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First They Killed My Father: A Daughter Of Cambodia Remembers (P.S.)



Synopsis

From a childhood survivor of the Cambodian genocide under the regime of Pol Pot, this is a riveting narrative of war crimes and desperate actions, the unnerving strength of a small girl and her family, and their triumph of spirit. One of seven children of a high-ranking government official, Loung Ung lived a privileged life in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh until the age of five. Then, in April 1975, Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge army stormed into the city, forcing Ung's family to flee and, eventually, to disperse. Loung was trained as a child soldier in a work camp for orphans, her siblings were sent to labor camps, and those who survived the horrors would not be reunited until the Khmer Rouge was destroyed. Harrowing yet hopeful, Loung's powerful story is an unforgettable account of a family shaken and shattered, yet miraculously sustained by courage and love in the face of unspeakable brutality.

Book Information

Series: P.S.

Paperback: 238 pages

Publisher: Harper Perennial (April 4, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060856262

ISBN-13: 978-0060856267

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.6 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 499 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #5,430 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #6 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Asia #7 in Books > History > Asia > Southeast Asia #27 in Books > History > World > Women in History

Customer Reviews

Written in the present tense, *First They Killed My Father* will put you right in the midst of the action--action you'll wish had never happened. It's a tough read, but definitely a worthwhile one, and the author's personality and strength shine through on every page. Covering the years from 1975 to 1979, the story moves from the deaths of multiple family members to the forced separation of the survivors, leading ultimately to the reuniting of much of the family, followed by marriages and immigrations. The brutality seems unending--beatings, starvation, attempted rape, mental cruelty--and yet the narrator (a young girl) never stops fighting for escape and survival. Sad and

courageous, her life and the lives of her young siblings provide quite a powerful example of how war can so deeply affect children--especially a war in which they are trained to be an integral part of the armed forces. For anyone interested in Cambodia's recent history, this book shares a valuable personal view of events. --Jill Lightner --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In 1975, Ung, now the national spokesperson for the Campaign for a Landmine-Free World, was the five-year-old child of a large, affluent family living in Phnom Penh, the cosmopolitan Cambodian capital. As extraordinarily well-educated Chinese-Cambodians, with the father a government agent, her family was in great danger when the Khmer Rouge took over the country and throughout Pol Pot's barbaric regime. Her parents' strength and her father's knowledge of Khmer Rouge ideology enabled the family to survive together for a while, posing as illiterate peasants, moving first between villages, and then from one work camp to another. The father was honest with the children, explaining dangers and how to avoid them, and this, along with clear sight, intelligence and the pragmatism of a young child, helped Ung to survive the war. Her restrained, unsentimental account of the four years she spent surviving the regime before escaping with a brother to Thailand and eventually the United States is astonishing--not just because of the tragedies, but also because of the immense love for her family that Ung holds onto, no matter how she is brutalized. She describes the physical devastation she is surrounded by but always returns to her memories and hopes for those she loves. Her joyful memories of life in Phnom Penh are close even as she is being trained as a child soldier, and as, one after another, both parents and two of her six siblings are murdered in the camps. Skillfully constructed, this account also stands as an eyewitness history of the period, because as a child Ung was so aware of her surroundings, and because as an adult writer she adds details to clarify the family's moves and separations. Twenty-five years after the rise of the Khmer Rouge, this powerful account is a triumph. 8 pages b&w photos. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Important. Painful. Shameful. Heroic. Inspirational. Loung Ung teaches all her readers about the harsh realities of war and, how it affects a family. Her family was torn apart. Family members lived, died, cried, suffered and persevered in her life. The story starts as, Pol Pot is fulfilling his plan to 'rebuild,' Cambodia. Loung Ung's family is moved from the city, along with all the other residents to rural farming communities across their nation. The people are divided based on their histories: Educated/wealthy/city dwellers vs. Farmers, laborers. The educated are tortured, killed or maimed.

They are all forced to work on the farms. The families are separated. This story is so important. Many people are unaware of the atrocities that the people of Cambodia experienced during the Pol Pot regime and even earlier, as the United States oftentimes dropped bombs meant for Vietnam above their country. I encourage everyone to read this descriptive, intense, emotional book.

Very real, sad and a lot to swallow. I would recommend it if you are into history and the truth about what is going on in our world that we may not realize. I have been to Cambodia and met people who have suffered from the harsh rule and war. It is very sad. The country is still rebuilding and most have moved on over the years. The children, though many are still very poor, don't understand the suffering of their parents or grandparents. They are told of the stories though and can still see the affects of the war. Over the years I have learned of many things that are happening or have happened in other parts of the world that are so foreign to our way of life that it is hard to imagine. We are a very privileged country and despite our problems we are still better off than any other that I have been to. This book is just one of those that brings a part of life in another country to our knowledge.

There are all kinds of things we need to know;, what's happening in our own Country. What's the norm, or what was the worst of the norm in other places. This is a well written book describing life from the point of view of a young girl who grew up in Cambodia, during the time of the Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot. It is a compelling read! As this young woman grows up we experience the privation, the brutality she and her family experience.. She tells her story with no holds barred, but matter-of-fact. There is no maudlin here, just the truth. I'm not going to spoil the end for you, but know that if you want to know how it was in Cambodia, this is the way to do it.

Dear Ms. Ung, Thank you for writing this book. I am glad that you survived and was able to ease some of your pain by sharing your experiences. Your book illustrated the similarities between the Pol Pot regime of intolerance, hate and a willingness to kill innocent people with the Nazi atrocities against the Jewish people. The memoirs I have read from survivors of the Holocaust are achingly familiar to the hell that the Cambodian people endured. Today, we have the Muslim terrorists using intolerance, hate and a willingness to kill innocent people in all parts of the world. Thank you again for being a force for good with your books and your efforts to help victims of landmines.

Truly educational, heartbreaking and thought provoking. I did not know much about the Khmer

Rouge or Pol Pot but this book has raised my awareness of another human tragedy and man's inhumanity to man. Written from perspective as a child experiencing the loss of her home, life as she knew it and family member's deaths versus as an adult, she does an amazing job exploring the world and thoughts as a child perceives them. She was only five when her world turned upside down. Truly remarkable journey. I read the entire book in one day because I couldn't put it down.

It was hard to continue reading this at times, as I kept thinking "there but for the grace of God, go I." A very gripping story from the perspective of a child, a very strong child to be sure, which details the experiences and tragedies of her family as they are taken by the Khmer Rouge. Highly recommended, and I am getting this book for friends too. The reason that it didn't get 5 stars is only because of the problems which may be related to transfer to Kindle form--some misspellings, missed words, and things of that sort. Minor but annoying.

This book blew me away. One imagines the hardships faced under totalitarian regimes but to read a first-hand account written from the perspective and accurate age of the person living it (she writes from the child's perspective as was her direct experience at the time), adds a dimension of realism taking it to a whole new level. I felt I was part of the author's family as I read. The emotion is real and you will laugh, cry, and feel anger & despair. I am pretty close to the same age as the author and this book really opened my eyes to the idea that these things CAN happen to anyone at anytime including present day. I recommend this book as mandatory reading not only for understanding the human condition but for a reminder of why liberty must be protected at all costs BEFORE things go beyond the point of no return.

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