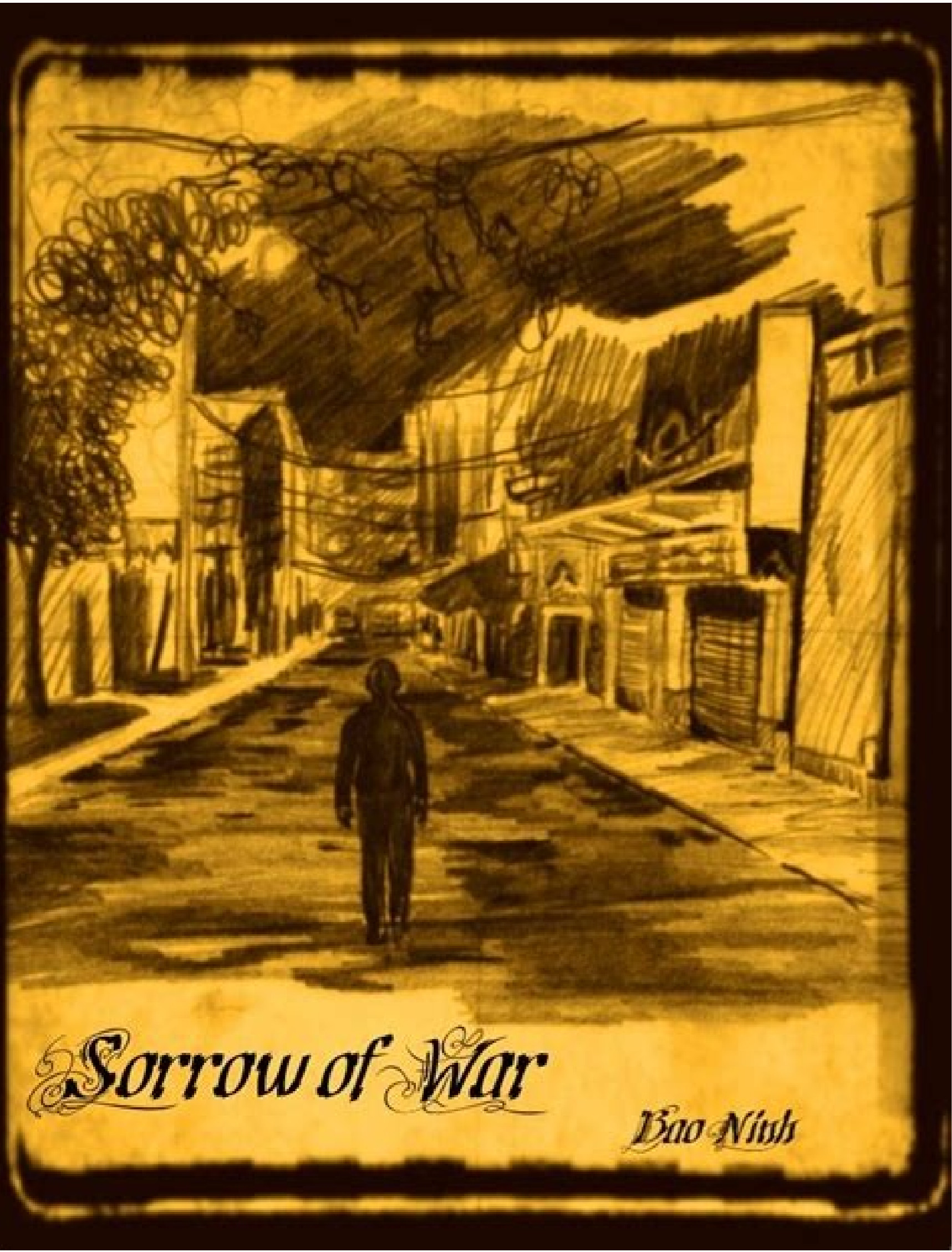


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Bao Ninh  
The  
**Sorrow  
of War**



Read an excerpt of this book! The daring and controversial novel that took the world by storm is a story of politics, selfhood, survival, and war. Heart-wrenching, fragmented, raw, former North Vietnamese soldier Bao Ninh's *The Sorrow of War* provides a strikingly honest look at how the Vietnam War forever changed his life, his country, and the people who live there. Kien, a lone survivor from the Glorious 27th Youth brigade of the Vietcong, revisits the haunting sites of battles and relives a parade of horrors, as he grapples with his ghosts, his alcoholism and attempts to arrange his life in writing. Originally published against government wishes in Vietnam because of its nonheroic, non-ideological tone, Ninh's now classic work has won worldwide acclaim and become an international bestseller. ISBN-13: 9780525562649 Publisher: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group Publication date: 08/14/2018 Edition description: Reprint Pages: 240 Sales rank: 108,758 Product dimensions: 5.15(w) x 7.98(h) x 0.68(d) From the Publisher "The first critical portrayal of life in the North Vietnamese army ever to appear in Vietnam. . . . The censors were evidently moved by the book's unflinching sincerity and Ninh's literary gifts." "Time "Vaults over all the American fiction that came out of the Vietnam War to take its place alongside the greatest war novel of the century. All Quiet on the Western Front. And this is to understate its qualities, for, unlike All Quiet, it is a novel about much more than war. A book about writing, about lost youth, it is also a beautiful, agonizing love story." "The Independent "Dramatic . . . Chronicle[s] the wrecked lives of North Vietnamese soldiers who enter the war with blazing idealism, only to sink deeper into disillusionment and pessimism as everything they know falls apart around them. . . . Will force American readers to acknowledge how little they still understand of the long war that left such a htiw raw eht morf senecs kcabhsalf gniworrah sexim rohtua eht sa sdiub ytisnetni lanoitome elbakramer a. snacirema gnuoy sa niap dna raef emas eht yb dehcnerw ,namuh sreidlos esemanteiv htron P notgnisaw eht". I'm sorry, grove and grovefrom his pastoral youth, from his prom to break the heart after a decade, and finally from the calamity of nightmare that unites all the rest and gives the book its tragic power. . . finally, put an acceptable human face in a group of people for a long time without one, you will never think of the northern Vietnamese and its people the same way again. "" the inquiry of the philatelfia "a novel not impugnable, should win the pulitzer prize. " - the guardian of the editor // tim pagei made my first trip to southeast Asia in 1994. I went to phnom penh to volunteer, teaching judgment defense skills for the Cambodian defender project, acting without notice, they told me to come back a month later. So I went north to Hanoi. The Vietnamese opened its doors for foreign investments and tourism, it was a lush time, full of optimism. It was during this trip