

LITTLE BROTHER

Written by  
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Based on the book  
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WGAE Reg.

INT. TUOL SLENG GENOCIDE MUSEUM - PHNOM PENH - PRESENT DAY

A wall of grim portraits -- men, women, and children with number boards around their necks.

CAMBODIAN MAN (V.O)

In January, nineteen seventy five,  
Cambodia was a neutral country  
populated by seven point seven  
million people.

A room filled with eye glasses.

CAMBODIAN MAN (V.O) (CONT'D)

By the end of nineteen seventy  
nine, the Khmer Rouge had  
exterminated two point five million  
of them. Schools were closed, the  
currency abolished, and religions  
banned.

A room filled with an assortment of clocks.

CAMBODIAN MAN (V.O) (CONT'D)

Even time was outlawed. Innocent  
victims were forced into labor  
camps, and faced the uncertainty of  
famine and execution.

An empty rice paddy filled with bones.

CAMBODIAN MAN (V.O) (CONT'D)

Throughout these years, every  
Cambodian suffered some form of  
mental and physical torture, but in  
the aftermath, stories of survival,  
true courage, and triumph of the  
human spirit would emerge.

SUPER: LITTLE BROTHER

EXT. SOUTHERN CAMBODIA - BIG RICE PADDY - DAWN

SUPER: SEPTEMBER, 1979

Ten armed Khmer Rouge soldiers dressed in black with Mao caps  
and red & white check scarves walk around the perimeter.

A group of twenty stand guard near a series of--

EXT. HUTS - DAWN

Music crackles from speakers wired to three meter high poles.  
Hundreds of Cambodians dressed in rags stand in neat lines.

VITHY, 11, is lean and tanned from not enough rice and months in the sun.

WOMAN (V.O)

Long live the revolutionary army of  
Kampuchea! The courageous and  
glorious army!

WORKERS

Determined! Determined! Determined!

WOMAN (V.O)

Long live the glorious Kampuchean  
revolution! Long live the new  
Kampuchean society without rich or  
poor!

WORKERS

Determined! Determined! Determined!

Vithy stares straight ahead with dead eyes.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL HOSPITAL - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Surgeon DR. BETTY HARRIS, 38, athletic, attractive, scrubs her hands at a sink. She's done this a million times before.

A bloody smock sits on the edge of a utility tub next to the sink.

Betty grabs some paper towels and looks at her tired reflection in the mirror. She gathers her things and shoves the locker room door open.

EXT. PROTRERO HILL - THAI RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Betty waits at the take out window for her order. She looks at the couples inside the restaurant and the families walking past.

She collects her food and trudges away to--

INT. PROTRERO HILL - APARTMENT - NIGHT

Betty walks into the kitchen. She tosses a handful of mail and her keys onto the table.

She carries a paper bag.

Clippings of news from Cambodia and a 'Join the Red Cross' brochure are stuck to the fridge with San Francisco 49ers magnets.

Betty takes a set of chopsticks from the drawer, removes her food from the bag and sits down.

She sorts through the mail.

INSERT - ENVELOPE

'Logo: International Red Cross'

'Dr. Betty Harris'

BACK TO SCENE

Betty drops the chopsticks and rips open the letter.

INSERT - LETTER

'Volunteer Opportunity Ref. Field-Surgeon'

'Congratulations Dr. Harris,'

'Khao I Dang Refugee Camp, Thailand...'

'...met by Dr. Frank Lombard in Bangkok...'

BACK TO SCENE

Betty raises both arms in the air.

BETTY

Yes!

EXT. SOUTHERN CAMBODIA - BIG RICE PADDY - DAY

Vithy carries a yolk laden with large straw baskets full of rice husks. He runs each load to a wooden bench.

He passes some older workers spread on the ground. One man clutches at his chest, unable to breathe. A soldier stands over him.

SOLDIER

Get up, filthy dog! You don't stop working without our permission.

The soldier raises the butt of his rifle over the old man.

The old man recoils into a ball.

Vithy turns and runs away.

EXT. HUTS - NIGHT

Male workers sit in silence and eat rice from dirty tin plates. Vithy sits alone.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

The workers lie feet to feet in rows. There's a large, hand painted sign on the wall--

INSERT - SIGN

'Don't be too free'

BACK TO SCENE

An OLD MAN sits up and coughs. A SOLDIER ON PATROL peers through a window.

SOLDIER ON PATROL

Why are you sitting up? You're gonna get it. Lie back down and don't make a sound. If I come back, watch out.

The old man continues to cough. The soldier passes again.

SOLDIER ON PATROL (CONT'D)

Sleep without coughing you scum, or you'll get the club.

The old man slaps a hand across his mouth.

SOLDIER ON PATROL (CONT'D)

No discipline, any of you bastards.

The soldier walks away.

INT. HUT - DAWN

Vithy twists and turns in his sleep.

FLASHBACK - EXT. MEKONG RIVER BANK - DAY

Vithy stands on a wooden ferry with his Mother, KANYA, 41, and sister, SOREI, 7. His older brother, MANG, 18, a taller version of Vithy with bushy eyebrows, remains behind.

Vithy stares at Mang as the ferry moves away. He gets smaller and smaller.

INT. HUT - DAWN

Vithy jolts awake. He blinks sweat out of his eyes.

EXT. BIG RICE PADDY - DAY

Vithy carries the yolk.

At the end of the paddy, Vithy sees a small group led by three soldiers arrive.

He stops in his tracks. One of them is Mang.

A YOUNG SOLDIER nearby sees Vithy stop, takes off his sandal, sneaks up from the side and strikes him in the ear with it. Vithy recoils in pain and drops to his knees.

YOUNG SOLDIER

Bastard, we let you live to work  
for us. Move it!

Vithy springs to his feet and runs off.

EXT. HUTS - NIGHT

Mang slinks over with his tin plate and sits next to Vithy.

Vithy opens his mouth, Mang holds up a finger to silence him.

MANG

We must be careful and dumb.  
Careful and dumb, little brother.

Vithy nods.

MANG (CONT'D)

Where are the others?

A tear rolls down Vithy's face. He shakes his head.

VITHY

I saw Mum a few times, but she  
looked very weak. She had been  
sharing her rice with Sorei.

Vithy's eyes glaze over.

VITHY (CONT'D)

Sorei was on her own after that.

MANG

And Sorei?

VITHY

They took her away a few weeks  
later. Someone said a Soldier asked  
if she learned to read and do sums.

Mang lowers his head and shakes it slowly.

He looks up at Vithy, ruffles his hair and puts a hand on his shoulder.

The soldier on patrol from the previous night sees the exchange between the two boys.

He walks away with a wry smile.

INT. HUT - DAWN

Three soldiers stand at the entrance. The soldier on patrol walks in and stands over Vithy and Mang.

SOLDIER ON PATROL  
This row. On your feet. Hands in  
the air. Get up! Move! Move it!

Vithy and Mang exit the hut with a dozen other dazed workers.

The three soldiers direct the group away from the big rice paddy with their rifles. They lead them towards the jungle.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

The group pushes through the foliage. Two of the soldiers argue and point in the direction of low a rumble in the distance.

CLEARING

THIRD SOLDIER  
Stop! Sit down, no one move!

He talks to the other soldiers. Mang looks at Vithy and widens his eyes.

He turns to face the group, then jumps to his feet.

MANG  
RUN!

The group scatters in all directions. The soldiers react and open fire.

Mang and Vithy dart around trees, duck under vines and tear through palm leaves. Bullets whiz by.

LATER

Both boys gasp for air and glisten with sweat. Mang scans the area for a place to hide.

## LARGE BANYAN ROOT

Vithy trips and slams to the ground. Mang hears the thud and turns around.

MANG

You OK?

VITHY

My ankle.

Vithy takes a step and buckles in pain. Mang scans the area and his eyes fix on a--

## LOW BRANCH

Mang hoists himself up. With one hand, he reaches down and pulls Vithy up and onto his back.

## PALM LEAF

The SECOND SOLDIER bursts through. He stops directly under the two boys and scans the area.

Mang turns his head and holds a finger to his lips. Vithy bites into his arm.

SNAP. A branch breaks.

THIRD SOLDIER (O.S)

Over here!

The second soldier sighs, spits, then walks away.

## LOW BRANCH - LATER

MANG

All right, Vithy. Get off.

Vithy slides backwards onto to a clear section of the branch. The sound of movement and conversation trails off.

## LATER

Mang lowers himself to the ground and motions for Vithy to follow.

VITHY

Are they gone? What do you think,  
Mang?

MANG

I think we may have beaten them  
little brother.

VITHY

You think so, really?

MANG

Why not? They're just a bunch of  
stupid mountain men. Let's have a  
look at that foot.

Mang examines Vithy's ankle.

VITHY

You think they would have shot us  
Mang?

