

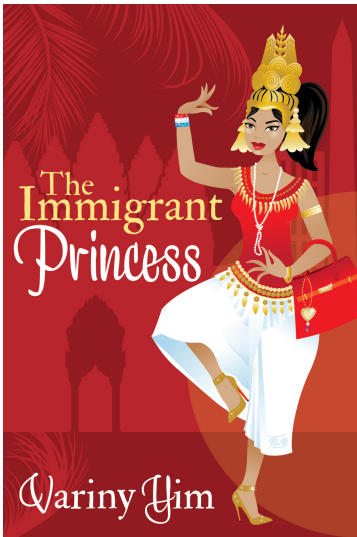


Windy City Publishers

For Immediate Release

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How to Remember a Genocide When Everyone Wants to Forget *40 Years After Pol Pot, Novel Focuses on the Cambodian-American Immigrant Experience*



San Francisco, CA — When you live in the daily shadow of a genocide that killed two million of your people, it's hard to complain about a bad hair day. That is the premise of Variny Yim's debut novel, *The Immigrant Princess*, which focuses on the lives of three generations of women from the Cambodian royal family who fled the country right before Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge invaded Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975 and led the country into its darkest period also known as the Killing Fields.

Yim's novel tackles the inner conflict experienced by many older Cambodians who resist speaking of their country's painful past - even to the detriment and confusion of the younger generation. When Sophea Lim loses a promotion and her American boyfriend, her emotional distress does not elicit much sympathy from her mother and grandmother.

They easily dismiss her first-world inconveniences when comparing them to the real world suffering Cambodians endured under the Pol Pot regime. However, when Sophea pushes to learn more specifics about the death of her own father during the war, her grandmother says, "We need to forget what happened so we can move forward." It is a confusing message for Sophea who is trying to learn more about her Cambodian roots but is chided for asking too many questions.

"Writing this book forced me to look at my own family history and ask questions that upset several of my family members," said Yim, whose own father was accused of being a CIA operative and killed by the Khmer Rouge at Tuol Sleng (Pol Pot's secret prison where thousands of Cambodians were starved, tortured, and killed). "As a Cambodian who survived and didn't directly experience the Killing Fields, I often felt unworthy, that I hadn't personally suffered enough compared with other Cambodians who had."

In 2006, Yim returned to Cambodia for the first time since arriving to the U.S., and felt compelled to create something positive out of the tragedy. "All I had was my story as an immigrant and as a refugee. I wanted to write about the strength and resilience of Cambodians who came to the states and succeeded in building a new life. The Killing Fields is a black mark on our country's history, but it did not permanently break us as a people."

Yim collaborated on a nonfiction book with Jessica Blatt (Press) in 2008 entitled, *The Teen Girl's Gotta-Have-It Guide to Money* (Random House). *The Immigrant Princess* is her first novel. www.varinyyim.com

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