



Saigon: An Epic Novel of Vietnam

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Vietnam's heady tropical landscape captivates fifteen-year-old Joseph Sherman on a hunting expedition to French colonial Saigon with his family in 1925. He is lured back again and again by his enduring fascination for the country and for Lan, a beautiful Vietnamese mandarin's daughter he could never forget. Over five haunting decades Joseph's life becomes deeply enmeshed with Vietnam's turbulent, war-torn fate - until he attempts to salvage something of lasting value during the final desperate helicopter scramble to flee defeated Saigon.

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Saigon: An Epic Novel of Vietnam Details

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From Reader Review Saigon: An Epic Novel of Vietnam for online ebook

Jonathan says

Taking on a book of this length was an endeavor I was not sure would pay off, but Anthony Grey did not disappoint in producing a wonderful narrative covering 50 years of Vietnam's turbulent history. Grey tells the story of Joseph Sherman, an American of privilege, and his relationship with Indochina, stretching from 1925 to the climax of the Vietnam conflict in 1975.

The story of Joseph's life, and the people and events that shape it, seems effortlessly mixed with the historical events and cultural nuances of Vietnam. Grey approaches all of the key historic events during the Franco-Vietnamese War, the Pacific War, and the American Conflict in Vietnam. Having dutifully done his research, Grey provides great detail throughout the piece, luring you into Joseph's captivating world with intrigue, passion, and thrills.

With such a wide scope of events and characters to work with, it is not entirely surprising that some things may have been more difficult to establish; chief among these being any real ability to develop an emotional connection for anyone beyond Joseph. At times the antihero, and, more often than not, just a man doing what he thinks best (despite how flawed), Joseph is an overall good companion to have on this literary journey. The other characters, while meaningful to him, can be seemingly less meaningful to the reader (or, at least to me).

The string of large scale conflicts, twist and turns, romances, drama, and surprising fates leads one to see parallels between Saigon: An Epic Novel of Vietnam and other works, such as A Game of Thrones. If you are considering this book, do not be put off by its length or the author's colossal undertaking; it is a thrilling read that will leave you in love with what Vietnam once was, and enthralled by its evolution into the country it has become.

H.W. Bernard says

Since Saigon (the city, not the novel) is part of my "coming of age" DNA, I really wanted to like this book. Unfortunately, I couldn't get beyond the first 50 or so pages; neither the characters nor the story pulled me in.

The characters seemed mere vessels for expounding the history and culture of Vietnam. Those topics were well researched and interesting, but not what I was looking for in a novel.

Although the book was touted as the "WAR AND PEACE of our time," I never got a sense of major conflict or drama (or even foreshadowing) in the opening pages. There just wasn't enough there to keep me reading. Also, I'm not a big fan of novels written in the omniscient viewpoint, which Grey used.

Perhaps I'll give SAIGON a try again someday, but at this moment, it didn't work for me.

Lorin Cary says

At first I thought that including the word "epic" in the title was a bit much. But the story is epic in fact. In 1925 a Virginia Senator visits Vietnam, then a French colony, with his family. Joseph, then 15, falls in love with the country and it marks him for life. We basically follow him, a French family, and a Vietnamese family through from then until the US pullout in 1975. The novel is divided into 8 parts which chronicle the quest for independence and the maturation of Joseph. At times it felt that the coincidental convergence of stories was a bit forced, and in a few spots the tale stumbled forward and then dipped into backstory. It becomes predictable that paths will cross, yet the author does a fine job of weaving together the strands and making them plausible. Ultimately a fine read. Got to know Joseph well. Originally published early 1980s.

Jinx:The:Poet {the Literary Masochist, Ink Ninja & Word Roamer} says

Saigon: An Epic Novel of Vietnam, written by the talented author Anthony Grey, is a fascinating historical fiction novel, deeply inspired by true events though embellished to tell a story, to give explanation to the war many people today still do not understand the true reasons behind. I, personally, found this book very enlightening and even though at times it was deeply disturbing, I greatly enjoyed reading it. It shows a great deal of perspective, from all sides, the French, the Americans, the Chinese, and of course the Annamese (Vietnamese), as unbiasedly as possible. If I may, here is the backdrop leading up to the point where the story of Saigon: An Epic Novel of Vietnam takes place...

