

<<世界文明之战/The Great War>>

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内容概要

If this is a book about war, it is equally a book about the hypocrisy and indifference of those in power. Fisk is an angry man and more than a little self-righteous. No national leader comes off with a scrap of credit here; he regards the lot of them with contempt, if not loathing. Among the men in charge -- whether Arab, Iranian, Turkish, Israeli, British or American -- there are no heroes and precious few honorable people doing their inadequate best in difficult situations. Jimmy Carter is lucky to escape with condescension, King Hussein of Jordan with a bit better than that. Fisk is not fond of the media either (though he grants some exceptions); CNN and the New York Times are particular targets of his scorn for what he sees as their abject failure to challenge the lies, distortions and cover-ups of U.S. policymakers. Only among ordinary people, entangled in a web of forces beyond their control, does Fisk find a human mixture of courage, cowardice, charity and cruelty!

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作者简介

Robert Fisk is a bestselling author and journalist based in Beirut as Middle East correspondent of the 'Independent'. He has lived in the Middle East for three decades and holds more British and international journalism awards than any other foreign correspondent. He is also the author of 'Pity the Nation', a history of the Lebanese war, and 'The Age of the Warrior', an anthology of his 'Comment' pieces from the 'Independent'.

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媒体关注与评论

'For sheer bravery, dazzling prose, three interviews with Osama bin Laden and an unrivalled collection of awards won over three decades, there is nobody to match Robert Fisk. This book is his testament.' Sunday Times  
'Brilliant!powerfully written.' Independent on Sunday 'A remarkable book.' New Statesman 'Fisk writes with a marvellous resource of image and language. His investigative reporting is lethally painstaking.' Neal Ascherson, Independent 'His forte is straight reporting, such as his three interviews with Osama bin Laden. At least as good are his meetings with Saddam Hussein, Khomeini and Sadeq Khalkhali, the hanging judge of the Iranian revolution, and his close-ups of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the launch of Saddam's war against Iran, an ambush by Islamists of an Algerian police patrol, and a lift into trouble in an Apache attack helicopter on the Iraq/Turkey border.' Guardian 'A mammoth and magisterial work, the definitive summation of what has gone wrong in the West's foreign policies towards Arabia.' Scottish Sunday Herald 'A stimulating and absorbing book, by a man who speaks Arabic, who has known the region better than most, and has met the leading players, from bin Laden to Ahmad Chalabi. A formidable production.' New York Times 'Full of furious, vivid and highly personalised writing!An important book by an intrepid and talented writer.' Literary Review 'Vivid, graphic, intense and very personal!this is a book of unquestionable importance.' Washington Post

编辑推荐

From Publishers Weekly Starred Review. Combining a novelist's talent for atmosphere with a scholar's grasp of historical sweep, foreign correspondent Fisk (*Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon*) has written one of the most dense and compelling accounts of recent Middle Eastern history yet. The book opens with a deftly juxtaposed account of Fisk's two interviews with Osama bin Laden. In the first, held in Sudan in 1993, bin Laden declared himself "a construction engineer and an agriculturist." He had no time to train mujahideen, he said; he was busy constructing a highway. In the second, held four years later in Afghanistan, he declared war on the Saudi royal family and America. Fisk, who has lived in and reported on the Middle East since 1976, first for the (London) Times and now for the Independent, possesses deep knowledge of the broader history of the region, which allows him to discuss the Armenian genocide 90 years ago, the 2002 destruction of Jenin, and the battlefields of Iraq with equal aplomb. But it is his stunning capacity for visceral description—he has seen, or tracked down firsthand accounts of, all the major events of the past 25 years—that makes this volume unique. Some of the chapters contain detailed accounts of torture and murder, which more squeamish readers may be inclined to skip, but such scenes are not gratuitous. They are designed to drive home Fisk's belief that "war is primarily not about victory or defeat but about death and the infliction of death." Though Fisk's political stances may sometimes be controversial, no one can deny that this volume is a stunning achievement. (Nov.) Copyright ©; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