MANG

They aren't going to shoot us now.

Mang cocks his head, grins and snaps his fingers.

MANG (CONT'D)

Maybe they were taking us into the  
jungle for a picnic? Fish and crab  
from the sea, pineapple and bananas  
and ice cream... Maybe we'd better  
go back.

Vithy smiles.

MANG (CONT'D)

I don't think it's broken.

VITHY

What?

MANG

Your foot. It's probably just  
sprained.

VITHY

Are we free?

MANG

Sort of.

VITHY

What do you mean sort of?

MANG

Do you know where we are, little  
brother?

VITHY

We're... It doesn't matter, you  
know where we are.

MANG

We're still in trouble, but if we're careful we can get out of it.

VITHY

What do we do, Mang?

MANG

We go forward. Start again, follow the lines out of the war. I think we'll go to the border.

VITHY

Which bord--

BANG. A shot rings out from close range.

MANG

Get down and don't move!

Mang sprints across the clearing. Shots and screams follow him.

CLEFT IN GROUND

Vithy hides underneath dead leaves and palm branches. He presses his face into the soft ground.

The shouts fade away.

CLEFT IN GROUND - DUSK

A distant shot rings out. Vithy leaps to his feet and runs. His run becomes a skip, a hop, a limp, then a shuffle before he collapses to the ground.

SMALL CLEARING - NIGHT

Mang returns. He sees the empty hiding spot.

MANG

Vithy! Vithy!

Mang paces around the area, hands on head.

He grabs a stick, draws a V on the ground and runs off in a different direction to Vithy.

INT. BANGKOK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - ARRIVALS HALL - DAY

Betty carries a document filled, cloth tote bag with the Red Cross logo on it.

DR. FRANK LOMBARD, 45, tall, athletic, alpha-nice, approaches her with the same bag.

Betty does a double take, then holds her bag up. Frank smiles and walks towards her.

FRANK

I thought it was you, but until you see that Red Cross symbol it's just one random person looking at another in an airport. Frank Lombard, nice to meet you.

Frank offers his hand.

Betty shakes it and smiles.

BETTY

Betty Harris, lovely to meet you.

INT. TOYOTA LANDCRUISER - DAY

Frank drives along the highway.

BETTY

I can't wait to be at the camp, helping, saving lives.

FRANK

Yes, it's great when we can help.

BETTY

But I think that's not enough, we must do more. There should be training for the refugees about health, and first aid. We have to help them get back to the lives they once knew.

FRANK

Easier said than done, I'm afraid. We're pretty much unofficial diplomats on a humanitarian mission. We're there to help alleviate human suffering and we have to treat everyone -- including the Khmer Rouge soldiers.

BETTY

Right, but why aren't the government in here helping along side us? We could be doing so much more.

FRANK

I agree, but we're here and that's all that matters.

Franks holds out his hand and Betty grasps it.

EXT. SOUTHERN CAMBODIA - JUNGLE - NIGHT

Vithy opens his eyes. He sees black sky through the trees above, and a mossy, stone lion shrouded by vines in front of him.

INT. ANCIENT STONE TEMPLE - NIGHT

Loud thunder claps and rain pours. Vithy funnels water from a leaf into his mouth. Bats above his head flap and squeak. He hugs up against a dry rock and closes his eyes.

INT. ANCIENT STONE TEMPLE - DAY

Vithy wakes up and moves a few meters in pain to--

EXT. JUNGLE - ROCK POOL - DAY

Vithy drinks water from a hollowed rock and scoops up green algae with a stick. He squeezes it in his hand, places it in his mouth, shudders and chews.

He shuffles away.

OVERGROWN PATH

A small deer nibbles on a bush.

VITHY  
Mang! Mang!

Vithy scares off the deer. He picks a small piece of orange fungus from a rock and eats it.

He picks up a stick and throws it at a tree.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Mang moves at a good pace through the foliage.

One hundred meters ahead, he sees a small clearing. He pushes through to--

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

Mang looks in each direction.

MANG

Follow the lines Vithy, follow the lines.

He turns and walks north.

RUINED SHACK - LATER

Mang rummages through the shattered wooden remains. He finds some rags which he wraps around his feet.

He moves to the edge of the jungle and runs parallel to the tracks.

EXT. OLD TIMBER HOUSE - DAY

Vithy squats in bushes and stares at the house for any sign of life. He waits.

EXT. OLD TIMBER HOUSE - BACK GARDEN - DUSK

Vithy sees a rusted motorbike and clothing loom overrun by vines. He tears through a small garden and finds stalks of lettuce, spring onion shoots and a yam to eat.

INT. OLD TIMBER HOUSE - NIGHT

Spiders, birds and monkeys live inside. Vithy scares away the birds and monkeys and finds a cracked old bedding mat. He lies down and stares at the ceiling.

Gentle rain patters on the roof.

INT. OLD TIMBER HOUSE - DAY

Vithy wakes.

He stands up to stretch and notices an old photograph on the floor.

INSERT - PHOTOGRAPH

'A family standing around a new motorbike.'

BACK TO SCENE

FLASHBACK - EXT. VITHY'S FAMILY HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Vithy's Father, PHI, 43, stands in a vegetable garden. He smiles and waters various plants.

Next to his garden is a shed--

INSERT - SIGN ON SHED

'Mang's fix-it shop'

BACK TO SCENE

Mang works on a motorbike. He kick starts it and revs the engine with a smile on his face.

FLASHBACK - INT. VITHY'S FAMILY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Kanya cooks in the kitchen. The cupboards and counters are pristine white, the pots & pans shiny.

Sorei makes dumplings in her corner of the kitchen. She smiles at her Mother.

INT. OLD TIMBER HOUSE - DAY

Vithy stands and places the photo on the rusted stove. He looks around the battered house one final time and walks out.

EXT. JUNGLE - MUDDY TRACK - DAY

Vithy sees an uneven dirt road riddled with craters of various sizes fifty meters ahead.

He stops and scans for any movement. He moves through the trees parallel to the road, then in the grass verge next to it.

ROAD - LATER

Vithy strides down the center.

BEND

Vithy hops and jumps down a series of craters and runs into--

LOADED KHAKI TRUCK

Four men in brown uniforms with shirts off are filling in a crater with shovels. One of the men, an OFFICER looks Vithy up and down.

OFFICER

Hey ya.

Vithy sprints into the jungle. He tears through branches, weaves between trees and jumps over logs. The soldiers don't shoot or follow him.

LATER

He slinks back to the edge of the road.

TRUCK

The soldiers level out another crater. They finish, put their shirts on and climb into the back. The truck drives away.

ROAD

Vithy finds five grains of rice in the dirt left by the soldiers. He wipes off the dirt and tosses them into his mouth. He walks on.

LATER

The jungle ends and empty rice paddies line either side.

He hears the sound of trucks and moves off the road and into a paddy.

LATER

He crawls through a paddy filled with bones, skulls and bits of rag. The sounds disappear and he returns to the road.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

Mang walks by a number of timber and corrugated iron buildings. Doors are open and discarded items lie everywhere.

He sees a faded cloth sign above an entrance to one of them.

INSERT - SIGN

'Best moto prices in Phnom Penh'

'50cc scooters 980,000 riels'

BACK TO SCENE

Mang peers inside. He sees some empty gas cans and a stack of bike tires.

In one corner, hidden under sheets of corrugated iron, is a two tone, red-orange pedal moped on its side. The tires are flat and there is no seat.

Mang rights the bike and gives it a shake. The gas tank is empty.

He moves over to a small shattered wooden room with a broken toilet. Under the wood, he finds a pair of toilet slippers.

He looks around the rest of the shop and finds a damaged air compressor against the far wall. He moves a piece of wood wedged behind it and finds a hacksaw.

He looks back at the bike and grins.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. Mang pedals the bike. The wheels have no tyres and he glides along, the rims balanced on a single rail.

EXT. ROAD - DUSK

Vithy walks along the road lined with deserted houses.

He sees a sign--

INSERT - DIRECTIONAL MARKER

'Phnom Penh'

BACK TO SCENE

Vithy moves into the trees and lies down in the shade.

He closes his eyes.

EXT. PHNOM PENH - DAY

Vithy walks past tall buildings and wrecked cars.

He passes rusted trains and the ruins of a cathedral. Paper money litters the streets. The shops are all bare, their awnings torn and windows broken.

INT. PHNOM PENH CENTRAL MARKET - DAY

Vithy walks under the huge concrete dome and looks for a place to sleep. The shops are smashed and empty.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

Vithy grabs a torn off piece of curtain and sweeps clear a space on the floor. He lies down and makes himself comfortable.

EXT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

THE KING, 15, wears a bright red and gold sarong and lots of jewelry. He bashes the metal screen over the front window.

THE KING

Hey! Come on, I can see you!

