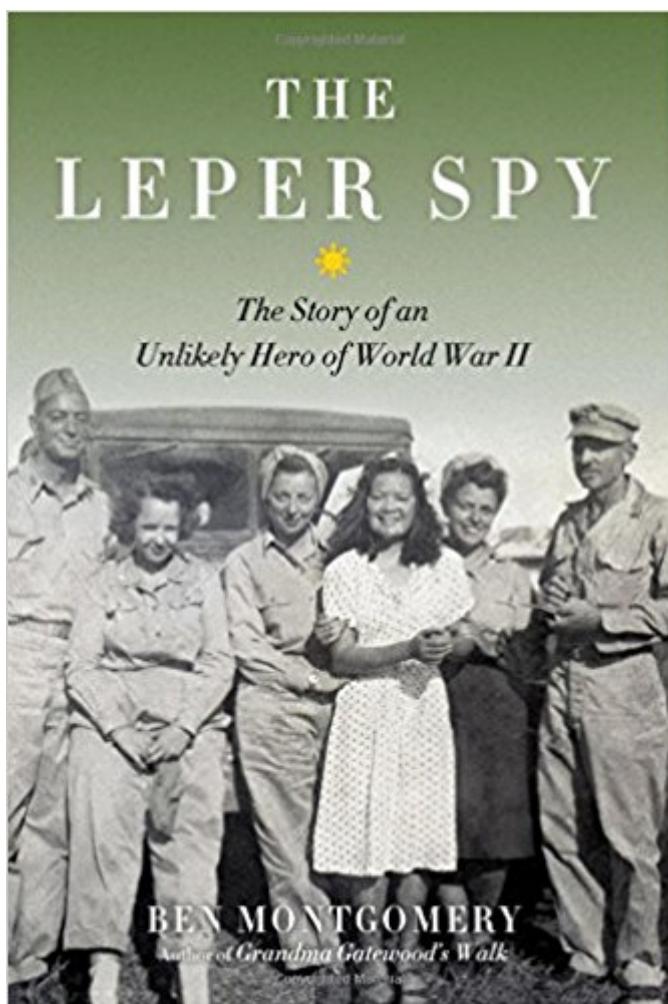


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The Leper Spy: The Story Of An Unlikely Hero Of World War II



Synopsis

The GIs called her Joey. Hundreds owed their lives to the tiny Filipina woman who was one of the top spies for the Allies during World War II, stashing explosives, tracking Japanese troop movements, and smuggling maps of fortifications across enemy lines for Gen. Douglas MacArthur. As the Battle of Manila raged, young Josefina Guerrero walked through gunfire to bandage wounds and close the eyes of the dead. Her valor earned her the Medal of Freedom, but the thing that made her an effective spy was a disease that was destroying her. Guerrero suffered from leprosy, which so horrified the Japanese they refused to search her. After the war, army chaplains found her in a nightmarish leper colony and campaigned for the US government to do something it had never done: welcome a foreigner with leprosy. The fight brought her celebrity, which she used on radio and television to speak for other sufferers. However, the notoriety haunted her after the disease was arrested, and she had to find a way to disappear.

Book Information

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: Chicago Review Press (October 1, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1613734301

ISBN-13: 978-1613734308

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 23 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #461,079 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #70 in Books > History > Asia > Philippines #426 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Specific Groups > Special Needs #486 in Books > History > Asia > Southeast Asia

Customer Reviews

When Joey GuerreroLeaumax, a volunteer usher at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, dies, her brief obituary mentions only her birth in Manila and late-life accomplishments. What it omits is her diagnosis of leprosy, her WWII heroism in the Philippines, her championing of the rights of lepers, and her receiving the Medal of Freedom. The story of this unlikely spy begins when, as a young wife and mother, Josefina Guerrero is diagnosed with leprosy. Forced to give up her husband and young daughter and live in isolation, Guerrero decides to work for the resistance when Manila is attacked by Japan. Her leprosy, ironically, protects her from scrutiny by the enemy, and she is able to