Originally called Nam Viet, or the Land of the Southern Viet People, the country became An Nam, by the conquering Chinese nation, meaning The Pacified South. For many centuries the Chinese occupied An Nam, calling its people the Annamese. During these eleven centuries, the people of An Nam absorbed much of Chinese culture, philosophy and religious beliefs and teachings. Eventually, they became an independent nation again with the collapse of the Tang Dynasty. Afterwards, the nation resisted future invasions from the Mongols, and quite a few Chinese emperors seeking to rule over them, but they could not fight off powerful European troops, and at last fell under French dominion.

The French were seeking to create the French Indochinese Union. They ruled the colony with an iron fist, governed the Annamese people as if they were property, created plantations in order to export valuable resources such as rubber, rice and coal back to Europe. For years this exploitation of the An Nam people and its freedom and national resources was left unchecked. All the while, the French openly claimed to the world, that they were on a "mission civilisatrice", a mission to civilize the uncivilized, and claimed to be there to help, educate and protect the defenseless country. Saigon is the city with which our story begins, the booming coastal city teeming with life and trade, in the year 1925...

"Vietnam's heady tropical landscape captivates fifteen-year-old Joseph Sherman on a hunting expedition to French colonial Saigon with his family in 1925. He is lured back again and again by his enduring fascination for the country and for Lan, a beautiful Vietnamese mandarin's daughter he could never

forget. Over five haunting decades Joseph's life becomes deeply enmeshed with Vietnam's turbulent, war-torn fate - until he attempts to salvage something of lasting value during the final desperate helicopter scramble to flee defeated Saigon.

First published in 1982, it has stood the test of time as critics predicted, and is now providing a new generation of readers with insights into that historic conflict - and its tragic echoes in Iraq. It has since become a bestseller in 15 countries and in eight other languages." -Book Blurb

Saigon: An Epic Novel of Vietnam was really informative, richly painted, epic tome of a novel. It is in no way light reading however, as it is nearly one thousand pages long. I think my copy has roughly 980 pages. While this book is a fascinating, beguiling, and very distressing read, (as well as being well written) it also has its downfalls. In the minds of some, this book focuses too much on overly dramatized themes, such as the cliché romance aspect where Joseph "falls in love" with an Annamese girl simply because of her beauty, charm and soft-spoken manner. Of course, some may argue there is a pure love between them but frankly he knows nothing of her personally or her heart. In fact, he knows her a mere few days before confessing his undying love for her. There is no two ways around it being a love at first sight, sappy, mushy, puppy-kind-of-love. So, yes, there is definitely drama, but I feel it was meant to add realism and warmth to an otherwise dry history book.

The same goes for the scenes of brutality, torture, rape and war descriptions, while in a different regard. While those things certainly happened, we are allowed to know some of the victims of such tragedies and therefore feel for them more deeply. Most of the violent, sexual, hateful things portrayed are for illuminations sake only, to portray scenarios that very likely happened, which sparked rebellions and led to the war.

There were only a few minor aspects, such as the incident between Mrs. Sherman and Captain Devraux for example, and Dao Van Lat's scene of self-inflicted body mutilation, that I felt could have been toned down or left out or at least not focused on so much. There were a few such scenes that really didn't seem to belong. That might give a book a feeling of gratuitous, melodrama when for the most part, it is far from that.

I think the story of Saigon really captured me because of the rich culture, history, and vivid portrayal of the people of An Nam, now turned Viet Nam. The landscapes, scenes and images are so poignantly described as to leave lasting impressions with the reader. Some readers might feel as though no one character is truly the main character of this book, or that the characters are not really relatable enough, however vividly portrayed or described. It is, indeed, difficult to feel a strong connection to many of the characters in this novel. The characters may feel secondary to the overall story. But....

That very aspect allows me to make this point. Viet Nam is the true main character. Viet Nam is the heart and soul of this book, or is meant to be the primary focus. The character of Viet Nam itself, as a nation, however complex or flawed, is the character with which we are intended to relate to and to understand. That is my personal impression after reading this novel.

An Nam, later turned Viet Nam, and its people is what makes this book a powerful read. Their many struggles and hardships brings light onto a topic none seem to remember or speak of. So for the book being so firmly based in history and the authors devotion to enlighten the world on the mysteries surrounding the subject, I greatly appreciated this book. For those things alone, it is worth the read. But I would highly recommend this to readers with slightly stronger stomachs, who are interested in Vietnamese history, and the Vietnam war. I would recommend this for mature readers, however.

[CONTENT & TRIGGER WARNING BELOW...]