## 名人推荐

From The Washington Post's Book World/washingtonpost.com This is first of all a book about war -- in particular, the wars that have scarred the Middle East, from Afghanistan to Algeria, throughout the author's long career as a correspondent for the London Times and then the Independent. It switches back and forth across the 20th century in a way that seems driven more by stream of consciousness than by any linear design, and, as befits its topic, it is a book of almost unremitting violence. The author presents himself both as unflinching witness and implacable judge of the events he recounts, for he believes that he is telling a story of unrelenting perfidy and betrayal -- in part a story of Middle Easterners being betrayed by themselves and their leaders, but mostly one of the Middle East being betrayed by the power, greed and arrogance of the West. Fisk has thrown himself into the fiery pit time after time, often at grave personal risk -- Afghanistan at the beginning of the long struggle against the Soviets, the bloodbath of the 1980s Iran-Iraq War, the civil war in Algeria after 1991, the second Palestinian intifada since the fall of 2000. When he is not personally in the midst of conflict and destruction, he evokes them, as in his lengthy discussion of the Armenian deportations and massacres of World War I or (in a different register) his treatment of the shah of Iran's prisons and torture chambers. However Fisk regards himself, he is at bottom a war correspondent, and the fabric of his book is woven largely from his battlefield reporting. Fisk's writing on war is vivid, graphic, intense and very personal. Readers will encounter no "collateral damage" here, only homes destroyed and bodies torn to shreds. At times, as one horror is heaped upon another, it all seems too much to absorb or bear. That intensity is both the book's great strength and one of its principal weaknesses. After reading it, no one can hide from the immense human costs of the decisions made by generals and politicians, Middle Eastern or otherwise. But Fisk portrays the Middle East as a place of such unrelieved violence that the reader can hardly imagine that anyone has enjoyed a single ordinary day there over the past quarter-century. That picture is a serious distortion. Life in the region is far from easy, but in spite of endemic anxiety and frustration, most Middle Easterners, most of the time, are able to get on tolerably well. Fisk says little about more abstract, less violent issues such as economic stagnation, the complexities of political Islam or the status of women. This gap is not a weakness in itself -- Fisk is writing about different themes -- but readers need to be aware that, despite its staggering length, this book is not The Complete Middle East. It may well be The Complete Robert Fisk, however. It is full of autobiographical reminiscences about the author's troubled but intense relationship with his father, Bill; indeed, that relationship provides the book's title. The elder Fisk had been awarded a campaign medal for his service in France in 1918, and the medal (which he bequeathed to his son) was inscribed with the motto "The Great War for Civilisation." The bitter irony of that motto is underscored by another gift, this one from the author's grandmother to his father -- a boy's novel, Tom Graham, V.C., which recounts the adventures of a young British soldier in Afghanistan in the late 19th century. For the author, both the medal and the novel symbolize the West's arrogant and destructive intrusion in the Middle East throughout the last century. If this is a book about war, it is equally a book about the hypocrisy and indifference of those in power. Fisk is an angry man and more than a little self-righteous. No national leader comes off with a scrap of credit here; he regards the lot of them with contempt, if not loathing. Among the men in charge -- whether Arab, Iranian, Turkish, Israeli, British or American -- there are no heroes and precious few honorable people doing their inadequate best in difficult situations. Jimmy Carter is lucky to escape with condescension, King Hussein of Jordan with a bit better than that. Fisk is not fond of the media either (though he grants some exceptions); CNN and the New York Times are particular targets of his scorn for what he sees as their abject failure to challenge the lies, distortions and cover-ups of U.S. policymakers. Only among ordinary people, entangled in a web of forces beyond their control, does Fisk find a human mixture of courage, cowardice, charity and cruelty! . Given the present state of things in the Middle East, one is tempted to agree with him. The mendacity and bland pomposity of the suits and talking heads, both Western and Middle Eastern, are infuriating to anyone who has any direct knowledge of what is going on there. Again, however, there is a problem: Fisk excoriates politicians for the awful suffering they have imposed on the peoples of the Middle East, but he never seriously asks why they make the decisions they do or what real alternatives they might have. It is all

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very well to flog Western and Middle Eastern leaders for their ignorance, moral blindness, lust for power, etc. That might instill shame and guilt (though it rarely does), but it provides no serious principles or criteria that serious policymakers might use to develop something better. In short, *The Great War for Civilisation* is a book of unquestionable importance, given Fisk's unmatched experience of war and its impact in the contemporary Middle East and his capacity to convey that experience in concrete, passionate language. Still, novices will find themselves both overwhelmed by the book's exhaustive detail and hard put to follow the author's leaps across countries and decades. *The Great War for Civilisation* is also a deeply troubling book; it may well confirm the conviction of many that the Middle East is incurably sunk in violence and depravity and that only a fool would imagine it could ever be redeemed. As tragic as the last three decades have been, there are different lessons to be learned -- one must hope so, at least. Reviewed by Stephen Humphreys Copyright 2006, The Washington Post. All Rights Reserved.



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