs explain how to build a dozen projects from table-top models of the Cheval-de-frise, Da Vinci's Catapult, and Alexander's Tortoise to the fullsize working Carpini's Crossbow, Hour-Glass Watchtower, and Palisade Wall. With a strong emphasis on safety, this book also gives tips on troubleshooting, explains the physics behind many of the projects, and shows where to find the best materials. It's sure to be an indispensable guide for at-home defenders everywhere.

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Editorial Review

Review

“You know that one book you’re allowed to have on a desert island? Take this. You’ll need it, if you’re going to defend it!” —Ziya Tong, host, *Daily Planet*

“Ever feared that raging Viking or Mongol invaders are about to attack your home? Gurstelle eases those concerns with a perfect blend of history and how-to, from building a battering ram-proof door and a house-surrounding moat, to making an updated version of Da Vinci’s catapult. I haven’t felt this safe, or productive, in centuries.” —Mike Senese, Executive Editor, *MAKE*

“Some designs lend themselves to science projects and would appeal to high school students as well as general readers. Practicality aside though, this book is a delight... readers will learn some military history while having a good time.” —*Library Journal*

“A fascinating journey for historians and makers alike. Neither of these elements are too focused on, leading to a very balanced and fun read.” —FactoryTwoFour

“Gurstelle has done the research, so it isn’t just the engineering but the history behind it that you take away... That’s what separates this from a doomsday prepper’s guidebook.” —DoItYourself.com

About the Author

William Gurstelle is the author of *Absinthe & Flamethrowers*; *The Art of the Catapult*; *Backyard Ballistics*; *Building Bots*; *Notes from the Technology Underground*; and *Whoosh, Boom, Splat*. He is a professional engineer who has been researching and building model catapults and ballistic devices for more than 30 years and is a contributing editor at *Popular Mechanics*, a columnist for *Make* magazine, and writes frequently for the *Atlantic*, *Maxim*, and *Wired* as well as other national magazines. He lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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