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

Vithy props on his elbows and crawls backwards until he hits a wall. He grabs a thin piece of metal near his right hand and holds it up.

The King waves an ornamental walking stick at him.

THE KING

I don't know why you try. You're so dumb!

Vithy freezes.

THE KING (CONT'D)

You can sit there all you want. I don't care. Stay hungry.

The King turns from the window and walks away.

Vithy's stomach grumbles.

VITHY

Wait!

He trips over a broken shelf and falls out into--

INT. CENTRAL MARKET - DAY

The King nods, walks over and takes the metal out of Vithy's hand.

THE KING

Afternoon.

VITHY

Hello. I'm Vithy. You said something about food?

The King examines the gold leaf from a brooch in his hand.

THE KING  
Where did you find this?

VITHY  
In there.

THE KING  
Because you found it here, it's mine. All right?

VITHY  
Why?

THE KING  
Because I'm the King of the city and you stink!

VITHY  
Oh.

THE KING  
You look starved.

VITHY  
You have something?

THE KING  
Of course, come to my palace!

EXT. CENTRAL MARKET - DAY

Vithy follows the King down alleys and streets to--

EXT. BURNED BUILDING - DAY

VITHY  
This is your palace?

THE KING  
Shh, it's a secret.

The King scrapes at the floor and lifts a trap door handle. They descend a set of metal stairs into darkness.

INT. SECRET PALACE

The King strikes a match and lights a lamp. Light fills the room and Vithy sees wall to wall treasures.

Stacks of tins, crates of soft drink, racks of clothes & belts, a TV, silverware, cans of oil and kerosine, rugs, and a large rattan ball.

The King bows and sweeps his arm out.

THE KING  
My secret palace.

VITHY  
Where did you get all this?

THE KING  
From my city. What would you like  
to eat?

Vithy reads the labels on the cans. Pears, baked beans,  
lichees, beef stew.

VITHY  
Anything.

THE KING  
Caviar? Maybe venison soup. No,  
potato salad to start.

The King opens a tin and empties it onto a silver plate. He  
motions for Vithy to sit on one of the rugs.

THE KING (CONT'D)  
I'd turn on the TV and give us some  
entertainment, but we don't have  
any electricity.

Vithy takes the plate and shovels food into his mouth.

THE KING (CONT'D)  
We don't have a TV station either,  
or a tap that works. We wash in the  
river. I don't suppose you can fix  
things... like an outboard motor?

VITHY  
Sometimes.

The King opens a tin of pears and joins Vithy.

VITHY (CONT'D)  
Where is everyone?

THE KING  
All gone. The Khmer Rouge marched  
in and kicked them out.

Vithy's eyes widen.

THE KING (CONT'D)  
But I stayed. Nobody shoves me  
around. If I don't want to go, I  
don't go. Once they see me, they  
try to catch me, but I am a cyclo  
man. I know--

VITHY

What?

THE KING

Cyclo man, cyclo man. A rickshaw with a bicycle. You come from the mountains or something?

VITHY

My brother and me, we fixed them a lot at home.

THE KING

Yes, we'll I'm a cyclo man and I know this city like a mouse knows his hole. They never catch me. I stay and they're gone, so I'm the King of the city.

VITHY

No soldiers here?

THE KING

Not the Khmer Rouge. I say 'go' and they go. Off to fight another war.

VITHY

Against who?

THE KING

Where have you been? It's the Vietnamese this time. The Khmer Rouge attacked some Vietnamese villagers or something, and it's war.

The King changes his sarong for a grey rag.

THE KING (CONT'D)

Time for a wash.

Vithy and the King climb the stairs.

EXT. PHNOM PENH STREETS - DAY

THE KING

Why have you come here?

As they walk, Vithy tells the King about the escape and Mang and the jungle.

EXT. MEKONG RIVER BANK - DAY

THE KING

And then you got separated. Are you really looking for him?

VITHY

Yes.

THE KING

You'll never find him.

MEKONG RIVER

The King dives in, Vithy follows.

VITHY

Why?

THE KING

Where would he go? He could be anywhere. If he came here, even I might not be able to find him. But he might be anywhere. Or dead.

VITHY

He's not dead!

THE KING

All right, all right. Take it easy.

The King tosses Vithy the soap. He scrubs himself and swims over to the King.

VITHY

Mang said something about a border.

The King duck dives and bursts up through the surface.

THE KING

What border?

VITHY

He didn't have time to say.

THE KING

There's the border with Laos. That's more than three hundred kilometers away. Or the border with Thailand. That's maybe four hundred kilometers away and it's more than one thousand kilometers long from the sea to the mountains. And then there's Vietnam--

VITHY

There's lines at this border.

THE KING

And most likely tigers too.

VITHY

He said they were there.

THE KING

Of course they are. That's what a border is. Cross the line and you cross the border and you're in another country.

VITHY

Oh.

THE KING

Look, you don't need an older brother. You don't need anyone at all.

INT. SECRET PALACE

Vithy puts his empty silver plate on top of a can, curls up on his rug and closes his eyes.

EXT. SECRET PALACE - DAY

The King cooks kippers and rice on a portable gas stove. He hands Vithy a shirt, shorts, and a new pair of sandals. The King kicks the rattan ball to Vithy.

THE KING

Can you play?

VITHY

Not any more.

THE KING

Come on, you're better than a brick wall!

VITHY

I'm very stiff.

They kick the ball back and forth.

Vithy catches the rhythm and moves the ball with his head, feet, knees, chest and heels. The King grins and claps.

They walk through ruined shops, stone houses and stop at--

EXT. PHNOM PARK - DAY

THE KING

That was fun. I will allow you to stay in my city.

VITHY

Thanks.

The King motions to the Wat at the top of the hill with his stick and strides away.

Vithy shakes his head, but follows after the King.

EXT. WAT - DAY

Vithy looks out at the view.

THE KING

Wasn't that worth it? I used to wait outside the Hotel Royale for most of my business. Was always full of reporters and photographers from all over the world.

VITHY

In those days, you weren't a King?

THE KING

Better than that. They'd come to me and say, 'Ang, take us to the best restaurant, or crime boss, or black market.' And I knew where all that was.

A truck approaches.

VITHY

Soldiers!

Vithy dives to the ground.

THE KING

You really are hung up about the Khmer Rouge, aren't you?

VITHY

They are very bad.

THE KING

You were at one of their rice paddies, what was it like?

Vithy shakes his head.

THE KING (CONT'D)

How long were you there? With just your brother?

VITHY

I don't know. With my mother, and my sister, and Mang.

THE KING

And you're looking for Mang, only Mang?

Vithy lowers his head.

The King turns away and stands up.

VITHY

Get down! They'll see you!

THE KING

It's all right. They're Vietnamese,  
I allow them to come.

The truck speeds around the circular road below the Wat and away towards the river.

VITHY

There's a ship.

THE KING

It's unloading rice. I let them  
come and go. Let's catch some fish.

VITHY

But where's it from?

THE KING

That one? I think it's from France.

EXT. MEKONG RIVER BANK - DAY

The King removes a tarpaulin to reveal a newly painted boat with a long shaft outboard motor.

THE KING

Can you fix that?

VITHY

It'll take a little time. Got any  
tools?

THE KING

Tell you what. We'll paddle out.  
I'll catch fish, you fix the motor  
and we'll zoom back.

VITHY

If we're lucky.

MEKONG RIVER

Vithy tinkers with the motor while the King casts his net.

THE KING

Where you from?

VITHY

Sambor.

THE KING

I've been there. Was working on one of the riverboats, all the way from here. One trip I went past Sambor to see the rapids. Did you ever see the Prek Patang rapids?

VITHY

I went down them with Mang.

THE KING

In the wet season?

VITHY

No, not in the wet season.

Vithy looks across to the Royal Palace.

FLASHBACK - EXT. MEKONG RIVER - RIVERBOAT - DAY

Vithy, Phi, Kanya and Sorei stand along the rail of a crowded river boat. They cheer in unison.

FLASHBACK - EXT. MEKONG RIVER - DRAGONBOAT - DAY

Mang and his team paddle against the Prince's team. The noise increases as they approach the finish line.

FLASHBACK - EXT. ROYAL PALACE - DAY

The green and gold roof glitters in the sun. Marble gleams and monks clad in orange robes walk past thousands of people who watch the races below.

Music plays, people dance with happiness and joy.

EXT. MEKONG RIVER - DAY

THE KING

It was good wasn't it?

VITHY

You know, Mang was in a crew that almost beat the Prince's boat--

THE KING

That brother again. Do you ever do anything without him?

VITHY

You don't have a brother?

THE KING

I don't have anyone.

VITHY

I'm sorry.

THE KING

I never had anyone. Just me. I suppose it must be different with a family.

