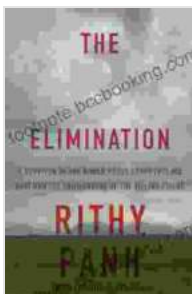


# Survivor of the Khmer Rouge Confronts His Past and the Commandant of the Killing Fields



In 1975, the Khmer Rouge, a communist regime, seized power in Cambodia and began a reign of terror that lasted for four years. During this time, an estimated 1.7 million Cambodians were killed, including Loung Ung's entire family.



**The Elimination: A survivor of the Khmer Rouge confronts his past and the commandant of the killing fields** by Rithy Panh

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 3113 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 289 pages



Loung Ung was five years old when the Khmer Rouge came to power. She and her family were forced to leave their home in Phnom Penh and march to the countryside, where they were subjected to forced labor and starvation. Loung's parents and three siblings were eventually killed, and she was left to fend for herself.

After the Khmer Rouge were overthrown in 1979, Loung Ung fled to the United States, where she rebuilt her life. But she never forgot the horrors she had witnessed, and she vowed to one day confront the man who had been responsible for her family's death: Pol Pot, the leader of the Khmer Rouge.

In 2013, Loung Ung's dream came true. She was invited to confront Pol Pot's deputy, Nuon Chea, at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), the international tribunal set up to prosecute the Khmer Rouge leaders.

## **The Confrontation**

Loung Ung was nervous as she entered the courtroom. She had never seen Nuon Chea before, but she knew that he was responsible for the deaths of her family and millions of other Cambodians.

Nuon Chea, who was in his 80s, sat hunched over in his wheelchair. He looked frail and tired, but his eyes were still sharp and intelligent.

Loung Ung took a deep breath and began to speak. She told Nuon Chea about her family and how they had been killed by the Khmer Rouge. She told him about the starvation, the torture, and the executions that she had witnessed.

Nuon Chea listened impassively. He did not say a word.

When Loung Ung was finished, she looked at Nuon Chea and said, "I forgive you."

Nuon Chea's eyes widened in surprise. He had not expected Loung Ung to forgive him.

"Why do you forgive me?" he asked.

"Because I don't want to hate you," Loung Ung said. "I don't want to be like you. I want to be free."

Nuon Chea nodded slowly. "I understand," he said.

The confrontation between Loung Ung and Nuon Chea was a historic moment. It was the first time that a survivor of the Khmer Rouge had confronted one of the regime's leaders in a court of law.

The confrontation was also a powerful act of forgiveness. Loung Ung's forgiveness did not excuse Nuon Chea's crimes, but it did help her to move on with her life.

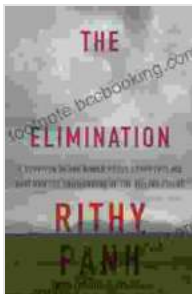
## The Aftermath

The confrontation between Loung Ung and Nuon Chea had a profound impact on both of them. Loung Ung was able to confront her past and find closure. Nuon Chea was forced to confront the consequences of his actions.

Nuon Chea was eventually convicted of crimes against humanity and sentenced to life in prison. He died in prison in 2019.

Loung Ung continues to speak out about the Khmer Rouge and its victims. She is the founder of the Loung Ung Foundation, which provides support to survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime.

Loung Ung's story is a powerful reminder of the horrors of war and the power of forgiveness. It is a story that should never be forgotten.



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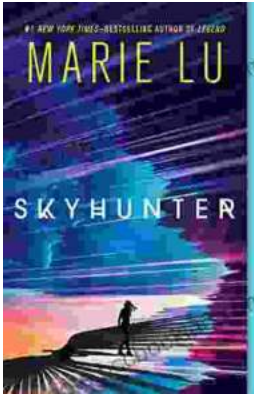
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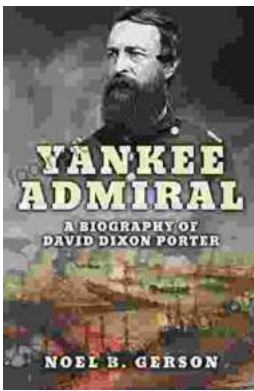
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