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The Railway Man



Synopsis

During the Second World War Eric Lomax was forced to work on the notorious Burma-Siam Railway and was tortured by the Japanese for making a crude radio. Left emotionally scarred and unable to form normal relationships, Lomax suffered for years until, with the help of his wife, Patti Lomax, and of the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, he came to terms with what happened. Fifty years after the terrible events, he was able to meet one of his tormentors. *The Railway Man* is a story of innocence betrayed, and of survival and courage in the face of horror.

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Customer Reviews

The Railway Man is an awesome story of Resilience, forgiveness and what it means to be human. I had heard about this book during a sermon a few weeks ago. Normally I do not read anything that even has violence in it, but the way the pastor described the story I had to read it. It is the story of an English POW in a Japanese Prison camp during the 2nd world war. I recommend this book and it will restore your faith in God's love and forgiveness and humanity.

I at first did not think this would be a book I would enjoy. It was recommended by someone who was

touched by it, and was given such rave reviews I felt obligated to try it. I am a middle aged white woman from America. What could I understand about the war from this man's perspective? However, at the conclusion, I find myself in tears. I am moved at the descriptions of war and suffering, including the PTSD that Mr. Lomax suffered from. He points out that we all have our sufferings, and while they might not be equal, they can be just as damaging to each of us. His journey to recovery is inspiring and amazing, and I find my heart warmed that he found closure for one of his internal demons. He is an articulate writer and was quite able to take his readers on a little journey through what he had been through.

This book reads like a great novel but when you realise it is a true story written by a man not avowedly social or outgoing, it is a masterpiece of communication. It is an autobiography that is a page turner - a very rare thing. It conveys messages about where people fit in society, or try to fit in. Messages of the madness of war and the lengths people will go to under those conditions and ultimately messages of reconciliation. I think in modern times, Mr Lomax would have been diagnosed with autism and when you consider the traits of autism and the huge suffering that being a prisoner of war would impose on that condition, it is astonishing that he survived to be such a courageous and insightful man. I have not seen the recent film but if you are interested in this story of suffering, courage and reconciliation, I would advise reading the book rather than seeing the film, which seems to focus on a love affair that is barely mentioned in the book. I think the film has taken this story in a completely different direction to sell it in box offices. I would heartily recommend the book.

I'll start this by saying I haven't seen the film and didn't really know what to expect other than what I had read from the book description. I found this book interesting but rather flat, given the subject matter. Mr. Lomax writes clearly about his experiences but I found there was a lack of emotion throughout most of the parts which dealt with his imprisonment and torture. He writes quite formally as he is recounting events but it's all done with a great deal of British reserve (something I'm well acquainted with). While he speaks of outrage, hate, anger or despair, these emotions felt quite ethereal to me; I knew they were there but just not strong enough for me to fully recognise. It was frustrating because I didn't feel I was getting a true sense of what he went through, which surely must have been horrific. In some ways the first three quarters of the book was a recounting of personal facts and dates, he recounts the events as an Officer would in a report at times. This may have been a way for him to cope with the recounting of events, he may also not want to colour the

readers experience or turn the book into a pity party for him, I just found there was a disconnect. Once Mr. Lomax moves into his post war experiences there is much more emotion to be found and I found I was able to connect with the story much more. This part of the book went by quickly for me, was very powerful and quite emotionally wrenching. This review is in no way a judgement, slight or questioning of the experiences Mr. Lomax was forced to endure. That he survived and was eventually able to move past his experiences is incredible. If you're looking for a book about the construction of the Burma Railway from the perspective of a POW then this book is probably not what you're looking for. It gives some details about this, the his reason for his imprisonment and torture are related to his time working on the railway, however it is more a personal account of a man's ordeal and survival of imprisonment, starvation and torture at the hands of the Japanese Imperial Army. The book is well worth a read, particularly for the final chapters. I enjoyed it and would recommend it.

Very interesting movie, but troubling movie. Bought the book, too, which does tell a somewhat different story than the movie. I finished the book just before a trip to Singapore and was able to tour the Canning Hill Bunker where the British made the decision to surrender to the Japanese. Got to see where Eric Lomax actually sat in the signals room.

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