



Chechnya: To the Heart of a Conflict

Andrew Meier

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Andrew's riveting portrait of Chechnya, a land ravaged by indescribable carnage, enables us to understand the origins of this brutal conflict like no other recent work.

The barbaric, terrorist siege in the summer of 2004 that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of innocent children in Beslan did not begin either there or in the take-over of a Moscow theatre in 2002. As Andrew Meier explains in this utterly compelling account, the most recent Chechen war actually broke out on New Year's Eve in 1994 when Boris Yeltsin sent hundreds of tanks to the center of the city of Grozny in an effort to quell popular demands for independence from Russia. Six years later, Meier, braving great personal danger, traveled to the scene of one of the largest civilian massacres carried out by Russian troops, reporting on the carnage in which over 60 Chechen civilians including a pregnant woman and many elderly were brutally slaughtered in one of the war's most horrific "mop-up" operations. Days after a Chechen woman became the conflict's first female suicide bomber, Meier visited this war-torn province, encountering, among others, kidnappers, Wahhabi Islamists aligned with the Taliban, and a stream of Russian mothers arriving at the morgue to identify their fallen soldier sons. *Chechnya* is Meier's stunning report from a region where the death toll has already exceeded 100,000 people, and a book that attempts to comprehend what compels men to shoot children in the back.

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