Vithy looks The King in the eye.

VITHY

Mang is all I've got.

The King hauls in his net and Vithy pulls the cord on the motor. The third time, it coughs, shudders, and the boat chugs across the water.

MEKONG RIVER BANK

The King covers the boat with the tarpaulin and lifts the motor onto his shoulder.

THE KING

Well then...

He re-adjusts the motor.

THE KING (CONT'D)

I suppose you'd better go find him.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

Mang pedals. Up ahead, he sees an abandoned train.

He lifts the bike off the tracks. He pushes it alongside, stops at a large pile of debris and puts the stand down.

Some of the train cars are destroyed, all have bullet holes and some other damage.

He rummages through a pile of debris. He finds bits of wood, sheet metal, some rubber hose, some twine, rags and a small can full of liquid.

He unscrews the cap and puts his nose to the opening.

Mang grins.

He takes a section of rubber hose and folds it back on itself three times. He ties it together in two places and sticks the backward S shape into the end of the existing muffler.

Mang grabs some of the cardboard and wraps it around the rubber hose. He folds the rags into a neat pile and places them over the seat.

He stands back and admires his work.

He pours the gas into the tank and shakes the bike. He looks down at the ignition.

INSERT - NO KEY IN THE IGNITION

BACK TO SCENE

Mang fiddles with the wires behind the ignition. The wiring array lifts away in his hand.

He kick starts the bike. Nothing. Again and again, still nothing. He twists the throttle several times and kicks it over again.

LATER

Mang sits against a tree, eyes closed.

He wakes and walks to the bike. Gives one twist on the throttle and presses the kick starter down until it stops. He lets it raise six inches, then steps down on it hard.

The engine catches. He twists the throttle. The engine comes to life. Mang shakes his head and grins.

He runs back to the tree and listens. The engine is quiet and puffs of blue smoke appear from the end of the rubber hose.

He lashes the gas can to the bike and pushes it back to the tracks. He lifts the bike onto the right hand rail.

He mounts the bike, twists the throttle and pedals at the same time.

The bike moves away.

EXT. SOLDIER'S DEPOT - WHARF - DAY

Vithy follows The King towards a soldier, SARGENT TRANG.

SARGENT TRANG  
Hungry enough to work, hey Ang?

THE KING  
What have you got?

SARGENT TRANG  
The same. Who's your friend?

THE KING  
Vithy. Wants to load your trucks.

SARGENT TRANG  
Always room for one more.

VITHY  
Thanks.

SARGENT TRANG  
Good. You work with us, you eat  
with us. The morning meal is ready,  
but you better be quick before it's  
gone.

EXT. SOLDIER'S DEPOT - WHARF - MEAL SHED - DAY

Thirty five Cambodians in rags sit and eat. Vithy scans the  
group for Mang.

THE KING  
My city is getting crowded again.

Vithy eats and asks questions about Mang. A YOUNG GIRL  
sitting next to a THIN MAN looks over at him.

YOUNG GIRL  
He might be at the border.

THE KING  
Which border?

YOUNG GIRL  
The Thai border of course, Ang.  
There's refugee camps there.

THE KING  
That border is more than a thousand  
kilometers long. Where would you  
start looking?

THIN MAN  
Aranyaprathet. That's the closest  
Thai town, maybe five hundred  
kilometers away. It has camps all  
around it.

THE KING  
And how's he going to get there?  
Walk?

Vithy looks across at the trucks.

EXT. SOLDIER'S DEPOT - WHARF - DAY

The Cambodians unload the ship. Vithy and the King load  
trucks and check the destination of each one.

TRUCK#1

The King races to the open window of the truck. He leaps up onto the side board.

THE KING  
Where's it for?

SOLDIER IN TRUCK  
Not far, Kompong Speu.

The King jogs off.

SOLDIER IN TRUCK (CONT'D)  
Hey, where are you going, it's not going to load itself!

TRUCKS SIDE BY SIDE

Vithy tugs the shirt of a soldier who leans against the bonnet of one truck.

VITHY  
Excuse me, where is this load headed?

SOLDIER LEANING ON TRUCK  
We're both going south, to Takeo.

Vithy darts away between the two trucks.

EXT. SOLDIER'S DEPOT - WHARF - DUSK

Vithy and the King lie motionless.

A truck reverses to a pile of sacks and stops.

THE KING  
No. Definitely not.

SARGENT TRANG  
One more truck, then you can go home!

THE KING  
Where's it for?

SARGENT TRANG  
Does where it's going make the sacks lighter? Siem Reap. Come on, come on.

THE KING  
All right, after dinner.

The King looks at Vithy and winks.

EXT. SOLDIER'S DEPOT - WHARF - MEAL SHED - DUSK

The King spreads eight palm leaves out and covers them with rice and fish. Vithy rolls and ties each one, joins it to the next with twine, then slings the sausages around his neck.

INT. BACK OF TRUCK - DUSK

Sargent Trang looks away. The King lifts a sack to reveal a dark cavity.

THE KING

Go!

Vithy jumps into the hole.

VITHY

Why don't you come with me? Out of the war and everything.

THE KING

And leave my City? No way.

VITHY

Thanks for everything.

The King puts the sack into place over the hole.

The sack lifts away. The King tosses a plastic bottle of water into the hole.

THE KING

You should have thought of this.

The King takes something from his pocket and puts it into Vithy's hand.

THE KING (CONT'D)

And this is for fixing the motor.  
So long, stupid.

Vithy looks and sees the gold leaf in his hand. The King replaces the sack.

INT. BACK OF TRUCK - NIGHT

The truck sits fully loaded. Two SOLDIERS climb up and dive across the sacks.

The roof of Vithy's hole sags.

The truck moves forward.

## BUSY ROAD

The truck moves through a congested area, men shout at one another.

## OPEN ROAD - LATER

The truck moves along smooth bitumen at forty kilometers per hour.

Vithy suppresses a cough.

## EDGE OF RIVER - LATER

The truck stops. The soldiers jump down. The truck moves forward onto a barge. A soldier takes a sack from the back and gives it to the master.

## ROAD - LATER

The truck swerves to avoid craters and holes. It stops and a soldier says something to a group of five people. Two more sacks are thrown down.

## INT. BACK OF TRUCK - DAY

The truck drives along the road faster than before.

SCREECH. The truck breaks hard around a corner. Sacks are thrown from one side of the truck to the other. Vithy is exposed.

SOLDIER#2

Hey!

Vithy lands at the feet of the other soldier, who tries to grab him. Vithy leaps from the rear of the truck.

## EXT. ROAD - DAY

Vithy tumbles along the road. He springs to his feet, runs to the side of the road, stumbles, then dives into some bushes to hide. His knees and elbows have grazes.

Vithy returns to the road to see the truck round a bend in the distance.

## EXT. KHAO I DANG CAMP - DAY

Betty leaves Frank's tent and walks across to the--

HOSPITAL

A representative from the Red Cross, DENNIS COATES waits.

DENNIS

Hello Dr Harris, do you have a minute?

BETTY

Sure, what's up?

DENNIS

Just wanted to find out how you're doing.

BETTY

Well, this is a horrific situation at a critical time. All the politicians out there need to understand the level of devastation we're dealing with and do whatever it takes to help. These Cambodian people are very, very emotional and deeply saddened by the situation. The ones who made it this far are very concerned about their friends and families and the future of their country.

Dennis stands stunned.

Injured people move past them on stretchers.

BETTY (CONT'D)

If there's nothing else, these people need my help.

Betty rushes inside.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Vithy walks past shattered shops and a canal. On the edge of the canal, he sees a rusty old cyclo.

Vithy approaches and stops. He sees a leg draped over the side of the seat. A YOUTH, 16, lies across the seat. He opens one eye.

VITHY

Ah... hello.

The youth lifts an arm and waves.

Vithy adjusts the palm leaf sausages around his neck.

VITHY (CONT'D)

Is this Siem Reap?

YOUTH

Used to be. You a tourist? Want to see Angkor? Where you from?

VITHY

Phnom Penh.

YOUTH

Long way. You want the border.

Vithy's gaze snaps to the youth.

YOUTH (CONT'D)

So many people trying to reach Thailand. There aren't many left.

VITHY

Are there any lines or something at this border?

YOUTH

Lines. Sure. Lines of people. Our people trying to get out of the country. Like I said. Why?

VITHY

How do you get there?

YOUTH

Just follow the sun.

VITHY

Are there any other bikes around?

YOUTH

No. They're all gone.

Vithy feels the leaf in his pocket.

VITHY.

Can I buy this one from you?

The youth laughs.

VITHY

I'm not joking.

YOUTH

But you were! What are you going to use to buy my beautiful cyclo? The rice around your neck, your clothes, your new sandals?

VITHY

I have a little gold.

The youth jolts upright.

