

**From The Killing Fields  
Through Fields of Grace**



*“Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.”*

— Isaiah 60:1

*from*  
**THE KILLING FIELDS**  
*through fields of*  
**GRACE**

*An incredible true story of God’s saving power,  
unending mercy, and awesome GRACE.*

Lakhina L. King



**LAURUS BOOKS**

[www.TheLaurusCompany.com](http://www.TheLaurusCompany.com)

Unless otherwise notated, all Scripture quotations are taken from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked (TNIV) are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, TODAY'S NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 2001, 2005 by Biblica®. Used by permission of Biblica®. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked (NKJV) are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

## ***From The Killing Fields*** **Through Fields of Grace**

by Lakhina L. King

Copyright © 2007-2012 by Lakhina L. King

All rights reserved. This book is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. This book may not be copied or reprinted for commercial gain or profit. The use of short quotations or occasional page copying for personal or group study is permitted and encouraged. Permission will be granted on request.

Paperback Book: ISBN: 978-0-9847683-0-1

E-Book: ISBN: 978-0-9847683-1-8

Edited and designed by Nancy E. Williams

Published by LAURUS BOOKS

Printed in the United States of America

Lakhina King is available for speaking engagements.  
For booking information or to schedule a speaking engagement,  
please contact: [author@laurusbooks.com](mailto:author@laurusbooks.com)



**LAURUS BOOKS**

P. O. Box 894

Locust Grove, GA 30248 USA

[www.TheLaurusCompany.com](http://www.TheLaurusCompany.com)

This book may be purchased in both paperback and eBook from [TheLaurusCompany.com](http://TheLaurusCompany.com), [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), [BarnesandNoble.com](http://BarnesandNoble.com), and other retailers around the world.

***“You are my King and my God!”***

Psalm 44:4

## **A Tribute to My King**

I was shattered, submerged in sorrows, my Lord.  
    You surged my heart with joy.  
Covered in shame, clothed with disgrace, my God.  
    You cleansed me from filthy stains.  
Hopelessly wretched and hunted by death, my Savior.  
    You snatched me from the grave.  
Dead in my transgressions, my Redeemer.  
    You gave me breath of life.  
Because of Your intoxicating love for me, my Father.  
    I now love.  
Who else do I have in heaven or on earth,  
    Oh, Magnificent Master, but You,  
    The Author of my every breath.

Lakhina L. King

***“... if only I may finish the race and complete the task  
the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying  
to the gospel of God’s grace.”***

Acts 20:24

# CONTENTS



Dedication .....	7
Introduction .....	11
History: The Killing Fields .....	13
Chapter 1: The Great Fall .....	19
Chapter 2: Through the Killing Fields .....	29
Chapter 3: Through Valleys of Death .....	39
Chapter 4: Launching for Liberty .....	49
Chapter 5: Jesus in the Refugee Camp .....	59
Chapter 6: Farewell, My Hero and Homeland .....	67
Chapter 7: The Land of the Living .....	77
Chapter 8: The Ultimate Betrayal .....	89
Chapter 9: Where Do I Belong? .....	99
Chapter 10: Angels Unaware .....	109
Chapter 11: A Deal with the Devil .....	117
Chapter 12: Set Apart .....	127
Chapter 13: Instrument of Wickedness .....	135
Chapter 14: Death into Dancing .....	147
Chapter 15: Shattered Fairy Tales .....	157
Chapter 16: Loved At Last .....	173
Chapter 17: Amazed by Grace .....	185

## INTRODUCTION



*A*s a child, I often asked these haunting questions: Who am I? Why was I born? Where do I belong? Isn't there more to life than pain, misery, and suffering? Will I ever find the true love for which my heart is yearning? Could someone possibly love me unconditionally? Is there really a God?

At some point in your life, perhaps you have pondered some of these same questions. The question I present to you is this: have you found your answers? My prayer is that my story will help direct you to the God Who holds the answers to our deepest longings. Actually, He does more than hold these answers—He *is* the answer.

Our Creator gave us inquisitive minds with deep, unanswered questions to cause us to seek Him. The Creator of the universe longs for us to know Him intimately.

***“You will seek me and find me when you  
seek me with all your heart.”***

Jeremiah 29:13

I dedicate this book to the underdogs, the outcasts, the abandoned, the addicts, and the orphan-hearts of the world. If you are one of the blessed ones who does not fit into any of these categories, you may know someone who is struggling to find their identity, purpose, and value in this world. It is my utmost desire that my personal triumphs over the tragedies written about within these pages will offer encouragement to those who

are wounded from the traumas of life. I pray that God's undeniable goodness displayed throughout each chapter will ignite hope in the heart of one who may feel hopeless.

