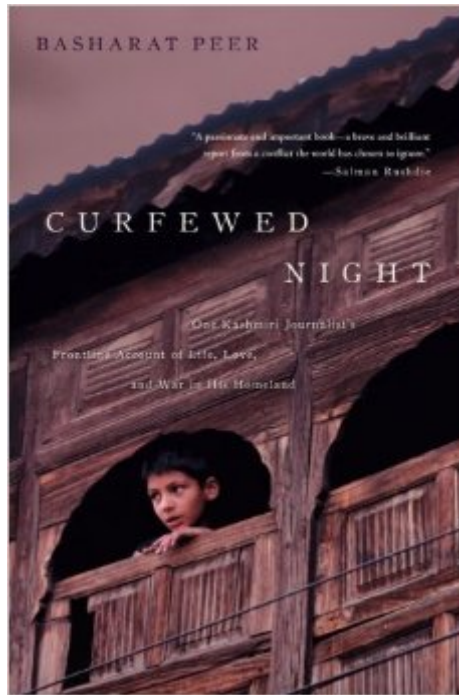


The book was found

Curfewed Night



Synopsis

Basharat Peer's powerful memoir about growing up in war-torn Kashmir.

Book Information

Paperback: 240 pages

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Customer Reviews

I lived in Kashmir during the 90's and while reading Curfewed night, I relived the terrible events of those years. Basharat has done a great job of recording and compiling a sample of the immense suffering that Kashmiris endured during the 90s and continue to suffer the wider implications of the impasse. I bought 4 copies after reading it to distribute to my friends and family. A must read for anyone interested in the Kashmir problem.

The book is a beautifully written account of the conflict in Kashmir, in which over 80,000 people have died since 1989. It is written by someone who spent his formative years during the conflict. Like all great books, this one is about human suffering, and what war does to people, to communities, to dreams, and to children's games. While the narrative follows author's own life, I admired the way it was never disruptive -- or worse, indulgent: you rarely see the author describe his own emotions; he builds a novelistic experience for the reader. This is true especially when narrating people's stories: he's virtually transparent. (I know at such moments, rather than being honest witnesses to people's stories, most writers would succumb to the temptation of describing their own feelings.) Each story in this book is a story of loss: how young men and teenagers lost their youth and teens to conflict -- some with their bodies, others with their souls, many with both and more --, how bunkers and checkpoints cropped among fields of flowers and gardens of fruits, and

how schools and temples were turned into military compounds, and how, even in war, people fighting on opposite sides can turn out to be the unlikeliest of acquaintances. In one story, a mother witnessed her son being handed an explosive mine and forced to go into a building where militants were hiding. All she could do was to fight the soldiers and save her other son from a similar fate. Reading this book, I kept thinking of the Robert Hass's poem, "Winged and Acid Dark": Basho' told Rensetsu to avoid sensational materials. If the horror of the world were the truth of the world, he said, there would be no one to say it and no one to say it to. At the end of it, this book affirms not what the ideological lot would have you believe (that it is about Pakistan or India, War on Terror, Indian democracy, conspiracy theories, etc.), but what Bash'o told Rensetsu: it is speaking to someone who cares. Please read this book. You would know things that make us human.

I wanted to give this book a 2.5 and couldn't quite manage it on my tiny smart phone, so pardon me for the low rating. I expected a book which would provide me an understanding of a complex situation that is Kashmir, instead what I got was a 'freedom fighters' version of his life in the valley. And the author doesn't try to hide his loyalties which is refreshing. But the beginning of the conflict, the radicalization of Kashmiri Islam, the loss of lives and dignity of the Hindus at the hands of the terrorists, their mass exodus under duress, and the religious nature of the ongoing protests are conveniently glossed over, whereas the terrorists are painted as heroes, their murders are justified (like Yusuf who was killed for being opportunistic, his own parents were almost blasted because an ikhwani had misguided the terrorists etc), army is demonized and there is no mention of the sexual humiliation of the locals by the terrorists. All in all this is one person's perspective- a devout Kashmiri Muslim from the Valley. If you are looking for that then this is a great book, but if you a little want more then please read this along with Rahul Pandita's 'Our moon has blood clots' and Jagmohan's 'My frozen turbulence in Kashmir'. Having said that it is a page turner and the innocence of life prior to the radicalization is certainly moving. I would recommend this book, but along with the other 2

This is a good view of life on the border of Pakistan. I have friends who have lived there and they told me that this book would give an accurate account of the conflict and struggle of life in this area of the world during my lifetime. Constant war and struggle for power renders little value for the masses of innocent people wanting to live and raise their families in peace.

An author this educated could have been a bit more honest in describing the ethnic cleansing of the Pandit community. The Islamist apologist in the author is always lurking underneath. His book is

also another vindication of how resorting to externalizing of the problems in Islamic society and frequent recourse to dishonesty has created trouble for minorities in virtually all muslim societies. The one sided victimization narrative is also a bit jarring as it removes objectivity and makes for incomplete cause effect analysis...too often the author resorts to the 'we were all fluffy bunnies' caricaturization of kashmiri society. otherwise a decent effort...

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