[OFFICIAL RATING: 4.5 STARS]

[CONTENT NOTE: Saigon: An Epic Novel of Vietnam contains quite a bit of graphic disturbing content such as violence and abuse, disturbing war scenes, racism and aryan idealism, slavery, child cruelty, torture, dark sexual situations, graphic animal abuse/murder (graphic descriptions of hunting and the killing of animals, as well as a graphic portrayal of taxidermy preparation, skinning, tanning which was described vividly) underage sexual encounter and prostitution (two young boys, while intoxicated with a potent drink, use rural Annamese girls for sex, one losing his virginity. They technically pay for them. The scene is brief but fairly detailed.) voyeurism, adultery (a main female character has graphic relations with a French Captain after she witnesses him raping a married Annamese woman, and her child overhears their heated encounter. The scene is pretty detailed and extended.) a few other scenes of rape (later another french guard rapes a young Annamese girl that he forces to live with him as a mistress) genital/body mutilation (an Annamese man, after a scene of lovemaking, presumably castrates himself and passes out from the pain. The scene is shocking and happens suddenly but is not overly described) There is a love scene between the main character and an Annamese/Mandarin girl, but is more tender than explicit, and is fairly brief. He intends to marry her. There are many descriptions of gore, disturbing depictions of violent war scenes, many of the torture scenes are very vivid etc. as well as mentions of alcohol, betel chewing and smoking.]

Laura says

I LOVED this book. As someone who grew up in the 60's and 70's, I had snippets and impressions of the complicated relationship between the US and Viet Nam. I love a historical fiction novel like this. When moments strike me I Google personalities or events included in the book and found often in this case that they relate to real people and occurrences, skillfully woven into the narrative, wrapped up in a compelling fictional story. I learned much from this book, about the complications of diplomacy and politics, greed and a desire for freedom. I am committed to reading more novels by this impressive author.

Ann says

I very seldom give five stars to a novel in which the writing is not exquisite - - and Anthony Grey's writing is very good, but not outstanding. However, the scope of the novel and the history it portrayed (and taught me - - and I thought I knew a lot about Vietnam!) were overwhelmingly satisfying to me. The characters are very well drawn (and, yes, I know there are some unlikely intersections of characters, but I got over it) and the scenes and landscape are vivid. Of course this book is about war, and the brutality is, rightly, there as

well. This novel showed all aspects and sides of the Vietnam war. I recommend it.

Sarah says

I'm not sure how to go about writing a review of such a complex, involved book (which was originally written in 1982, not 2012, as this record indicates). I am astounded by the amount of research and planning that must have gone into writing this book. When I started reading *Saigon*, I was expecting to read an account of the Vietnam War. I didn't know what I was getting into beyond that. The book actually spans from 1925-1975, providing context for the war and American involvement far beyond what I ever learned in history class, or (according to the book) beyond what Americans of the time understood about Vietnam as well.

The story is told through the lives of members of four families over three generations: the French Devrauxs, the American Shermans, and the Vietnamese Trans and Ngos, who all become acquainted with each other in the 1920s, and whose lives become intertwined over the next 50 turbulent and often tragic years. The characters themselves seem a little uninteresting at times, but I think this actually works in the book's favor, as the character's interpersonal relationships serve more to provide a backdrop for historical events than to drive the plot of the book.

Though the story spans various conflicts including French colonialism, World War Two, and the Vietnam War, these individual conflicts read as a single decades-long struggle for Vietnamese independence. Through the generations of the four fictional families, we see how nationalism, prejudice, hatred, loyalty, fear, love, etc, can be passed down from generation to generation, motivating actions, affecting familial relationships, and escalating conflict on all sides.

This is a long and somewhat arduous read, but it's well worth it. This book would be appreciated by anyone who wants to gain a full, contextual understanding of the effects of colonialism, American foreign policy, and American involvement in the Vietnam War.

Free_dreamer says

First of all, I have to admit that I knew little to nothing about Vietnamese history before I started reading this book. I'd heard of the infamous Viet Cong and knew bits and pieces about the Vietnam war, but that's about it. Vietnam was never a country I found particularly interesting before. But since I'm always interested in books about South East Asia and recent world history, I decided to give this book a try anyway.

And I'm so glad I did! "*Saigon*" is a truly epic masterpiece the like of which you only very rarely encounter. Though I can't judge whether this is "the War and Peace of our age" since I've never read "*War and Peace*".

"*Saigon*" moved me deeply. I was at turns shocked, utterly horrified, incredibly furious, saddened to no end, but also completely and absolutely fascinated and intrigued. More than once I had tears in my eyes and I often had to stop reading for a moment or two to get my feelings under control.

