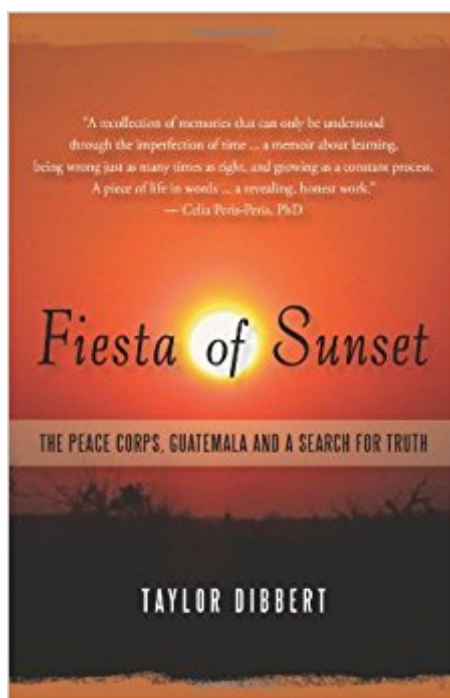


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Fiesta Of Sunset: The Peace Corps, Guatemala And A Search For Truth



Synopsis

"A recollection of memories that can only be understood through the imperfection of time ... a memoir about learning, being wrong just as many times as right, and growing as a constant process. A piece of life in words ... a revealing, honest work." - Celia Peris-Peris, PhD Men who voted for George W. Bush don't fit the mold of your typical Peace Corps volunteer. But Taylor Dibbert isn't your typical anything. Born and raised in Dallas, Dibbert lived far away from the third world countries he saw on the news. Yet something called to him, and so from 2006-2008, Dibbert lived in a small, indigenous village in Guatemala, after unpredictably joining the Peace Corps. *Fiesta of Sunset* tells not only of the adventures of a far off land; it also provides a closer look into the back alleys and sad streets of a country struggling with poverty, corruption, crime and more. Some of the mysterious and romantic stereotypes of the Peace Corps are set to rest in this engaging example of one young American's experience abroad and how, while there, he began to learn how mistakes often pave the path to understanding. Ultimately the Peace Corps is about empowerment, helping the world's poor help themselves. But there's something more that JFK left out of his groundbreaking Peace Corps speech. Personal growth lies at the heart of the volunteer experience. As the Peace Corps celebrates its historic 50th anniversary, this uniquely compelling book reminds us that the organization's mission is more relevant now than ever.

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Customer Reviews

Taylor Dibbert has kindly shared with us a thoughtful and highly entertaining account of his Peace Corps experience in Guatemala. Ranging from the hilarious to the disparaging to the deeply

personal and spanning the entirety of his service, the vignettes unfold in real time so that we are privy to all of the excitement, anxieties, frustrations, successes and honest reflections as they occur and that constitute Taylor's "Fiesta of Sunset." In full disclosure, I was a fellow volunteer of Dibbert and we remain friends to this day, but I recommend this book for anybody interested in the Peace Corps, Guatemala or the nuanced world of development work in general. What's more, the text bristles with Dibbert's personality, so while on one page you get inquiries into the injustices of poverty or the history of American foreign policy, on the next page you might get tales of literary love affairs or elegiac praise for the creator of instant noodles! Truly unique and a pleasure to read. Bravo!

Taylor Dibbert is a cultured, well spoken aficionado of many things in life - he is veraciously funny, while poised and at ease with who he is and what he believes in. His first book (from which I expect won't be the last) seems to provide a vast insight to not only what the Peace Corps experience can be, but more importantly a declaration of cultural appreciation & struggles that come with living abroad. Having never been involved or experienced with much volunteer work, reading this helped me garner the selflessness and sacrifice needed to dedicate your time and energy in the most noble way -- helping the impoverished achieve a better quality of life. It's his experience, but it seems to become yours as well. Through his journey you are with him -- in the various cities, on the bus, eating beans and rice, communicating with the locals -- His style of writing is to the point and witty, humorous, while serious about the realities of a lifestyle and a world most don't get to see. I felt like I was stepping through this day by day with him -- The imagery brought me directly to Guatemala, which is an exemplary ability of a good author to help the reader fully appreciate the story (fact or fiction). The book is great for those wanting to learn what the Peace Corps can be like for any individual. At the same time, it proves to be a personal reflection of the disembarkment from all comfort zones and safe havens we like to call home. What I really learned from Taylor's experience is that however hard it is to be living in a distant country, starting a selfless career path, or doing both at the same time... it essentially teaches such a great lesson about who you are, what you are capable of, and that there is a giant world out there waiting to teach you more --- it can be a disaster, but also a beautiful conglomerate of like minded human beings who want to make a difference and become stronger from it... and then pass it on and encourage others to do the same. I'd recommend this book to anyone who wants to learn about what the Peace Corps experience is like, or simply someone who is interested in exploring the idea of a multi-national, multi-cultural quest for knowledge, wisdom, and as Taylor says, worldly truth.

This is a very well written Peace Corps memoir which describes where the author is from, why he joined and what he did. It is a wonderful addition to Peace Corps literature and another testament to the power of unarmed foreign policy. Anyone interested in the Peace Corps or Guatemalan current events will enjoy this book. The author served as a community development volunteer between 2006 and 2008, during which time he helped to design and build many village potable water systems. If water is life, his service is symbolic of what the Peace Corps has always aspired to be. As another former volunteer and fellow Peace Corps writer, I recommend this book. However, do not steal it. That was another generation! Lawrence F. Lihosit, the reviewer, is the author of several books about or inspired by his own Peace Corps experience in Honduras (1975-1977).

What a great story! Very Compelling! Dibbert's piece accentuates the poverty of the rural folks in Guatemala and the hardwork that goes along with helping them. Poorness is all they know, and they all need and deserve some help. The men and women in the Peace Corps who help give these people water are performing such a great deed and act of kindness. I was amazed when I read this book. I hope he keeps writing because this author really excites me, and I certainly wish him the best of luck on his future endeavors. I can't wait for more. He's sarcastic and witty a lot of times and keeps me from putting the book down. Getting to know him on a personal level throughout his task is quite comical, being detailed with stories of booze and love. Furthermore, getting to know how passionate and committed one must be to take on such a task is overwhelming. The rewards must be tremendous. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in helping those who are less fortunate or, simply, just to anyone interested in human rights or in the development of foreign nations altogether.

Very honest writing...Taylor's personality really comes out through the pages. He's analytical and inquisitive....so reading this book helped me look back on my own peace corps experience and realize (or remember) how the successes, struggles, and everyday realities I encountered have greatly influenced my life. I laughed out loud a couple of times as was reminded of my own reactions to the idiosyncrasies in Guatemalan culture. For someone thinking about the Peace Corps, keep in mind that everyone will have a different experience, but this is an excellent account of what you're signing up for, with all the ups and downs and reasons why it is 'the toughest job you'll ever love'.

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