Come journey through the shattered life of a little orphan refugee girl marked for death. From the Killing Fields of Cambodia through fields of betrayal, abduction, addictions, and promiscuity, you will witness how God transformed those dark places into bright light, exposing His awesome love—a love so vast, so deep, and so high that it is almost incomprehensible. He is the true Author of *Through Fields of Grace* because He is the Author of my life.

***“For in him we live and move and have our being ...***

***‘We are his offspring.’”***

Acts 17:28

You can stop searching. Embrace the same Miracle Worker Who transformed me from death into life as your own personal Lord, Savior, Father, Friend, and Lover of your heart and soul. He is the One your heart has been longing for. He wants to give you peace beyond measure, joy uncontainable, and love everlasting. Are you ready to live?

***“... For the LORD is your life ...”***

Deuteronomy 30:20



## CHAPTER ONE

# THE GREAT FALL



According to my mother, in 1972 our little family was flourishing happily. My mother was pregnant with me, and my newlywed parents were anxiously awaiting my arrival.

With Father as the Regiment Troop Commander in the Cambodian Military, life was good with a promising future ahead. In preparation for my birth, my father built a home for Mother to nest her soon to be born infant. She said it wasn't very big, but it was a pretty little house, a place that she loved.

I was born in Battambang, Cambodia, in October of 1972, the Year of the Rat. Mother described me as a round and plump baby. I guess you could say that I was well-nourished.

Growing up as a child, I was mesmerized by Daddy's contagious presence. He was nurturing and tender toward me. He loved to have fun, loved to sing, and loved to play his flute and banjo. Daddy was full of life. He always made opportunities to make me laugh. Although I remember so little about my father, he was indeed my world. He was my protector.

One of my fondest memories of him was when he came running to rescue me from a severe lightning storm. When the lightning bolt struck nearby, I was petrified. Frozen by fear, I stood still screaming at the top of my lungs. Then, suddenly, Daddy was there lifting me into his strong, loving arms and carrying me inside our house. It was also Daddy who taught me how to rub my feet together to remove the dust before climbing

into bed. I was, like any typical daddy's girl, captivated by my flawless hero.

My daddy's older brother, Uncle Roeun, served alongside him in the Cambodian military. He told me of a violent struggle where Daddy prevailed single-handedly over nearly a dozen Vietnamese soldiers. By the look on my uncle's face and his intense body language, I could tell that he was particularly proud of his brother. He told me that Daddy wasn't afraid of anyone. Daddy was popular and known throughout the area as a fierce battle hero. Men feared him, and women loved him.

I guess that is why it was so hard for me to understand and believe that what my mother told me about him could be true. It just seemed inconceivable that my daddy could do anything wrong. I remember wanting to argue with her, to tell her she was mistaken, and what she was telling me about my childhood hero could not be true.

One year after my birth, our family's promising future came to a shameful end. The generational curse that had destroyed our ancestors had returned to rob everything that was precious to our family's name. Like his father and grandfather, Daddy's addiction had escalated to a shattering momentum that was too powerful for him to control. Mother admitted that she was ashamed of the fall of our family. What she told me I knew had to be true, but I did not want to accept it. I had wished that it was just a bad dream, but it wasn't. It was a very ugly, startling reality. And it was about my perfect hero.

The evil shame that brought the fall of our family's glory was my wonderful father's bondage to an insatiable addiction. He was enslaved to the destructive, compulsive lifestyle of gambling, and it eventually robbed us of everything. As Daddy continued to feed his unquenchable passion for each wager, mother wept in shame. Time after time, she pleaded with him, "Please stop this madness before we lose everything!" But it was to no avail. Daddy's addiction drove him beyond the limit of his conscience.

In the end, mother watched as Daddy's debtors came in the middle of the night to collect their gambling prizes. They came at night in hopes of "saving face" for Daddy, so he would not lose the honor and respect of his neighbors. They hauled all of the furniture out, including the very bed that mother slept on. The embarrassment of this hideous curse stripped our family of all dignity, but unfortunately, it did not end there. After the money was gone and the furniture was collected, it finally came to a painful



*Our mother and father. This is the only photo we own of our father. It was taken while Mother was pregnant with Sopheak.*

end. Mother's worst fear came true. Driven beyond reason, with one unfortunate roll of the dice, Daddy gambled again and lost our home. Heartbroken and humiliated, my family had to relinquish our home and begin looking for some other place of shelter.