observe troops, draw maps, and smuggle information to the Americans and food to prisoners of war. After the surrender, Guerrero is exiled to a leper colony where she protests the unsanitary conditions and scant medicine and later travels to the U.S. for treatment. *Montgomery (Grandma Gatewood's Walk, 2014)* offers a fascinating tribute to the slight Filipina who courageously saved thousands and chose anonymity. -- Candace Smith, Booklist Yet odds are you have never heard of Joey Guerrero, as she was known (along with several other names). Until a few years ago, neither had Ben Montgomery, but his new book, *The Leper Spy: The Story of an Unlikely Hero of World War II*, brings her extraordinary life back into the light. - Colette Bancroft, *Tampa Bay Times* "Some of the most poignant moments of war lie not in the savage atrocities but the quiet moments of valor risked by the smallest unsung heroes. With the eye of a historian and the soul of a storyteller, Ben Montgomery paints a tender portrait of an unlikely paladin, who turned the curse of her cruel disease into a shield and a sword. We can all learn from this." Kim Cross, New York Times best-selling author of *What Stands in a Storm* "Written with grace and elegance, *The Leper Spy* tells a surprising and affecting espionage story." Howard Blum, the author of *The Last Goodnight: A World War II Story of Espionage, Adventure, and Betrayal* "I love this story. I love it when a gap in history is filled in with such a riveting tale, and Montgomery does it here with deep reporting, and fluid, beautiful writing." Alex Tizon, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author of *Big Little Man* "Once again, Ben Montgomery has unearthed from history a gem of a forgotten story about war and love, patriotism and sacrifice and invites us all to gather round for his thrilling tale of an amazing woman." Thomas Mullen, author of *The Last Town on Earth* "Montgomery offers a fascinating tribute to the slight Filipina who courageously saved thousands and chose anonymity." Booklist "The woman's remarkable story is related with you-are-there lucidity by Ben Montgomery." Washington Times

Ben Montgomery is the author of the New York Times bestseller *Grandma Gatewood's Walk*, which won the 2014 National Outdoor Book Award for History/Biography. An award-winning staff writer at the *Tampa Bay Times*, Montgomery was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize in 2010.

Once again Ben Montgomery brings to life another person who did something remarkable in the past as he did with 'Grandma Gatewood's Walk' In his second novel 'The Leper Spy' we meet

Josefina Guerrero, a diminutive young woman with a passion for God and music. Born in Manila, in the Philippine Islands, just as World War Two began, she contracted the most feared ailment: Hansen's Disease (leprosy). Leaving her husband and new born child she would travel a path as 'Joey' that took her through the horrors of war, became a spy and passed by the Japanese soldiers who recoiled in fear. She noted gun emplacements, land mines, walking through battlefields as men fell around her. She took her maps to the Americans. Her note exposed a trap, set by the Japanese. This act and others saved thousands of lives. She campaigned for years for those inflicted and driven from society by Hansen's disease and eased their suffering with the help of those she contacted through countless letters. Yet this book is not about 'Joey' alone, remarkable as she was, but the entire campaign of the war in the Philippines. Captured in all its sorrow, bravery and horror are many battles, prison camps and human carnage that took place and Ben Montgomery gives an unflinching account in great detail. It is about the courage of many and one tiny woman who influenced others across the world. If you love history you will find it, and entwined within you will come to love Joey, a humble servant of God.

I can't say enough great things about this book. Ben Montgomery is one of the most talented journalists working today, and the LEPER SPY is some of his best work: in it, Montgomery deftly combines meticulous reporting with page-turning narrative. He's a skilled storyteller with a strong voice and an unparalleled ability to bring characters (and history) to life. Even more, the LEPER SPY asks important questions about contagious disease, the price of war, and the value of faith. I read this book in a single weekend and was very sorry to see it end.

Wonderful story and glad to see a book about a hero who would not otherwise be acknowledged. She not only assisted the allies at the risk of her life and suffered with leprosy (which worked to her advantage to cross enemy lines) but after the war worked to improve conditions in the leper colon of her native country. Later she was healed in the USA and continued her efforts with leprosy throughout the rest of her life.

What an extraordinary memoir, told in an engaging manner, about a truly remarkable woman who had a significant and positive impact on the American forces in the Philippines during World War II.

Love this author. He makes the story come alive for me with his craft! I cannot wait to add more of his books to my library! Get busy writing Ben!

Expected a story limited to spying. Instead got a very well written story of her life. An excellent read and a keeper for my World War II library.

Very intriguing story. Well written with close attention to historical facts. Another success for the author.

A captivating tale well told about one of the most intriguing characters I've ever read about.

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