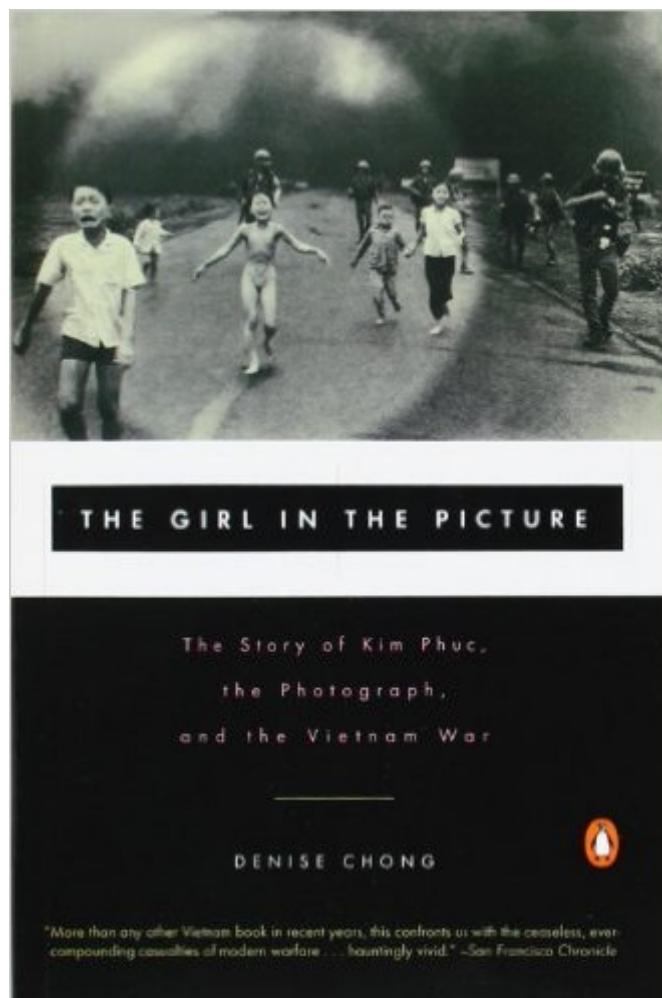


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The Girl In The Picture: The Story Of Kim Phuc, The Photograph, And The Vietnam War



Synopsis

On June 8, 1972, nine-year-old Kim Phuc, severely burned by napalm, ran from her blazing village in South Vietnam and into the eye of history. Her photograph-one of the most unforgettable images of the twentieth century-was seen around the world and helped turn public opinion against the Vietnam War. This book is the story of how that photograph came to be-and the story of what happened to that girl after the camera shutter closed. Award-winning biographer Denise Chong's portrait of Kim Phuc-who eventually defected to Canada and is now a UNESCO spokesperson-is a rare look at the Vietnam War from the Vietnamese point-of-view and one of the only books to describe everyday life in the wake of this war and to probe its lingering effects on all its participants.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is the life story of Kim Phuc, with supporting coverage of the horrors of Vietnam and the endless legacy of pain and sorrow caused by the war. Kim was captured on film in the devastating news photo from 1972, as she ran naked and screaming from a napalm attack (which turned out to be a friendly-fire accident, to boot). While reading this book, I was unable to stop flipping it over to look at the famous photo on the cover again and again, as writer Denise Chong does an outstanding job of bringing Kim and her story to life. Granted, the book does have a few weaknesses. Chong obviously saw the need to add background information about the war to support Kim's story, though in the attempt to summarize or introduce the issues and politics of the war, Chong's coverage seems simplistic and perfunctory. Also, as Kim's biography progresses,

Chong is trying too hard, and inconsistently, to make the book "inspirational," with Kim's inner thoughts and reflections on her ongoing struggles coming across as forced and sappy in places. But these weaknesses do not damage the overall success of the book, because Kim's life story is definitely compelling, and her postwar struggles are especially informative. We learn about the wartime travails of Kim's middle-class Vietnamese family, culminating in the horrific day when she was injured and barely survived. Kim has suffered through chronic pain and constant health problems stemming from her severe napalm burns. Meanwhile the incompetent new Communist regime in Vietnam used her for years as a pawn in propaganda schemes, and ruined her once successful family.

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