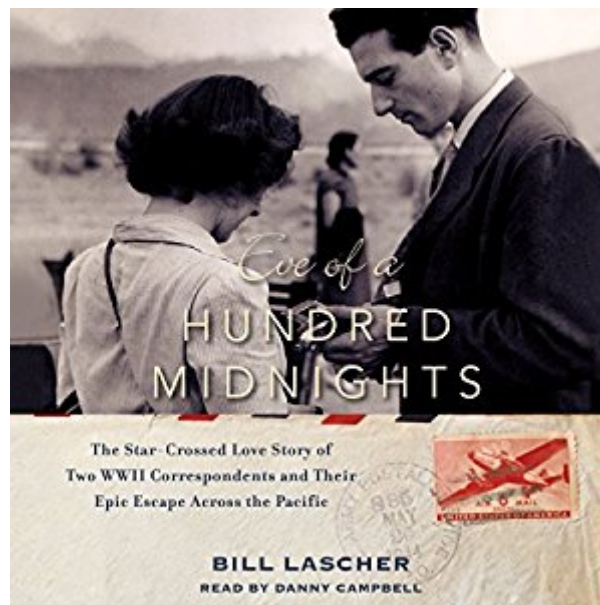




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# Eve Of A Hundred Midnights: The Star-Crossed Love Story Of Two WWII Correspondents And Their Epic Escape Across The Pacific



## Synopsis

The unforgettable true story of two married journalists on an island-hopping run for their lives across the Pacific after the fall of Manila during World War II - a saga of love, adventure, and danger. On New Year's Eve, 1941, just three weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese were bombing the Philippine capital of Manila, where journalists Mel and Annalee Jacoby had married just a month earlier. The couple had worked in China as members of a tight community of foreign correspondents with close ties to Chinese leaders; if captured by invading Japanese troops, they were certain to be executed. Racing to the docks just before midnight, they barely escaped on a freighter - the beginning of a tumultuous journey that would take them from one island outpost to another. While keeping ahead of the approaching Japanese, Mel and Annalee covered the harrowing war in the Pacific Theater - two of only a handful of valiant and dedicated journalists reporting from the region. Supported by deep historical research, extensive interviews, and the Jacobys' personal letters, Bill Lascher recreates the Jacobys' thrilling odyssey and their love affairs with the Far East and one another. Bringing to light their compelling personal stories and their professional life together, *Eve of a Hundred Midnights* is a tale of an unquenchable thirst for adventure, of daring reportage at great personal risk, and of an enduring romance that blossomed in the shadow of war.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 12 hours 13 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: HarperAudio

Audible.com Release Date: June 21, 2016

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B01EGCUI3Q

Best Sellers Rank: #184 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > History > Asia #656 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Asia #858 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Journalists

## Customer Reviews

I'm not a big history buff, and I don't actually have a lot of time to read, but I made time for this book

and this bit of history. It's a meticulously researched and layered look at the Asian theater in WWII, but beyond that, it echoes the need for journalists to witness history firsthand. I relished learning about the Chinese and Filipino efforts, slices of history that I'd never heard before, but I also loved experiencing it alongside these young, brave journalists through their eyes. Really well done.

This book is superb. A very well written account of an intrepid reporter, Melville Jacoby, and his equally impressive wife in the Pacific during the lead up to World War II. It operates on several levels. On the one hand, it is a very personal account of a man from a privileged background seemingly compelled to situate himself in danger zones and to report from a theater largely ignored by the American government and populace. It deals substantively with the issues prevailing in that quadrant of the world during a most explosive time. Lastly, it is a love story. Mr. Lascher had access to a treasure trove of notes, letters and photographs that make this account come alive in most vivid fashion. A page turner and highly recommended.

What an incredible weaving of the events from a young wanna be photographer-reporter, who became a real contributor of events in Asia before and during the outbreak of WWII in the Pacific! There is so much passion expressed for getting the story out. Then on top of this, there was the love shared so distinctly between Melville and Annalee in the midst of their individual commitment to reporting the truth to America, and those who had the power to make a difference. I'm not a war/history buff by any means, but for those who are, and want to gain a different perspective, this is a book to read! If you think this is going to be a romance story, well, there is a bit of that, but most of all it's the story of young reporters who were caught up in the changing of Asia, and knew it was a journey they couldn't turn away from. This is not a quick read, so be prepared to persevere. There could have been a bit more editing, as sometimes it slowed with details, and was occasionally repetitive, but it captured this young man's passion. It incorporated the commitment this couple shared together. Well done.