Seeing what he had done and mother engulfed in such deep emotional pain, I know my daddy knew he needed to stop gambling. I am sure he tried to stop again and again, but he obviously lacked the will power to overcome the addiction that had him so bound. He needed more than just good intention. He desperately needed the power of God to set him free from his generational curse.

***“Do not be a man who strikes hands in pledge or puts up security for debts; if you lack the means to pay, your very bed will be snatched from under you.”***

Proverbs 22:26

Not long after we lost our home, mother gave birth to my younger brother, Sopheak. Sopheak was born in 1973, the Year of the Ox. Since the years of war destroyed all of our important documents and birth records, these ancient oriental calendar zodiacs actually played an important role

in identifying our true ages.

Needless to say, times were hard when Sopheak was born. We had become wanderers, migrating with Daddy from one patrol station to another. Because of Daddy's military position, we were always on the move. Mother said that the only possessions we had were the clothes on our backs and a few pots and pans. Food was extremely scarce, so much so that it was often difficult for mother to produce the needed breast milk to feed my little brother.

On April 17, 1975, Cambodia entered a crossroad that would forever alter the course of the entire nation. It was New Year's week, the jolliest time of the year. The nation's men, women, boys, and girls were filled with cheery hearts anticipating the week-long festivities. Women were merrily preparing delicious meals and desserts to take to the monks at the temple. Young men and women were dressed in their best attire in hopes of attracting the opposite sex for possible marriage. Children were intoxicated with fun, playing traditional Cambodian New Year's games.

The bands were playing the Rourm Woung's traditional beats under the shady trees. Classical dancers, adorned in special costumes, performed royal dances and blessed the people with peace and prosperity for the coming year. People of all ages were proceeding to the nearest temple to present their offerings to Buddha for a better new year. The air was filled with the sounds of traditional music piped through the loud speakers, encouraging the spirit of celebration. With eager expectation, street vendors hoped for their biggest profit of the year selling food and goods.

While the young and old were sharing wishes of blessing and prosperity with one another, death was lurking in the shadow to end their New Year merriment without a warning. Suddenly, as the Khmer Rouge (*Red Cambodians*) discharged truckloads of armed guerilla soldiers carrying AK-47s and machine guns, the scene of children's laughter turned into confusion and chaos. Tanks began rolling through the streets, broadcasting their poisonous propaganda, and people ran wildly in every direction screaming and searching for their loved ones. The Khmer Rouge soldiers were armed and ready to execute indiscriminately.

The command from the megaphone was for all to leave their homes and move out to the country right away. The lie told by the Khmer Rouge was that the United States was planning an attack on the nation's capital

city, Phnom Penh, in three days. The soldiers commanded that the townspeople pack light and take only the bare necessities. They promised that the evacuation would only be a temporary move and that the people could return to their homes within a few days. Those who refused to leave their homes were dealt with immediately by means of execution.

The New Year scenes that were once filled with gladness and celebration were abruptly replaced with fear and madness. The Khmer Rouge had begun their systematic execution of every doctor, lawyer, government official, teacher, and student, including people whose only crime was their need to wear glasses. The diabolical philosophy was simple: annihilate every citizen with any semblance of education, prestige, or power. Intelligence represented a threat to the new mindless culture that Pol Pot envisioned for Cambodia.

For Pol Pot's plan to succeed, there had to be a national cleansing. For the new Cambodia to take root and grow, the old Cambodia had to be destroyed. The new Cambodia would consist of uneducated, lower class farmers. History remembers this evil conspiracy as "The Killing Fields"—a one-of-a-kind atrocity against millions of innocent human beings. It was nothing less than a horrendous bloodbath defying all human comprehension.

The Khmer Rouge, like heartless savages, would line up entire families and perform mass executions in broad daylight. Their strategy was to instill a deep-seated fear in the hearts of anyone who may be tempted to entertain any thoughts of rebelling against their authority. They were ready to kill, without hesitation, anyone who posed a threat to their bloody goals.

It was Pol Pot's goal to turn Cambodia into a Communist nation where only the powerful, like him, would benefit. His plan was to overthrow reigning Prince Sihanouk Norodom. The Khmer Rouge taught that a new Cambodia was needed because the foundation of the old Cambodia was made up of a class of corrupted, gluttonous aristocrats who deserved death. They brainwashed their young soldiers with lies and propaganda to instill deep hatred toward the middle and upper class Cambodians.

