



www.apexreviews.net
info@apexreviews.net

Cherries: A Vietnam War Novel
John Podlaski
ISBN: 9781604817362
Wordclay
Reviewed By Karynda Lewis

Official Apex Reviews Rating: ★★★★★

Over the past 30 years, many accounts have been written of the brutal realities of the Vietnam War. Chronicling everything from the harsh conditions in which the soldiers were forced to live to the widespread death that surrounded them, said accounts have often spared no detail in highlighting the grim circumstances of the monumental conflict.

Throughout the pages of **Cherries: A Vietnam War Novel**, though, author John Podlaski treats the reader to an up-close-and-personal look at a specific subset of the Vietnam War: its effects on the naïve young recruits who fought in it. Dubbed “Cherries” by their more seasoned peers, these newbies suddenly found themselves thrust in the middle of a nightmarish scenario for which not even their worst dreams could prepare them; as such, they were hardly ready to absorb the harsh mental, emotional, and physical toll that the conflict would eventually take on them. Literally forced to become men overnight, the Cherries had to learn quick to make life-or-death decisions, the consequences of which not only impacted their own lives – but also those of their fellow soldiers.

With striking detail and brutal honesty, **Cherries** is nothing if not compelling. Largely compiled from Podlaski’s real life experiences, his eye-opening account offers the readers an in depth look into the everyday struggles with which the young recruits were forced to contend. The reader may find it surprising though, to learn that – despite the death, terror, and mayhem that surrounded them – the soldiers were often able to find humor in their situations, even to the extent of adopting quite self-deprecating ways of looking at their own fates. One can only assume that the tremendous psychological toll of war gives rise to this unexpected phenomenon, as being confronted with the glaring

prospect of your own mortality every day surely fosters a profound, unique appreciation of the frailties of the human psyche.

Every bit as gritty and shocking as can be imagined, **Cherries: A Vietnam War Novel** is a refreshingly honest account of a life few of us would ever choose to live – and, thus, should feel fortunate that we don't have to. A highly recommended read.