The history of World War II in the Pacific contains a tumultuous amount of recollections that have yet to be shared with the public, especially the many that have stories of their own that relate to the time and place. Writer Bill Lascher reveals in the most unexpected moments, one day after a family gathering his grandmother Peggy Cole introduced him to an old Corona typewriter that he discovered belonged to his cousin foreign and war correspondent in Asia Melville Jacoby to whom he was not aware of was of any familial relation before the discovery and bought the typewriter in

Cebu City, Philippines. As a journalist, the story does not end there but developed into a narrative that may be added to the personal history of survivors and those who lived through the most pivotal period in WWII history. *Eve of a Hundred Midnights: Star-Crossed Love Story of Two WWII Correspondents and Their Epic Escape Across the Pacific* is a combination of a biography and historical narrative of the life and experience of Melville Jacoby and fellow journalist and wife Annalee Jacoby and the events that occurred before the war, peace time in South China in the 1930s before 1937 and in the Philippines before and after 1941 with the occupation by Japan. The book contains interesting aspects of Melville Jacoby's experience as a young journalist who so-called had his heart and soul in Asia once he set foot in Chungking, present-day Chongqing as a student taking a global trip abroad and after attending Stanford University returned and remained reporting of developing events that happened in China up to July 1937 that sparked the beginning of the Second-Sino Japanese War. Aware of the changing political climate in Asia, Jacoby asserted, "It is Japan's duty and destiny to rule all Asia and get the British, French, and American out of that part of the world, as a part of its Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" | he predicted that exact strategy that Japan would ultimately employ when it turned its military ambitions toward the Western colonial possessions straddling the Indian and Pacific Oceans (126). Hence Jacoby reported the war that unraveled before his eyes that culminated to events in China and across the seas to the Philippines; he would be one of the first reporters to send and write of the news of the downfall in Manila and Bataan. He along with Annalee would be involved in the so-called thick of it all when Japanese armies moved into "the rock Corregidor, an island located off the coast of Manila in which General Douglas MacArthur and his family and military and Philippine officials escaped for refuge after the fall of Manila. The Jacobys and fellow correspondents and friends would also seek refuge and later escape to Australia with the assistance of the General MacArthur. Their experiences is a invaluable piece of history, and despite the circumstances, the Jacobys made the best of their circumstance. Readers may not be surprised if their story bears resemblance to something out of Hollywood movie with plenty of happy moments and a tragic ending. Possibly, the spirit and aura of Annalee, who had been a Hollywood scriptwriter before becoming a correspondent lingered in the midst. *Eve of Hundred Midnights* is a thought-provoking story and most importantly, one that many may also share the parallels, families gripped during wartime similar with the lives of Melville and Annalee Jacoby during the most historic events and period in the history of WWII in Asia and the Pacific.

An absolutely great story of WWII and two journalists. After I read the story, there were news items concerning the book. The author did a great job of researching through the papers given to him as a relative. I appreciate his writing this to reveal the history of 1930s and 1940s. Made history more livable. I had heard only about Bataan and Corregidor in news items. Didn't know people lived there who were connected to journalists and military.

A very good read. Learned a lot about the war against the Japanese. Also, what it means to be a war correspondent.

This book, the story of young journalist Melville (Mel) Jacoby, touches so many things, Chinese history, WW II history, journalism, adventure, second hand memoir, and it reads like a novel. Interestingly, one of Mel's cousins said, "He [Mel] was too good to be true. If a fiction writer invented him, the reader would say, 'That's a lousy book.'" The character is not believable. While many critics seem to latch on to the final part of story, the love and marriage of Mel and Annalee Whitmore and their escape from the Philippines as the Japanese were closing in on their position, there's much, much of interest that goes on before. I can't help but think there's a movie or two in here. Thanks to Bill Lascher, a wonderful writer, for bringing the story to light. Only at the end of the book did I learn that Bill was a relative.

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