Anthony Grey managed to portray his protagonists' feelings in a way that made me feel their sorrows as deeply as their joys.

The author didn't gloss over anything here. For the most part of the novel Vietnam was at war. Hence there

was murder, rape, torture, lots and lots of violence and incredible suffering. What was happening was always obvious, at times also very explicit, and yet Anthony Grey never crossed the line from violence to gore, it was never excessive.

The plot was a perfect mix of historic events and personal destinies, which got me hooked immediately. I could hardly stop reading and I was utterly fascinated till the very last sentence and was sad to see the story end. I found it incredibly intriguing to watch the impact of the historic events on the protagonists' lives. The protagonists and their destinies are fiction. At the end of the book, Anthony Grey talks about his years of research for this book and his conversations with various experts on Vietnamese history. Now, I can't judge how successfull the research was, but I always felt like the author knew what he was writing about.

Grey's style of writing is definitely sophisticated but it never felt jarring.

I don't think you need any previous knowledge to enjoy this book. Before every new part of the book the author gives a brief summary of what happened between the end and the beginning of the new part. That was very helpful and there was no need for lengthy interruptions of the plot to explain the historic facts. Well done!

Especially in the first part of the book, when Vietnam was still the French colony Annam, there were a lot of French phrases and sentences that weren't translated. Thanks to my somewhat pathetical French I understood most of them, but I still found it a little jarring. Luckily, as the plot moved on, less and less of these French phrases showed up.

A little help with pronouncing the Vietnamese names and words would have been nice as well. I don't speak a single word of Vietnamese, so I always had to guess the pronunciation, which I hate doing.

Other than that, I would've liked a little epilogue on the situation in Vietnam today. That might not have been necessary when the book was first published in 1982, since that was only a few years after the plot ended, but now it's been over 35 years and I'm sure a lot has happened since.

To sum it up, "Saigon" is a truly epic work that doesn't require any previous knowledge about Vietnam. I haven't read many books that managed to touch me and intrigue me so completely. A book for everybody that's interested in contemporary history. You don't need to be a huge fan of Vietnam to enjoy this book! This was definitely one of the best books I've read this year. Consequently, I just have to give this novel a full five stars. A real must read!

Mandy says

This long and detailed saga of 20th century Vietnam follows 3 families, one French, one American and one Vietnamese through decades of that country's turbulent and troubled history. It centres around young American Joseph Sherman from 1925 when he visits French Indo-China for the first time to his last visit at the end of the Vietnam war. As traveller, soldier and reporter he is uniquely placed to reflect the key political, military and social changes and challenges that faced Vietnam as it moved towards independence. Essentially an adventure story, with the required romance thrown in, this book cannot claim to be great literary fiction. The characters sometimes verge on caricature, the plot is often contrived and the coincidences too frequent, but if you enjoy a complex and compelling tale, but one where you can effortlessly absorb historical fact at the same time, then this one is for you. If you prefer rather more subtle writing, then perhaps not. However, it's certainly informative and enlightening about Vietnam and as such has much to recommend it.

Ian says

I have read many, many novels about the Vietnam war and most are written from a US perspective, generally anti-war and about the experiences of the young American G.I.'s thrust into a violent, alien world in the 1960's. This is the first one I have read that gives a proper overview of the whole tragic conflict over a period of 50 years. The English author takes us from the roots of the eventual disastrous US misadventure with the brutality of the colonial French towards the as then called Annamese, through the struggles of the nascent revolutionaries to overthrow the French, taking in the 2nd World War when Vichy France handed the country over to its ally Japan, the post war period when Britain connived to enable the French to remain in power, the eventual humiliating defeat and overthrow of the French and the subsequent infamous direct Cold War involvement of the US with the indirect involvement of China and the Soviet Union. The conflict is personalised around the main character of Joseph Sherman, the son of a US senator, who first visits Vietnam as a 15 year old boy in 1923. In that first visit he meets the Devraux, a colonial French family, a peasant Annamese family who work for the Devraux and also a mandarin Annamese family who owe their position to their collaboration with the French. These families, their children and grandchildren form the thread around which the author weaves his dramatic tale. The novel is generally written from no country's particular political perspective and this was the key thing for me. Written in 1982, yes it is eventually anti-war, but the French, British, Japanese, Americans, North Vietnamese revolutionaries and all the various South Vietnamese regimes are ultimately all portrayed as seriously, seriously flawed. The domestic stories of the various families, though at times a little tenuous, are interesting enough but it is the backdrop of the political and military struggle, and the unfolding overall tragedy that that kept me turning the pages.