that I came across the romance of ninh, the sadness of war, almost from the first page I was hypnotized by the story, the characters (especially the protagonist, kien,) and the pain and suffering portrayed everywhere. The more I read, the more I reflected what I knew - u presumes to know - about war, the Vietnamese and, in particular, the northern -vietnamites. I was being treated with a new perspective. I always prided myself on trying to see things from all sides, including the other side, on questioning opinions and beliefs when the facts did not support them. Yes, I had never had time to think about how it must have been the north of Vietnam during the war. It never occurred to me to think about what the north Vietnamese passed, the number of the dead of civilians and soldiers, visit the memorial of the Vietnamese veterans, in Washington, Dc, would evoke feelings in me for the more 58,000 soldiers of the Eua killed - as well as their allies in the south - without thinking about the 1 million soldiers of the dead Vietnamese. it must have been like for those North Vietnamese soldiers who survived the war: their physical and psychological injuries; their suffering after the lights went out each night, when memories of pain, loss, anguish and terror would surface. In The Sorrow of War, I saw the conflict for the first time through the eyes of a North Vietnamese soldier. Most of the films and books I had been exposed to on the war were from the American perspective. The narrative that had shaped my thinking was one-dimensional, full of misapprehensions, half-truths and hearsay. As soon as I finished The Sorrow of War, I started re-reading it. All of a sudden I became more sensitive to my surroundings. I began challenging my assumptions and presumptions. I recall, on that first visit, taking a trip to Dien Bien Phu in a jeep, driven by a North Vietnamese veteran who was about my age. He wanted to know if I had fought in the war. I told him I had not. The question provoked anxiety in me that would not go away. As he drove on, for hours on end, I imagined what it must have been like for him during the war. My point of reference was Bao Ninh's novel. I could not stop thinking of Kien, the tragic figure who chronicles his anguish from his youth to his lost love, from his years as a soldier to his postwar duty of collecting the bones of his fellow soldiers in the Jungle of Screaming Souls. In almost every waking moment during that trip to Dien Bien Phu I could not stop thinking of Kien. His eloquent yet disquieting recollections haunted me. When my month travelling through Vietnam came to an end, I headed back to Phnom Penh. When my work was done, my mind gravitated to Kien. The more I thought of The Sorrow of War, the more convinced I became that it should be turned into a film. American audiences should see this side of the story. Even Vietnamese should see it. The breaking of promises made to those who sacrificed for or fought in Ho Chi war of reunification was one of Bao Ninh's themes. By chance, I had with me a book on screenwriting and thought (naively) that perhaps I could take a stab at it. If only I could track down the author and secure the rights. I