Pol Pot successfully established his tyrannical reign by winning the support of uneducated lower class masses from remote villages and wilderness areas. He knew they would be easy targets, open to brainwashing, because they had nothing to lose and everything to gain. He enticed them with promises of power, control, and better living conditions.

He persuaded them that loyalty to his revolution would mean an abundance of food and guaranteed positions for their future.

Pol Pot played on the hatred of those who already harbored jealousy and resentment toward the prosperous city people. Carefully sown seeds of envy and greed formed the ultimate madness that spawned the Killing Fields. God's Word says:

***“For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”***

James 3:16

It was indeed envy, greed, and selfishness that spawned the demonic brutality against millions of innocent Cambodians.

Pol Pot unleashed his execution squads with a permit to capture and kill. People like my father, a trained military warrior, posed the greatest threat of all to their new terrorist government. From the beginning of their reign in April 1975, death warrants surfaced all over the nation, demanding the innocent lives of all government officials and professionals of all trades. Father's position elevated him to the top of the Khmer Rouge's execution list, so the hunt was on for Daddy, and for my family.

For the four years following 1975, our family, along with countless others, became fugitives. We fled from one town to the next, from village to village, changing our names and hiding our true identities. Mother buried every picture of father and destroyed every piece of evidence that would link him to the military and to us. Unfortunately, the Khmer Rouge had already ransacked his patrol station and taken the picture of him that was hanging in his office in Battambang. That picture was all the proof the Khmer Rouge needed of his connection to the Cambodian militia. And so it seemed that his fate would soon be sealed by death itself.

Within those tumultuous years, we rarely stayed in any one place more than two to three months. Whispers would eventually begin circulating between the townspeople, warning us that our enemy was close. Then, as soon as night would fall, we would gather our few belongings and hit the road once more. We were like thieves who vanished in the darkness of night seeking refuge in another nearby village or town. Because of Daddy's well-known reputation, he knew that there was really no safe place

anywhere for him to hide. He knew that regardless of where he went, people would recognize him. His high profile fugitive status kept us distant from the rest of our other families. They were afraid that we would bring them harm and jeopardize their lives.

One night, Father sneaked out with Sopheak to Grandmother's house in a different village. After he arrived, he told his mother about his fear of being captured. He knew that with two small children and a pregnant wife, he would not be able to outrun his enemies for long. It was then that Daddy's younger brother urged him to flee to Thailand for safety and argued that it was his only chance of escaping the Khmer Rouge alive. But Daddy did not have the heart to leave us, especially Mother. She was due to give birth any day. He refused to leave his beloved wife and two young children behind in order to save his own life.

In their secret meeting, Daddy desperately shared his heart's wish with his mother, pleading with her to take care of his children after he was gone. He told her, "Mother, there's no way that I can hide from them forever. They will find me, and they will kill me. I am worried about my children. My wife is still very young and beautiful. One day she will be married to another man. I am afraid that her new husband will mistreat my children. Promise me that you will take care of them after I'm gone. Promise me that you will do this for me, so that I may die in peace."

Out of her deep love and compassion for her son, Grandma agreed to his last request. Daddy's younger sister, who heard their conversation, later told me that they embraced and cried together that heartbreaking night, clinging to one another knowing it could very well be their last farewells.

Not long after that, Mother gave birth to another baby boy. Father named him "Bountho" after his honored General who was slain by the Khmer Rouge. The very week of Bountho's birth, Father wanted to build Sopheak and me a wooden swing. I remember crossing the street from our home carrying our tools. Since I was the oldest, I was appointed to be Daddy's little helper. He would need my assistance while he was up in the tree. With great pride and a joyful grin, I would hand him more nails. Oh, how I was anticipating the great fun-filled rides that we would soon be enjoying. My little heart was bursting with gratitude for Daddy's kindness.

But before our exciting little project was complete, I noticed a white car approaching from the distance. As the car came closer, something

seemed wrong, and I began to feel that this was not a good thing. When it finally reached us, four men, all dressed in black, got out of the white convertible. Immediately, my once joyful heart was filled with dread.

One of the men asked Daddy to come down from the tree and verify his name. When he reached the ground, I ran to him and grabbed on to one of his legs. I began to cry out hysterically. One of the men, trying to calm me, told me everything would be alright. He said that they were not going to hurt my daddy. However, in my young mind, I somehow knew that those men meant him harm rather than good. In my desperation, I began pleading with them for mercy: "Please, don't take my daddy away from me! Please, sirs, don't take my daddy!"