Shonna Froebel says

This is not a new book, but the 30th anniversary edition of an amazing novel centred on Vietnam. The action here takes place over 50 years from 1925 to 1975. At its centre is the Sherman family, specifically Joseph Sherman. In 1925, at the age of 15, he came to Vietnam with his mother, father, and older brother Chuck to hunt. The hunting was to obtain specimens of rare animals for the Washington museum created by Joseph's grandfather. This first visit of Joseph to Vietnam also connects him to three other families that play an important role in the novel. One is the French Devraux family. The hunting guide that the Sherman's have hired is Jacques Devraux, and his son Paul is his assistant. Chuck, Paul, and Joseph are close in age and make a connection. Joseph's mother also makes a connection with the Devraux family that will have a lasting effect. Servants to Devraux family, Ngo Van Loc, his wife Mai, and their sons Dong and Hoc, are not treated well and their lifelong struggle to regain an independent life now includes a strong resentment against the Devraux men. In their first days, the Shermans also meet the Tran family. Tran Van Hieu is a mandarin and at one of the formal events, the Tran children have stayed in the palace grounds while the formal event takes place inside. Joseph makes the acquaintance of the three children Tam, 12; Kim, 11; and their sister Lan, 10. His experiences lead Joseph to a lifelong fascination with Vietnam, and he becomes a scholar in the history of the region. When he returns again in 1936, he again encounters the Devraux and Tran families and renews his friendship with Paul, while creating a different connection with Tran Van Lan.

Joseph returns to Vietnam again in World War II, first as a pilot and then as an OSS officer working with the Vietnamese against the Japanese. His experiences here form strong bonds with the Vietnamese revolutionaries and the reader sees a chance to avoid the future tragedies of this nation lost in the colonially oriented decisions of the war's aftermath.

When Joseph return next, it is as a reporter, and he covers the French struggle against the Vietnamese, in particular the battle at Dien Bien Phu.

As the Americans become more involved in the tragedy of Vietnam, Joseph returns many times, as a reporter, a government official, or a civilian who cares deeply about the country he has intimate ties with. At almost 800 pages, this is not a light read, but the novel flows quickly, leading the reader on through the strong characters he creates. Each section begins with a short historical comment of what is going on politically in Vietnam at the time. This gives us context and a grounding in the forces that influence the characters in that section. I learned so much about Vietnam's history through the reading of this novel, and highly recommend it to those who may be visiting this country or just interested in history.

Cherie says

I graduated from high school in 1965 so Vietnam was part of my young adult life. I associated it with a callous group of people that killed and maimed my friends and family in an undeclared war. Reading this book has enlightened me on who the people and culture of this country really were and their years of oppression that ultimately created this conflict and the role our own government played. I was a war protester then and I still hate wars that take the youngest and best of any country but there is always a second side to most conflicts. A very long read but worth it for me.

Gregg says

All the reviews I saw of Anthony Grey's *Saigon* raved about its being America's version of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, or a more academic version of one of James Michner's novels. I am not convinced. But it has other values that make it laudable.

The novel has, as its centerpiece, one James Sherman, son of Virginia senator Nathaniel Sherman, and tells the story of his and two other families' interweaving stories, all revolving around Saigon and Vietnam in total. Sherman falls in love with a Vietnamese girl only to lose her to familial politics; his Western family is all but consumed by the war and various ripple effects of the French and American occupations, and a Vietnamese family suffers its own losses, betrayals and conflicts out of the same factors. The book starts with a hunting expedition in 1925, in which all three families are present, but as the book progresses through two wars and years of bloody, senseless violence, Sherman sort of takes center stage, right up until the end, with the fall of the city and the much-referenced helicopter evacuation of the embassy.

Grey's strengths in this narrative rely on plot and progression, as well as fidelity to the historical record. Not that I would know anything firsthand, of course, but his depictions of pivotal events and scenes like the French colonial occupation of the early 20th century, the battle at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, or most particularly the fall of Saigon are clearly based off meticulous research, and his imagery largely succeeds in delivering vivid pictures and sensations of the country, both at its most idyllic and most tortured. His book shines a light on the more sordid and overlooked aspects of our and the West's overall effect on this peasant country that the more mainstream pop culture has tended to overlook.

