



# The Fearless Man: A Novel of Vietnam

*Donald Pfarrer*

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On its publication in 1982, James Carroll called Donald Pfarrer's *Neverlight* "the most intelligent and moving novel that I have read about Vietnam." Paul Fussell wrote that it was "one of the finest novels about war I've ever read, and that includes *A Farewell to Arms*." Now Pfarrer revisits the conflict and creates a modern classic—an epic novel of all the wars we wage to occupy ground, forge a future, and save our own souls.

The mission is Vietnam in microcosm: a quest to find and obliterate a secret enemy weapons cache. Leading this fateful journey is Captain MacHugh Clare, a draftee who has become the consummate soldier.

Unconcerned with death, he shifts immediately each morning from unconsciousness to action, "from sound sleep to a crashing heart." His reward at the end of the mission is the possibility of seeing his beloved wife. But for now, he cannot stop fighting long enough to see any other world but war.

Beside Mac is his opposite, Chaplain Paul Adrano, who knows only doubt and disillusion. He has come to Vietnam to kill his fear, to find his faith on the field of battle, and he will soon know the forbidden power of violence and the pull of sexual temptation.

Meanwhile, in America, Mac's wife, Sarah, fights her own battle—against a feeling of uselessness, a suspicion that she is "not fit for anything the world needs." Struggling with notions of a woman's proper role, Sarah begins to see possibilities beyond merely waiting at home for the man she loves.

They all complete their missions in ways they had never anticipated.

From a jungle battlefield to the Citadel of Hue to the homefront, Donald Pfarrer paints in prose both violent and lyrical his characters' attempts to believe and deny, commit and be released, search and destroy. Not since Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* has a writer so powerfully explored the inner lives of men and women in war. *The Fearless Man* is a major work of fiction—one as meaningful, wild, tortured, and unsettling as the Vietnam experience itself.

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