YOUTH  
Let me see it.

Vithy pulls the gold leaf from his pocket and hands it to the bigger boy.

YOUTH (CONT'D)  
Do you have any more?

VITHY  
No.

YOUTH  
It's not enough.

VITHY  
Can I have my leaf back then?

The youth opens his hand, then closes it and raises a finger.

YOUTH  
Tell you what I'll do. I've got a yard full of old bikes. For the gold, I'll let you build your own. Hop in.

Vithy climbs in and they ride along the road.

EXT. CANAL - DAY

They pass water wheels, many sit idle, others creak and pump. The youth stops the bike.

EXT. WRECKED HOUSE - DAY

The house has no windows, no door, and holes in the roof.

EXT. WRECKED HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Vithy sees a graveyard of motorbikes, scooters, cyclos and bicycles. Tins of grease, bottles of oil, wheels, tires and tubes hang from rusted rods in a shed.

YOUTH  
OK then?

VITHY  
It's a lot of stuff. Thanks.

YOUTH  
Big business when the tourists were here. They'd take a bicycle to see Angkor Wat and crash it. You can use anything you find and also live here while you're working.

VITHY

Thanks. Is this your house?

YOUTH

Nobody owns anything any more.  
Goodbye.

The youth turns and walks away.

VITHY

Wait a minute!

YOUTH

What? You can't have the gold back.

VITHY

No, no, that's not it. I was just thinking, with all the people you see going to the border, have you seen my brother?

The youth laughs.

YOUTH

Maybe. Who knows? There's hundreds of people going to the border. How would I know?

VITHY

He looks like me, only bigger.

The youth frames Vithy's face with his fingers.

YOUTH

Let me see. Might be.

Vithy lights up.

VITHY

Did you see him? Did you see him?

YOUTH

Might have been him. On the back of a truck going towards the border maybe four days ago. Whistling. Might be.

VITHY

What was he whistling?

YOUTH

I don't know. It wasn't Khmer. It was stuff you hear from the tourists. When they were here. But you couldn't tell. He was a terrible whistler.

The youth gets on his bike and rides away.

Vithy smiles. He walks over to a cupboard and places his palm leaf sausages inside. Cockroaches scatter in all directions.

EXT. CANAL - DAY

Vithy dives into the water. He sings a song to himself.

He swims under the waterwheel and scrubs his clothes.

INT. WRECKED HOUSE - DAY

Vithy wakes and checks the grazes on his knees and elbows. He eats half a palm leaf sausage. He drinks water from a tap.

EXT. WRECKED HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Vithy finds a frame, some paint and two pedals. He collects the other parts he needs. Two wheels, two axles, a mudguard, crank, chain, tires and tubes. He has no handlebars.

INT. WRECKED HOUSE - NIGHT

Vithy eats half a palm leaf sausage, lies on his back and listens to the water wheel creak and splash.

FLASHBACK - INT. MANG'S FIX-IT SHOP - DAY

Mang and Vithy stand in the workshop.

Sorei walks in with a broken doll. Vithy repairs the doll for her. They all talk and laugh.

INT. WRECKED HOUSE - NIGHT

Vithy wipes his arm across his eyes. He runs from the house.

EXT. WRECKED HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT

Vithy pushes over a rusty motorbike with his foot. He picks up a metal bar and hits a tin can until he tires. He launches the bar into the side of the shed and storms back into the house.

INT. WRECKED HOUSE - NIGHT

He dives onto his mat.

LATER

Vithy wakes to the sound of an argument outside. He lies on the floor until they stop and leave.

EXT. WRECKED HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT

Vithy hurries to complete his bike. He takes a chain out of a tin of dirty oil and assembles the rear wheel.

EXT. WRECKED HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAWN

Vithy looks at the bike. The rear wheel turns smoothly in the forks. He sits under a clump of bamboo and eats half a palm leaf sausage.

Vithy gathers spokes for the front wheel. He snaps one and kicks the wheel. He searches for a replacement wheel.

EXT. WRECKED HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Vithy has both wheels on and repairs a hole in a tube.

EXT. CANAL - DAY

Vithy dives into the water and floats on his back.

EXT. WRECKED HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Vithy admires the bike, complete except for handlebars. He scratches his head and looks up.

CLUMP OF BAMBOO

Vithy cuts a tall pole of bamboo with a rusted blade.

EXT. WRECKED HOUSE - BACK YARD - DUSK

Vithy straightens his back and looks at the bike.

Chipped yellow frame, half silver front mudguard, no rear mudguard, black front wheel, rusty red rear wheel, no brakes and a sawn off piece of bamboo with a cross member lashed to it for handlebars.

EXT. WRECKED HOUSE - NIGHT

Vithy sits on the bike, the remaining palm leaf sausages in a tote bag slung over his shoulder. He pushes on the pedals and the bike moves forward.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

CLICK. WHIR. CLICK. WHIR. Vithy races along.

He passes a group of soldiers around a fire.

He takes the road to the north and sees a turn up ahead.

INSERT - DIRECTIONAL MARKER

'Angkor'

BACK TO SCENE

Vithy stops, then turns and rides in the direction of Angkor.

EXT. BUILDING WITH MOAT - NIGHT

Vithy stops in front of a dark building with a moat. He drops his bike and lies down under a tree. He closes his eyes.

RAIN FALL

Vithy wakes. He gets his bearings and rides across a stone causeway into--

EXT. ANGKOR WAT - NIGHT

Vithy stops near a flat stone in front of the building. He sees stone Aspara statues and elephant carvings on the wall. He rides on.

EXT. ELEPHANT GATE - NIGHT

Vithy admires the carvings and smiles.

FLASHBACK - EXT. ANGKOR WAT - DAY

Vithy and Phi wander around the grim city of massive stairways, gateways and galleries.

PHI

A hundred years ago, a French explorer pushed through the dense jungle and found the great city everyone had forgotten about. A city built a thousand years ago with towers of gold, and a vast treasury filled with ornaments from Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and Burma.

(MORE)

PHI (CONT'D)

A city of great walls, canals, reservoirs and buildings with towers made of the mighty faces of kings. And the kinds that rode to battle on elephants with a thousand soldiers around them... Who could believe such a city existed?

Vithy's skips around and grins.

PHI (CONT'D)

And after the French explorer found the ruined city of Angkor, archaeologists cut back the jungle and carefully began to rebuild the city. Khmers carried immense carved stones clear of a ruin, and lifted them back when they worked out where they had been before they fell. I was here, marking the stones and helping out until the Phnom Penh University opened and I studied to be a Doctor.

They move to another section.

PHI (CONT'D)

Here was what we called the elephant terrace. Me and ten other Khmers would lift blocks of stone to complete a trumpeting elephant on the wall. Your Mother would sit on that banyan root and eat her rice sausage with burnt sugar tea. It was a place filled with laughter and people everywhere working to recreate a city as grand as Rome.

Vithy stares at the carvings of battling elephants on the walls.

Vithy and Phi stop in the flat stone area in front of a building.

PHI (CONT'D)

And here Vithy, is where your Mother would dance.

FLASHBACK - EXT. ANGKOR WAT - FLAT STONE AREA - NIGHT

Vithy's mother glides out of the shadows in a green and gold costume. She moves her hands and gestures with her eyebrows.

Other dancing girls of Angkor, the Aspara follow her. Vithy's Father stands with the rest of the tourists transfixed on her performance.

Spot lights float over the towers, exposing the elephants on the wall, and the long row of columns.

The tourists and Vithy's Father applaud.

EXT. ELEPHANT GATE - NIGHT

Vithy looks around at the ruins and frowns. He turns the bike and rides away.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Vithy pedals the bike. He sees two specks on the road far ahead of him.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The specks are two families of men and women. A THIN MAN steps in front of Vithy and puts his hands on the bamboo handlebars.

THIN MAN

You come from Siem Riep?

Vithy nods.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)

Are they still fighting?

Vithy blinks. A WOMAN moves forward.

WOMAN

The soldiers, are they still there?

THIN MAN

You shut up!

VITHY

Yes, they are. But they're not fighting anymore.

THIN MAN

Ah. Then the Khmer Rouge?

VITHY

They're gone.

The man releases his grip on Vithy's bike.

THIN MAN

These soldiers. Did they bother you?

VITHY

No.

THIN MAN

They're still soldiers. It might be trouble.

WOMAN

We have to find out.

The group of men and women march past Vithy's bike.

LATER

Vithy passes more groups of people.

EXT. DESERTED VILLAGE - DAY

A small house burns. Dark smoke rises and the flames hiss and spit. Vithy smells meat.

EXT. BURNING HOUSE - DAY

VITHY

Hello?

Vithy spots a slab of bullock meat being barbecued three meters away.

VITHY (CONT'D)

Hello? Hello?

