



Ghosts in the Forest (Kindle Single)

Corinne Purtil

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In 2004, 34 men, women and children stepped out of a Southeast Asian rainforest and presented themselves as refugees from violence engulfing their native Cambodia. They did not know that the war they were fleeing had in fact ended—25 years earlier. Corinne Purtill was one of the first journalists to meet the families upon their incredible return to society. Years later she returned to Cambodia to learn the truth about their time on the run. What she found was a darker and more complicated tale than the one they first shared, a story of terror, isolation, fierce loyalty, appalling choices and murder. The result is a story that examines the unyielding human need for family and connection and the meaning of survival.

Corinne Purtill is a journalist who has reported around the world for publications including Quartz, GlobalPost, CNN, Salon and the Cambodia Daily. She lives in California with her family.

Cover design by Hannah Perrine Mode

Ghosts in the Forest (Kindle Single) Details

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From Reader Review Ghosts in the Forest (Kindle Single) for online ebook

Al says

Fascinating and detailed, yet limited.

Deborah says

WOW! What an amazing story of survival against the odds. Sad, powerful & moving. I would love to know more of what happened in the depths of the jungle with Moun and his family & friends, but I don't think we ever will. This is one of those stories that I'm sure will be taken to the grave. The hardships that these people endured can never be appreciated, unless you experience it yourself.

Not a very long book, I easily read it in one sitting; however it is worth reading.

Chloe says

Good read

Interesting to learn a little history, found it moving and made me think differently on how to spend my own time, appreciate how lucky I am

Kathy says

Well written, interesting and informative. Sad story about a group of survivors.

sharon in Hercules says

What a great story

A story of what war does to a Society. This man loved his family so much that during the war in Laos he moved them to the forest...for 25 years!

Shane Hawk says

Compelling, poignant, laconic.

Indochina is a region I lack knowledge in historically and once I found out this story's subject I delved right in. Purtill gives an engrossing overview of what these 34 people endured before, during, and after the reign of the Khmer Rouge. With the help of a translator, we get conversations right from the source. The author packed a mighty punch in under a hundred pages.

The reader receives a well-rounded education on these people who re-entered the world after being in a forest for most of their lives avoiding the terrors of war under the Khmer Rouge communists. Little did they know, when they came out of the forest in 2004 the war in the Indochina Peninsula had ended 25 years prior. It was intriguing reading how little they knew of the modern world. In a way they had traveled time.

It is free on Amazon Kindle and I recommend this short read to anyone remotely interested.

I'll leave you with a couple quotes:

"The Khmer Rouge offered only one way to live, yet now, as their failed state disintegrated, there were endless ways to die."

"Highlander people I spoke to regularly counted the absence of salt alongside death and bombing as the worst of their sufferings under Pol Pot."

Corinne Purtill says

I'm biased, but I like this book.

Warren Spradlin II says

Interesting

It was good but I wish it had more details of their lives. It felt like the author just tapped the surface.

Julie says

I occasionally see a Kindle Single book advertised that jumps out and calls my name. This is one of those books. It is short book, written by one of the first journalists to interview one of the Cambodian families that walked out of the jungle in 2004, not knowing that the war had ended 25 years earlier.

The story is well written and compelling. And it was particularly interesting to me because I grew up in a small Utah community that took in refugees from Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos during the 1970s & 80s. I also have Cambodian friends now in Korea. The atrocities of war that were inflicted in these three countries are unthinkable. I found it mind-opening to learn more about what life was like for these people before, during, and after the wars that ravished the Indochina Peninsula.

My favorite quote from the book is:

"What I learned.....is the difficulty of divining the truth of another human's story. Understanding the whole of a person's life - not just what they did, but why they did it - is like constantly unfolding a puzzle, a Jacob's ladder that spills out in a new direction every time you grasp a different corner."

Bradley Heck says

3.5 Stars

Miles says

Article or novel

Too interesting a story for just an article, not quite enough information for a novel - this short read fluctuates, sometimes awkwardly between the two. Should have been twice as short but then who would buy it?

maria seilius says

An interesting historical account of the repercussions of a war . Imagine struggling to survive separated from the rest of society and then returning after 25 years . The world they returned to having nothing in common with the world they had left , they must have felt like aliens . This book certainly depicts the human will to survive against all the odds .

Alison Offerdal says

An incredible story

A really interesting read on survivors of the war in Cambodia who constructed a life in the jungle in complete isolation and fear. It illustrates the incredible destructiveness of war and the infinite resilience of the human spirit.

Savannah Wooten says

Succinct and compelling

Jool says

While many would find this a most fascinating look at some of the last tribes living in the Cambodian forest, this was more history than I wanted to read. These people had hidden in the jungle for decades, escaping the war of Vietnam. I did delete the book, but again, anyone interested in this historical accounting of the era that was Vietnam/Cambodia and the tribes involved, would find this fascinating I'm sure.