But the novel suffers from ineffective characterization. The Western figures, for example, are either gallingly shallow or outright caricatures (Grey throws around the word "coolie" enough to make me cringe, as if his reference to the Japanese Army as the "Imperial Nipponese Army" wasn't bad enough). Sherman "falls in

"love" with Lan, the Vietnamese woman whose beauty will consume him, but to my eyes, Grey doesn't depict her as anything more than every white man's supposed fantasy about Asian women: she's meek yet strong, delicate yet enduring, and Sherman doesn't seem to discover anything substantial about her character for hundreds of pages, though he does rave about her beauty enough.

(Full disclosure: I am a white guy married to a Korean woman who, by any objective standard, is ravishing, although she's as far from "docile" as you can get. Sorry, honey! Don't beat me up.)

For example, when Lan loses a bracelet in the Perfumed River of Hanoi, Sherman manages to wade into the water and retrieve it. What a Galahad! And as if that weren't enough, he uses his Herculean achievement as an opportunity to rave to her about the ardor that led him to such a stunning success in cringe-worthy adolescent diction:

Joseph felt the familiar breathless sensation constrict his throat, and he took hold of her hand suddenly and pressed it to his lips: "I did it because I love you, Lan! I love you very much. I knew the moment I saw you praying at the tomb--you're so pure and good, so beautiful. I want to be with you always--to protect you and take care of you. I never want to leave your side." ...To his surprise, she said nothing; he thought he felt her body tremble once, then she detached her hand gently from his grasp and half turned away to steady herself with one hand against the larch tree.

"I feel a little dizzy, Joseph," she said softly, pressing her other wrist against her brow in a little gesture of distress. "Perhaps it's all that incense..."

I know I've seen this scene before. In every movie or novel with an East Meets West Vietnam romantic scene. *Ever.*

This kind of pubescent rhapsodizing isn't much better than what Grey serves up with other aspects of his characters. Joseph debates his hawkish father and brother spouting lines that sound like George Lucas wrote them, and even the Vietnamese characters lapse into heavy exposition in places.

But the story itself is enough to keep one engrossed. We get the brutal French exploitation of Ammanese workers. We get a fly-on-the-wall perspective of the removal of South Vietnamese President Diem in a CIA- and State Department-supported coup, as well as the power struggle between Diem and his brother. We see the appalling self-mutilation of militant Dao Va Lat and his subsequent activism and eventual incarceration, and begin to understand the fervor with which the Vietnamese fought their occupation a bit more clearly. We see the tunnels of the Viet Cong and bear witness to their methods; we march with GIs and bear witness to theirs. We see American intel and Vietnamese interrogation side by side (torture, betrayal, spying, bitter recriminations, murder, et al), with predictably chilling results, and this juxtaposition, coming on top of such deep and informed historical perspective, makes it impossible not to see the war through the eyes of the Vietnamese first and foremost.

Doubtless this was the author's effect. Not a stunning observation I'm making here, I know, but I still wind up in the odd debate over the U.S. role in this country, and "historical perspective" is still scorned much more than I think it should be at this point. Grey doesn't come off as biased or judgmental, but his thesis (if this novel could be said to have one) seems, to me, indisputable: American never really knew what the hell it was doing in Vietnam because it didn't know *Vietnam*. The broad historical tapestry upon which Grey

weaves his characters' stories is what really makes the book worth reading, and as proxies for the country itself, you really want to see what happens to these characters.

Most of it is bad. But then, if we're shooting for realism when it comes to Indochina in the 20th century, what else should we expect?

Glenna Pritchett says

I have read some superb books in 2016, and Saigon is one of the best. For a couple of days I have tried to write a review but the book has left me at a loss for words, and I just can't get anything down on paper. Maybe I can come back later and do it justice. Maybe.

For right now I'll make do with this: you should read it. Really, you should.

Chrissie says

This is cinematic, cheap, tawdry romance. I have quit after eleven chapters, that is to say 3.5 hours of the total 35hrs and 4 minutes. I cannot bear another minute. It is actually possible for me to not finish a book. Yay, Chrissie!

Within these first chapters the wife of an American senator has in sexual ecstasy thrown herself upon their French hunting guide who has just forced himself upon the wife of his Vietnamese employee. The chapter before, the fifteen year old son of the American senator and wife lost his virginity with a Vietnamese native. Oh my....I am enthralled. I hope you hear my sarcasm.

It starts by telling us that many Americans didn't know why they had come to fight in Vietnam. The point of this book was supposedly to explain that. Excuse my French, but this is pure bullshit.

The characters are two-dimensional and the plot predictable.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with the audiobook's narration by Gordon Griffin.

I recommend this only to those who are looking for a soap opera with a large dose of "romance".