I remember begging Daddy, while clinging tightly to his legs, "Pa, please don't go with them!" While I knew that Daddy really didn't have any choice, I hoped my pleas would somehow make a difference. The men told me they were going to take him to a celebration of some sort. Deep down inside, I knew they were lying to me. Daddy told me, "Don't worry, it's okay. Don't cry, my child. Go home and tell Mother that they have taken me."

After Daddy pried my arms off his leg, I stood there helplessly watching them put him into the car. I knew then and there, as the white car drove off down the dusty road with my hero inside, that I would never see my daddy again. I wanted to die that day, but I couldn't because I was Daddy's helper, and he told me to go home and tell Mother about his capture. When I did, she let out a scream that pierced the very core of my being. It wasn't long before we all began a chorus of heart-rending cries, holding each other tightly while mourning our missing protector.

Although I cannot recall ever seeing my father again after that dreadful day, Mother told me that on that particular event, the Khmer Rouge only took him for interrogation. While the plot against him was not over, he was eventually released. The Khmer Rouge tried to mislead him by telling him that the orders to execute military officers had been rescinded. They tried to convince him that Pol Pot only desired peace and that the killing had ended. They baited him with the false hope that Cambodia would once again be united. Believing this, he had no reason to withhold his true identity. They promised him that he would not be put to death or in any way punished for telling them the truth.

Mother told me how weary Daddy had become of being on the run all



those years and how tired he was of living a life of lies. He wanted so desperately to believe that he was no longer in danger. With this conviction, Mother narrated that Daddy surrendered to his enemies and told them the truth of his identity, that he had been a commanding officer for the Cambodian military. After his release, Daddy returned home to tell Mother the great news that Cambodia was once again at peace and that he was no longer wanted by the Khmer Rouge. He assured her that his enemy had granted him freedom and his life. But she was terrified by what he told her. Mother's heart plunged into despair. She told me how she sobbed bitterly because he had fallen for their lies. She shouted at him, "What have you done? They have lied to you. The country is not at peace. Your confession has signed your death warrant!"

No doubt. My family desperately needed to flee from the Khmer Rouge that night, but because Mother had so recently given birth to Bountho, she was not able to make such a treacherous trip. Unfortunately, pain killers of any strength did not exist at that time. Three days after Daddy's confession to the Khmer Rouge, Daddy disappeared and never came home.

In desperation, Mother approached the Khmer Rouge village ruler and begged him to tell her what had become of her husband. Trying to comfort her, he only told her lies, "Oh, we have chosen a few strong men to cut down a bamboo forest some distance from here. Your husband is with them. Don't worry about him; the work will only take a few days. He will be back soon."

Mother replied, "You are lying to me. Tell me the truth! You have killed my husband, and he will never come home. You have killed him, haven't you? Please don't lie to me. Just tell me the truth!" Day after day, she pleaded with them to tell her what had happened to the love of her life. But all she got from them were more lies to cover up the horrid truth.

Later, Mother learned from her neighbors that they had seen my daddy. He was tied up in the back of a truck along with other prisoners. They said the Khmer Rouge's truck broke down in front of our very home. It took the soldiers almost twenty minutes to repair the problem that took place within feet from Mother's view. Because Daddy knew where Mother was lying, he did not dare look in her direction.

Fortunately, she was distracted by neighbors who had come in to see my newborn baby brother. Some of them saw what was taking place and deliberately blocked Mother's view, so that she would not be able to see

Daddy's forlorn face inside the truck. They were afraid she would be unable to take such trauma because she was still weak from childbirth.

Later, when Mother narrated this tragic event to me, I asked her, "What would you have done if you had seen Daddy in the truck that day?" Without hesitation, she exclaimed, "I would have run after him." It was obvious by the passion of her response that she had been very much in love with my daddy, and nothing could have kept her away from him. Within that moment, I sensed God whispering to me that it was by His mercy and grace that Mother's eyes were kept hidden from the heartbreak of that tragic day. By blocking her view, God shielded us and preserved our lives from our enemies. If she had seen Daddy bound in the back of that truck, she would have run to him. There is no doubt that the Khmer Rouge would then have finished off our family along with my father at that critical moment.

***"He will cover you with his feathers,  
and under his wings you will find refuge;  
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart."***

Psalm 91:4