Vithy drops his bike in the mud and rips into the meat. He pauses, and closes his eyes.

CRACK. A large beam in the burning house splits. Vithy's eyes jerk open.

He grabs a double handful of meat and stuffs it into the bag with his last palm leaf sausage.

He hurries back to the road.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Vithy pants as he pedals away.

LATER

Vithy rests in the trees, out of sight from the road.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Vithy rides along the road. Up a hill. He rests at the top.

LATER

Vithy rides down slopes and around tight bends with pitch black edges.

His shirt streams behind him. He swerves to avoid a log in the middle of the road.

EXT. ROAD - DAWN

INSERT - DIRECTIONAL MARKER

'Sisophon 30'

'Battambang - 26'

'Aranyaprathet - 41'

BACK TO SCENE

Vithy rides on.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Vithy sees a set of rusty train tracks.

VITHY

The lines! Follow the lines!

Vithy speeds up.

EXT. GRASS ON SIDE OF ROAD - DAY

A GAUNT WOMAN, 34, holds a rusty knife.

She leaps out in front of Vithy, grabs the bike by the bamboo handlebars and shakes it.

GAUNT WOMAN

Get off!

The woman thrusts the knife at Vithy, the blade stops inches from his throat.

GAUNT WOMAN (CONT'D)

Get off! Get off!

Vithy takes his hands off the handlebars.

CRACK. The woman strikes him in the face with her forearm.

He drops to the ground.

VITHY

Aaaaah!

Vithy looks up. The woman pedals away towards the border.

He gets up, dusts himself off and walks away.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

Mang pedals the bike with the motor off. The gas can lashed to the back is gone, as is the rubber hose and cardboard muffler. The seat made from rags remains.

Abandoned houses line either side. Broken furniture, rubbish and piles of dirt litter the tracks.

Up ahead, Mang sees a squat concrete building with a weathered wooden roof.

INSERT - SIGN

'Sisophon Train Station'

BACK TO SCENE

Mang sees the train tracks make a turn to the left ahead. He looks at the bike, drops it, then moves away from the tracks and walks behind the station building.

EXT. SISOPHON STREETS - DAY

Mang walks towards a large hill overlooking the town. He hears pops and cracks from under the grey skies above it.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Vithy sees a bullock drawn cart. An old man, SAMNANG sits on a pile of fire wood. A MONKEY sits on his shoulder.

SAMNANG

We almost snuck past you. Going to the border?

Vithy nods.

SAMNANG (CONT'D)

There's nowhere else to go. Come on up.

Vithy looks at the bullock.

VITHY

I'm too heavy.

SAMNANG

Don't worry. Naga can pull an elephant off its feet. You're a flea.

The old man pulls Vithy up onto the cart.

SAMNANG (CONT'D)

What's your name?

VITHY

Vithy. Are you going to the border?

SAMNANG

I'm Samnang, we go close, but not there. You know there's trouble ahead.

VITHY

What?

SAMNANG

Listen.

Vithy holds his breath. He hears a low rumble.

VITHY

Fighting?

SAMNANG

It comes and goes. Two armies out there, between us and Thailand. They fight when they find each other. This road goes there, but you can't follow it.

VITHY

There's soldiers?

SAMNANG

Many of them. Big guns, lorries, tanks, land mines. Everything. It's a war.

VITHY

Then how do I reach the border?

SAMNANG

I don't know.

The old man scratches the monkey's head.

SAMNANG (CONT'D)

Maybe you better forget about the border. Why do you want to go to Thailand anyway? Better to stay with us.

Vithy blinks.

SAMNANG (CONT'D)

We have a house. Not much good, but  
it's a house. We even have two  
ducks.

The monkey reaches for Vithy's hand.

VITHY

What do you call the monkey?

SAMNANG

She is not a monkey. She is an ape.  
A gibbon ape. See, no tail.  
She is Aspara.

Vithy grins.

SAMNANG (CONT'D)

You do not think she is Aspara?

The old man snaps his fingers. Aspara leaps onto the  
bullock's back.

SAMNANG (CONT'D)

Dance, Aspara. Dance.

Aspara sways, flips and claps her hands.

Vithy laughs hard.

Aspara sees something behind the cart, stops dancing and  
leaps back onto the old man's shoulder.

Vithy and the old man turn to see two trucks driving towards  
them.

The first truck loaded with thirty soldiers stops next to the  
cart. An OFFICER in the cabin looks out.

OFFICER

Where are you going?

SAMNANG

Only to my house.

OFFICER

You are going to the Khmer Rouge.

SAMNANG

No, never.

OFFICER

What are you carrying?

The old man gestures to the load of firewood.

SAMNANG

As you see.

The bullock moves. The Officer motions the trucks on their way.

SAMNANG (CONT'D)

Leeches.

The cart pulls off the road onto a dirt track.

SAMNANG (CONT'D)

Aspara, coco.

Aspara burrows into the pile and returns with a yellow coconut. The old man takes a spike from under his seat, and stabs it. They share the clear milk.

SAMNANG (CONT'D)

We have to hide things now. From thieves and leeches. We know where there are coconut trees, and sweet potatoes, even bananas. But we have to keep them hidden.

VITHY

Mang and me, we used to hide things in our special tree. Nobody knew about it. We once found an old gold watch and hid it there, but it disappeared. Mang said it was spirits of the jungle.

SAMNANG

Who is Mang?

VITHY

My brother. I'm going to find him over the border.

SAMNANG

I see.

The old man hands Vithy some white coconut flesh. He eats it, then slumps back on the pile of wood and closes his eyes.

EXT. ROAD - DUSK

The old man shakes Vithy's shoulder.

SAMNANG

I think you'd better leave now.

Vithy sits up.

SAMNANG (CONT'D)

Listen.

Vithy hears fire crackers in the distance.

VITHY

A battle?

SAMNANG

Just a squabble, nothing to worry about. There is no fighting out there tonight.

The old man points to the jungle in front of the cart.

VITHY

You think I should go?

SAMNANG

You have a brother.

VITHY

Goodbye then.

SAMNANG

Goodbye.

Vithy leaps from the cart.

SAMNANG (CONT'D)

Vithy.

The old man extends the spike.

SAMNANG (CONT'D)

Be very careful.

Vithy takes it, turns and walks into the jungle.

EXT. JUNGLE - DUSK

Mang keeps low and sneaks up on a group of six Cambodians. Three adults, two youths and a toddler.

The group notice him and turn around. One of the adults, CHANTHOU approaches Mang.

MANG

Is this all of your group?

CHANTHOU

Yes, we are all that remain.

MANG

We are very close to the border. Just stay together and keep down and we'll all make it. Here, let me take him.

Mang grabs the toddler and cloth sling from a woman and fastens him to his chest.

MANG (CONT'D)  
This way, hurry.

The group move through the jungle, shouts and movement grow louder behind them.

SMALL TRACK

MANG  
OK, now run.

He makes sure the rest of the group are in front and runs behind them.

Mang sees a camp five hundred meters ahead. He increases his grip on the toddler.

MANG (CONT'D)  
Keep going, we're almost there.

SMALL JUNGLE CLEARING

A Khmer Rouge soldier props on one knee and takes aim at the group.

SMALL TRACK

The group fan out as the small track widens. Mang links arms with the youths and drags them along.

SMALL JUNGLE CLEARING

The soldier squeezes the trigger.

A burst of AUTOMATIC GUNFIRE rings out.

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - DUSK

Vithy looks across a gap in the jungle.

Some earth is disrupted and there are dead body parts in various stages of decomposition scattered around.

He drops to his knees and takes out the spike from his belt.

He holds it at a thirty degree angle and gently slides it into the ground.

To the right. To the left. Dead ahead. CLINK. He slides it back, places it down and digs away to uncover the side of a land mine. He moves his knees either side of it.

He looks up at the twenty five meters ahead of him and continues the process.

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - NIGHT

Vithy crashes through the dry undergrowth. He stops to listen to the cacophony of sounds.

He pushes through.

SMALL TRACK

Vithy moves low to the ground--

BANG BANG BANG. Vithy throws himself into the undergrowth. He hears the sounds of guns no more than fifty meters away. He rolls further away from the track.

Vithy sees the track from his hiding place. He sees two men pass by, then a woman with a small girl held to her shoulder.

More people pass, old men and women with a few children. Finally a teenage girl, SARO, 16, runs along with a one legged man.

She sees Vithy's face.

The shooting stops.

He hears the jungle move all around him. A man laughs, a gun clicks and the sounds move away.

Vithy slinks along the track from tree to tree.

He returns to the track and runs.

BODY ON TRACK

Vithy sees a woman, mouth open and eyes closed. He kneels down next to her. She coughs.

VITHY

We've got to go.

Vithy grabs some moss and places it over the wound on her shoulder. He tears his shirt into pieces, then wraps palm leaves over the moss.

