Emma Larkin
Finding George Orwell in Burma

A brave and revelatory reconnaissance of modern Burma, one of the world’s grimmest and most shuttered police states, using as its compass the life and work of George Orwell, the man many in Burma call simply “the prophet.”

Finding George Orwell in Burma is the story of the year Emma Larkin spent traveling across this shuttered police state using the life and work of Orwell as her guide. Traveling from Mandalay and Rangoon to poor delta backwaters and up to the old hill-station towns in the mountains of Burma’s far north, Larkin visits the places Orwell worked and lived and the places his books live still. She brings to vivid life a country and a people cut off from the rest of the world, and from one another, by the ruling military junta and its network of spies and informers. Orwell’s sporadic leads Larkin to strange, ghostly traces of the British colonial presence and to people who have found ways to bolster their minds against the state’s all-pervasive propaganda. Orwell’s moral clarity, hatred of injustice, and observant gaze serve as the author’s compass in a less tangible sense too: they are qualities that also suffuse this, her own powerful reckoning with one of the world’s least free countries.

PRAISE FOR FINDING GEORGE ORWELL IN BURMA

“[Larkin] comes across...as an inquisitive and trustworthy guide to the underlying reality of a country whose leaders would rather have outsiders focus only on their carefully constructed veneer.” —Publishers Weekly ★ Review

“[Larkin’s] quest for the past illuminates the grim present in this true-life Orwellian world.” —Booklist

“Mournful, meditative, appealingly idiosyncratic...an exercise in literary detection but also a political travelogue.” —The New York Times

“Combining literary criticism with solid field reporting, [Larkin] captures the country at its best and, more often, its worst.” —San Francisco Chronicle

“A truer picture of authoritarianism than anyone has written since, perhaps, Orwell himself.” —Mother Jones

“[A] sobering, journalistic memoir...A disquieting profile of a country and its people.” —Newsweek

Emma Larkin is the pseudonym for an American journalist who was born and raised in Asia, studied the Burmese language at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, and covers Asia widely in her journalism from her base in Bangkok. She has been visiting Burma for close to fifteen years. Emma is the author of Everything Is Broken.

Emily Durante has narrated Casting Off by Nicole R. Dickson, Smooth Talking Stranger by Lisa Kleypus, and the Midnight Twins trilogy by Jacqueline Mitchard, and directed the Earphones Award–winning performance of Heaven’s Keep narrated by Buck Schirmer.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION
Toll Free 877.782.6867 Tantor Audio
Fax 888.782.7821 2 Business Park Road
www.tantor.com Old Saybrook, CT 06475

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