was almost certain that the rights would have been sold or given away, but I had to try. I decided to head back to Hanoi in search of Bao Ninh. I assumed he was living in Hanoi, as Kien was from Hanoi. Only someone who has gone through what Kien does could write with such depth, clarity and anguish. As a public defender I had experience in tracking down witnesses. How difficult would it be to find this writer of obvious notoriety? I would use the same methodical approach, of finding a lead and taking it from there. I had given myself three to four days to locate Bao Ninh. Two days into my search, it occurred to me that there must be a writer's association. Surely if one existed its members would know of his whereabouts. When I found the organisation, I was greeted by a woman who spoke good English. She seemed to be in a position of authority and very much switched on. Though polite, she had a dour look on her face that barely changed throughout our exchange. When I mentioned the purpose of my visit, her expression shifted to a mixture of irritation and impatience. I had obviously touched a nerve. Why are you looking for this Bao Ninh? I told her about the book. I have never heard of him. I do not know this Bao Ninh. If he exists, he is not from Hanoi. I politely insisted that he must be from Hanoi because Kien and many other characters are from Hanoi. Only someone who has lived in Hanoi would know it so well to write about it in such detail. Sorry, but I cannot help you. I tried some small talk, but she would have none of it. Getting nowhere, I left the building. All of a sudden, appearing with an exasperated look on her face, she handed me a folded piece of paper and whispered: You will find Bao in this address, but the sorrow of war is not very good; it is a miswritten novel of no distinction. I asked what she meant. The style is not Vietnamese. It is written as a Western novel, with the plot going back and forth, and all this remembering of a pathetic soldier who gets things mixed up and is confused about war, bao ninh is not very writer and the sorrow of war is unpleasant, not Vietnamese. I wished good luck and left. the same afternoon I went to the address, which proved to be seen. bao ninh lived in an apartment in a complex of countless buildings of indistinguishable apartments, a little far from the center of hanoi, appearing without warning, as I had done on my first day in phnom penh. I expected that bao ninh was at home, he went, although I learned quickly that he had given the film rights to his English translator (or at least he thought so), in any case, he was not interested in seeing the sorrow of war adapted, he seemed tired, seemed shy at first and often was lost in thought, but he eventually opened up and talked for a few hours, surprisingly, he received the opportunity to speak with a complete stranger about his novel, one of the most influential ever written about the Vietnamese war, a classic. the wars of bao ninh is the interview with the author in the August edition of mekong review michael karnavas is an international criminal defense attorney more than mekong review

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