The girl opens her eyes, then closes them in pain. She re-opens them and stares at Vithy.

SARO

Please.

VITHY

I'm not a soldier. I am Muong  
Vithy. Can you sit up?

SARO

I'm dying.

VITHY

No, you're not. It's only a broken  
bone.

SARO

You're only a boy. You don't know  
anything. I'm dying, I've been shot  
many times.

VITHY

Only once and it went right  
through. Look, the border is just  
over the hill.

SARO

Over this hill?

VITHY

With hospitals and everything. If  
you can sit up, I can help you.

SARO

Kid doctor.

VITHY

My father was a Doctor.

Vithy grabs her good arm and pulls her.

SARO

My shoulder!

VITHY

Can you stand up?

SARO

I can't get up. Never.

Vithy grabs the strips of his shirt which brace her  
shoulders.

SARO (CONT'D)

That's better.

VITHY

Good.

Vithy makes a sling for her wrist with the last strip.

SARO  
Maybe it will do. What do we do  
now?

VITHY  
You have to get up and walk.

SARO  
Just a minute.

VITHY  
What's your name?

SARO  
Saro. Didn't I tell you? Where are  
the others?

VITHY  
The people with you?

SARO  
Yes. Ah, you weren't with us. You  
were hiding.

VITHY  
They've gone.

SARO  
Gone?

VITHY  
I think they were sure you were  
dead.

SARO  
Well I was, wasn't I? I'll bite  
some heads off when I find them.  
All right.

Saro grabs Vithy around the neck and pulls herself to her  
feet.

SARO (CONT'D)  
Ohhh... I'm so weak.

VITHY  
You've lost a lot of blood. Lean on  
me.

Vithy and Saro struggle along the track.

TOP OF HILL

SARO  
Where's the border?

VITHY  
Just a little bit further.

SARO  
I can't see anything. You said the border would be here. Just here.

VITHY  
It's close. It's easy to walk now.  
It's downhill.

SARO  
It's all right for you.

TREES AND SCRUB - DAWN

The jungle thins out into a plain.

VITHY  
Come on, we're almost there.

SARO  
We're lost. I'm staying here.

VITHY  
You can't stay here.

Vithy looks at Saro's face.

VITHY (CONT'D)  
We'll just rest here for a few minutes.

SARO  
Where's the border? You're lost and going around and around in circles. I'll stay here until someone finds me. Someone who knows where we are.

VITHY  
You have to try.

Vithy sniffs the air.

SARO  
What is it?

VITHY  
Breakfast.

Vithy and Saro stop on the track in front of a WOMAN by a pot.

WOMAN  
Ooi!

People emerge from the jungle.

The woman races to Saro's side, while a WHITE HAired MAN ruffles Vithy's hair.

WHITE HAired MAN

Good son, good. Are there any more coming?

VITHY

I don't think so.

WHITE HAired MAN

We heard the shooting, we hear it all the time. You were lucky.

VITHY

Lucky?

WHITE HAired MAN

You reached us. Many don't. Yesterday five people were shot no more than four hundred meters from the camp. We brought a big boy into the hospital, but he was shot in the head. He won't live, but your girl will.

VITHY

Then this is Thailand?

WHITE HAired MAN

Near enough. It's the closest most of us are going to get.

VITHY

This is not the border?

WHITE HAired MAN

Yes, this is the border. The end of Cambodia. Now the Thais and the Red Cross feed us. You better follow your sister before you lose her.

Saro lies on a stretcher. Vithy chases after her and into a small city of shelters and sacks of rice.

INT. NONG SAMET 007 REFUGEE CAMP - DAY

The stretcher stops and Vithy catches up with the rear STRETCHER BEARER.

VITHY

What is this place?

STRETCHER BEARER

The camp or that?

The stretcher bearer nods toward a dozen ragged men who squat and clean their weapons.

STRETCHER BEARER (CONT'D)

The camp is Nong Samet. The Thai Army calls it 007. They think it is very funny, like the spy in the films. You see the films? Nong Samet is 007 because there is always trouble here.

VITHY

Khmer Rouge?

STRETCHER BEARER

It's all right now. They don't do anything during the day. They're here for food and maybe recruits to fight the Vietnamese. Just keep clear of them.

They shuffle further into the camp. Vithy sees larger huts with thatched roofs, clothes hang on lines and children carry containers of water.

The stretcher stops in front of a large building with stick walls and a blue tarp roof. Two men, a THAI and Frank, run out.

FRANK

Shot?

VITHY

Yes, will she be OK?

FRANK

I think so, son. Just tag along.

INT. NONG SAMET 007 REFUGEE CAMP - HOSPITAL

Frank stops a nurse.

FRANK

Tad Wan, please give this kid a drink and show him a cake of soap.

ANOTHER ROOM

Four injured patients with bandages wrapped around their heads and other body parts lie on mats. Two Doctors consult and prepare them for travel to Bangkok.

LATER

Vithy sits next to a plastic sink full of filthy water. He eats a cheese sandwich. Betty stands over Saro.

BETTY  
Who's done this!

FRANK  
Must be the kid. He brought her in.

BETTY  
Boy! Great job!

Betty grabs Vithy by the arm. He tries to evade her, but Frank grabs him from behind.

BETTY (CONT'D)  
I'm Dr. Betty Harris. You've got nothing to be frightened of here. Now, you just stay there, all right?

Vithy sits still.

Betty lifts the palm leaves to examine Saro's wound.

BETTY (CONT'D)  
I think Khao I Dang, hey Frank.

FRANK  
Sure, and this time we can do something.

BETTY  
You know, you saved your sister's life.

VITHY  
She's all right, perhaps.

BETTY  
She will be. Just a small scar. Sutures.

VITHY  
I am very--

BETTY  
Glad. Yes, I know. What's your sister's name?

VITHY  
Sorei--Saro. Saro.

BETTY  
And you?

VITHY

Vithy.

BETTY

All right Vithy. We're going to take Saro to a better hospital at Khao I Dang this afternoon and I think you'd better come along.

VITHY

Where is that? Is it on the border?

BETTY

Almost on the border, but not as close to the border as this. Why?

VITHY

I've got to find my brother.

BETTY

You were separated?

VITHY

Yes.

BETTY

When?

VITHY

I don't know, weeks ago.

BETTY

That's not so bad. So many people come into the camps and look for wives and families they have not seen since the first war ended. Where did you last see your brother?

VITHY

In the jungle near Phnom Penh.

Betty gestures towards Saro.

BETTY

You've been together all that distance?

Vithy nods.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Frank, you might as well take him over to the cafe. He might be lucky.

FRANK

Now?

BETTY

Sure, I'll clean up here.

Frank leads Vithy from the hospital.

EXT. NONG SAMET 007 REFUGEE CAMP - DAY

Frank and Vithy walk through the camp to Cafe de la Boheme, a large building.

INT. CAFE DE LA BOHEME - DAY

SOKHAR, 47, and a few others slouch against poles and stare at Frank.

FRANK

This is Muong Vithy. He's looking for his brother.

SOKHAR

We'll see. You leave him here.

FRANK

Thank you.

Franks turns to Vithy.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Come back to the hospital early in the afternoon OK? Otherwise you'll miss your sister.

Tables wrapped in blue plastic fill the cafe. Sokhar motions Vithy to sit down.

SOKHAR

Would you like some tea?

A wrinkled woman approaches with a large pot and a few cracked cups.

SOKHAR (CONT'D)

She is Madam Boheme and I am Sokhar. About your brother, you do not want to find anyone else?

VITHY

No.

SOKHAR

I understand. What is your brother's name?

VITHY

Mang. Muong Mang.

One of the men hands Sokhar a large black book. It has yellow pages full of names.

SOKHAR  
When do you think he arrived?

VITHY  
Maybe a week ago.

SOKHAR  
He might not be on the list. We try to keep up, but it is very hard. People come and go all the time.

Sokhar scans through the pages.

SOKHAR (CONT'D)  
He is not there.

Vithy slumps on the table.

SOKHAR (CONT'D)  
But I'll put you down. How do you know he came here?

VITHY  
He said he would come to the border.

SOKHAR  
It's a long border.

VITHY  
I know.

SOKHAR  
Where did you come from?

VITHY  
Near Phnom Penh.

SOKHAR  
A long way.

One of the other men, KHIEU, 38, steps forward.

KHIEU  
He might be dead.

SOKHAR  
Shut up Khieu!

Vithy leaps up.

VITHY  
No he isn't! He's smart and he's fast and they'd never catch him.

Sokhar puts a hand on Vithy's shoulder and eases him back down.

SOKHAR

Of course he's not dead. There are many camps, and hospitals. Even Bangkok if they are very serious.

Sokhar shakes his head.

