



Never Fall Down: A Novel

By Patricia McCormick

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This National Book Award nominee from two-time finalist Patricia McCormick is the unforgettable story of Arn Chorn-Pond, who defied the odds to survive the Cambodian genocide of 1975-1979 and the labor camps of the Khmer Rouge.

Based on the true story of Cambodian advocate Arn Chorn-Pond, and authentically told from his point of view as a young boy, this is an achingly raw and powerful historical novel about a child of war who becomes a man of peace. It includes an author's note and acknowledgments from Arn Chorn-Pond himself.

When soldiers arrive in his hometown, Arn is just a normal little boy. But after the soldiers march the entire population into the countryside, his life is changed forever.

Arn is separated from his family and assigned to a labor camp: working in the rice paddies under a blazing sun, he sees the other children dying before his eyes. One day, the soldiers ask if any of the kids can play an instrument. Arn's never played a note in his life, but he volunteers.

This decision will save his life, but it will pull him into the very center of what we know today as the Killing Fields. And just as the country is about to be liberated, Arn is handed a gun and forced to become a soldier.

Supports the Common Core State Standards.

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Never Fall Down: A Novel By Patricia McCormick Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

“While never shying from the ugliness and brutality of this genocide, McCormick crafts a powerful tribute to the human spirit.” (Publishers Weekly (starred review))

“Powerfully, hauntingly unforgettable.” (Booklist (starred review))

“This compelling chronicle deserves to be widely read, discussed, and reflected upon by a generation of young people who may be largely unaware of this dark chapter in world history.” (Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books (starred review))

“A gripping account of the inner turmoil of a child soldier.” (New York Times Book Review)

“McCormick’s novel is one that needs to be read.” (The Horn Book)

“One of the most inspiring and powerful books I’ve ever read. Never Fall Down can teach us all about finding the courage to speak our truth and change the world.” (Archbishop Desmond Tutu)

“Following the pattern of excellence McCormick began with her novel SOLD, she has created another amazing story through skilled and patient research.” (Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA) (Starred Review))

“Arn Chorn Pond is a fast-talking dynamo with endless energy and zest for life. In Never Fall Down, Patricia McCormick captures brilliantly the man, his heart, and his passion to make Cambodia and our world a better place for all. Arn’s against-all-odds survival story and McCormick’s crisp prose gripped me from the first page to the very end.” (Loung Ung, bestelling author of First They Killed My Father, and Lucky Child)

Praise for PURPLE HEART: “In this suspenseful psychological thriller...McCormick raises moral questions without judgment and will have readers examining not only this conflict but the nature of heroism and war.” (Publishers Weekly (starred review))

Praise for PURPLE HEART: “McCormick builds the plot subtly and carefully with rich, spare prose.” (Kirkus Reviews)

Praise for PURPLE HEART: “Gripping details of existence in a war zone bring this to life.” (ALA Booklist)

From the Back Cover

When soldiers arrive in his hometown in Cambodia, Arn is just a kid, dancing to rock 'n' roll, hustling for spare change, and selling ice cream with his brother. But after the soldiers march the entire population into the countryside, his life is changed forever. Arn is separated from his family and assigned to a labor camp: working in the rice paddies under a blazing sun, he sees the other children, weak from hunger, malaria, or sheer exhaustion, dying before his eyes. He sees prisoners marched to a nearby mango grove, never to return. And he learns to be invisible to the sadistic Khmer Rouge who can give or take away life on a whim.

One day, the soldiers ask if any of the kids can play an instrument. Arn's never played a note in his life, but he volunteers. In order to survive, he must quickly master the strange revolutionary songs the soldiers

demand—and steal food to keep the other kids alive. This decision will save his life—but it will pull him into the very center of what we know today as the Killing Fields. And just as the country is about to be liberated from the Khmer Rouge, Arn is handed a gun and forced to become a soldier. He lives by the simple credo: "Over and over I tell myself one thing: Never fall down."

About the Author

Patricia McCormick is a former journalist and a two-time National Book Award finalist whose books include *Cut*, *Sold*, *Never Fall Down*, *The Plot to Kill Hitler*, and the young readers edition of *I Am Malala*. Patricia lives in New York. You can visit her online at www.pattymccormick.com.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Anthony Thies:

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