



Children of the Dust

J. C. Bourg

Amazon KDP

(743pp)

978-0-9910076-3-9

The historical novel Children of the Dust follows two veterans as they become vigilantes.

In J. C. Bourg's historical novel *Children of the Dust*, Vietnam veterans and other war-traumatized heroes join forces.

After an icy reception in the US, Vietnam soldiers Reno and Longboard return to Thailand to make their livings. They team up to become an arms dealer and an assassin, supplying munitions to a liberation group in Sri Lanka. There, they meet Chola, a Tamil Tiger and translator.

At a field hospital where Chola is treated, Reno falls for Sandy, a Dutch doctor. During an arms exchange that's interrupted by sea-faring sex traffickers, Reno and Longboard rescue two sisters who were rejected in Vietnam because of their half-white lineage. Longboard trains the older sister, Phoenix, as an assassin; Reno and Sandy raise Ly, the younger sister, who is religious.

Each chapter in this long story includes powerful discharges of action, including instances of violence. Nonetheless, this is a stealthy tale: action scenes begin with serene descriptions, out of which their attacks burst. These movements are sequential and easy to follow; they also include frequent dips into personal histories, so that the cast's traumas are always foregrounded as motivators for their risky endeavors.

The characters are developed with references to their distinct traits that come throughout the long book: about their physical appearances; through their italicized asides and in conversations. Still, they are consistent. Reno's swagger wins Sandy over and intimidates his adversaries, while Longboard is an enigma; his signature is evasiveness, and he calls himself a psychopath. Phoenix's sexiness catches people off-guard; they think she's an object of desire, but she refuses men's advances. Chola's scars reveal his sacrifices for his chosen life's path. But the cast hardens as the book progresses, becoming poster children for life lived to the maximum. Secondary figures, including bureaucrats and criminals, are a source of contrast; they seem to act without purpose and are roundly sloppy.

Like the world stage upon which it takes place, the prose is expansive in mapping graphic brutality, reflection, and love. Its variety of settings help to maintain interest, as does the fact that its developments often play upon hot topics, though the story still runs long.

Thick with action, the historical novel *Children of the Dust* follows two veterans as they become vigilantes; they use unorthodox methods in the pursuit of justice.

MARI CARLSON (November 5, 2021)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.