SOKHAR (CONT'D)

He may still be coming. You were very fast. When did you last sleep?

Sokhar leads Vithy to a nearby hut.

INT. SMALL HUT - DAY

Vithy lies on a mat and closes his eyes.

INT. BANGKOK - HOSPITAL - DAY

The transported patients are surrounded by a team of Doctors and Nurses.

One DOCTOR holds a chart and addresses the group.

DOCTOR

Three with head injuries headed for San Francisco. Let's move.

INT. SMALL HUT - DAY

Sokhar shakes Vithy's shoulder.

SOKHAR

It's three o'clock. You must leave.

Sokhar leads Vithy back to the hospital.

SOKHAR (CONT'D)

Mang isn't in Nong Samet 007, but I will keep looking for you.

HOSPITAL

Saro lies asleep in a Landcruiser. Vithy climbs into another Landcruiser next to Frank.

BETTY

The Army wants us out of here before sunset.

EXT. NONG SAMET 007 REFUGEE CAMP / JUNGLE

The vehicles leave the camp, travel across a deserted paddy, past a shelled house and into the hills.

EXT. KHAO I DANG CAMP - NIGHT

The vehicles enter the camp and stop in front of a small house. Frank carries Vithy inside.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Vithy wakes to the chatter of children. PONARY, 47, stands next to the bed. Another boy, SEN, 10, sits nearby.

PONARY

Hello. We thought you were going to be asleep until the rainy season.

VITHY

Am I still at the border?

PONARY

You are at Khao I Dang in my house.

Ponary hands him a bowl of steaming rice.

VITHY

Thank you for breakfast.

PONARY

Well it's really lunch.

SEN

Tomorrow's lunch!

PONARY

You slept for a day and a half. You needed it.

Vithy finishes a mouthful of rice.

VITHY

Are all these others your family?

PONARY

Yes, and there are five other boys out building a house. All my family until an uncle or a mother crosses the border and finds them.

Vithy shovels more rice into his mouth.

PONARY (CONT'D)

But you have family here, haven't you?

Vithy stops chewing and looks up.

PONARY (CONT'D)  
Your sister, Saro.

Vithy's eyes return to the bowl.

VITHY  
How is she?

PONARY  
Good. You can go to the hospital  
and visit her this afternoon.

Vithy eats the rest of his rice with the other children. They laugh and joke.

Vithy doesn't.

EXT. KHAO I DANG CAMP - DAY

Sen leads Vithy towards the hospital. They stop in a large quadrangle. Sen points.

SEN  
That's it. And that's my hospital  
too.

VITHY  
Oh.

Sen bows his head to show a scar from ear to ear.

SEN  
See?

VITHY  
What happened?

SEN  
I got shot in the head.

VITHY  
Near 007?

SEN  
Near what? You mean those kids a  
couple of days ago? Wasn't me. I'm  
fit. A Doctor took them off  
somewhere to die yesterday. I was  
hit a month ago. Got better in that  
hospital. They are tremendous  
Doctors here, if they can't fix  
you, nobody can.

Betty emerges from the Hospital and waves at the two boys.

BETTY

Sen! Vithy!

Sen runs across to her and she gives him a bear hug. Vithy trails behind.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Good news, Vithy. Saro's awake and she's got visitors. Your Father has found you!

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Vithy follows them into a dimly lit room. A TALL MAN squats beside her mat.

SARO

Oh, that boy.

The tall man smiles at Vithy.

SARO (CONT'D)

The Doctor says I should thank you. So, thank you. But why does she keep calling you my brother?

Vithy swallows.

VITHY

Must be a mistake.

SARO

Yes, well I'll see you later. I want to talk to my Father now.

Vithy leaves the room. Betty sees him and steers him to a chair. She pulls a packet of barley sugar from her pocket and offers one to Vithy.

Vithy shakes his head.

BETTY

I take these to stop myself eating. Saro's not your sister is she?

Vithy shrugs.

BETTY (CONT'D)

You should have been left down at Nong Samet 007 shouldn't you?

Vithy looks at the floor.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Shouldn't you?

VITHY

Yes.

BETTY

That's better. We can use you here,  
but no more lies, OK?

Vithy nods.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Why did you want to come here?

VITHY

To find my brother.

BETTY

Oh yes, him. What about the rest of  
your family?

Vithy shakes his head.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Do you want to tell me what  
happened?

VITHY

No.

Betty puts her hand on Vithy's shoulder.

BETTY

When I first came here, I had done  
a long stretch in the ER of a city  
hospital. I thought I had seen and  
heard it all. But that was then.  
Now, I really have. Everything that  
happened to you and your family has  
happened to hundreds of people in  
this camp. It's OK to share your  
story.

Vithy sits unmoved.

BETTY (CONT'D)

All right then, we'll just have to  
find that brother of yours.

INT. PONARY'S HOUSE - DAY

Vithy sits at the table and writes. Betty stands next to him.

INSERT - PAPER

'Would anyone who knows where is  
Muong Mang, son of Muong Phi of

Sambor please say hello to Muong  
 Vithy at Khao I Dang Hospital.  
 Thank you,  
 Muong Vithy'

BACK TO SCENE

BETTY  
 It's perfect. Now give me twenty  
 copies.

VITHY  
 Twenty?

BETTY  
 For the other camps.

Vithy writes out the notices. Betty and Ponary adjust a green  
 smock to fit him.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Vithy follows Betty and Frank around the hospital. Saro  
 stares at him from her mat. He avoids her gaze.

INT. PONARY'S HOUSE - DAY

Vithy wakes and sees the other boys staring at his green  
 smock.

SEN  
 You a Doctor?

VITHY  
 I lend a hand when they need me.

SEN  
 Oi!

Ponary looks in.

PONARY  
 Oi surgeon! You better get washed  
 up before the operation.

VITHY  
 Operation?

PONARY  
 Breakfast.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Vithy walks in and approaches NURSE COLDSTREAM.

VITHY

Is Dr. Harris here?

NURSE COLDSTREAM

She's at the border this morning.  
Be back this afternoon. Do you want something?

VITHY

Dr. Harris says I'm to help.

NURSE COLDSTREAM

In the hospital?

VITHY

Yes.

NURSE COLDSTREAM

Can you wash up?

Vithy washes, dries and polishes dishes. He sweeps floors, and adjusts shades.

LATER

He trudges back to Ponary's house.

EXT. PONARY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sen plays with a rattan ball. Vithy ignores him, eats and goes to sleep.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Vithy sees Betty and Nurse Coldstream in the kitchen. Betty peers into a pot.

BETTY

Vithy, did you clean these?

VITHY

Yes.

BETTY

Nurse Coldstream is very glad I brought you from Nong Samet. Great job.

Vithy smiles.

Betty leads Vithy around the hospital. He assists her with a boy who has lost his leg, a girl with a fever, people with various injuries and an old lady who can't speak English.

Betty ruffles his hair and gives him a hug.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DUSK

Dr. Harris and Vithy stand in the yard.

BETTY

You were a great help today, Vithy.  
Thank you very much.

VITHY

It's a good job you give me Dr.  
Harris.

BETTY

Do you know how hard it is to find  
someone who knows English, Khmer  
and a little bit of medicine as  
well? You're a very bright boy,  
Vithy.

VITHY

Thank you Dr. Harris.

BETTY

I think we can drop that outside  
the hospital. Betty will do.

VITHY

Ah, well...

BETTY

No, really.

VITHY

Ok, bye, Betty.

BETTY

Bye, Vithy. See you tomorrow.

Vithy skips to Ponary's house.

Betty smiles and watches until he disappears from sight.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - SMALL JET - DAY

Red Cross workers unload three bandaged patients on gurneys  
into ambulances.

INT. KHAO I DANG - HOSPITAL - DAY

Vithy wanders the hospital. Some of the injured kids move around. He sees Saro's empty bed. Betty holds an old transistor radio.

BETTY

I don't suppose you know how to make this work?

Vithy takes the radio, cleans a dirty point under the battery cover, turns it on and hands it back to Betty.

BETTY (CONT'D)

You're too much! Where did you learn all this?

VITHY

We had a shed at the back of our house in Sambor. We'd fix almost anything. Motorbikes, bicycles, radios, toys, anything.

BETTY

You and Mang?

VITHY

Mainly Mang. I was the helper. It was a good business, but we had trouble all the time with Sorei's ducks.

BETTY

Ducks? My brother has ducks, tasty eggs. What sort of trouble can those lovely birds give you?

VITHY

All kinds. They get through our fence, they peck at our glue and oil, swallow our ball bearings and when Dad chases them from his vegetable garden, they flap through our workshop. And then Dad is shouting and Sorei is running around screaming. So Mum sends us all away to cool off and when we return, we have a nice meal of duck, vegetables and rice.

BETTY

That's the first time I've got you talking about your family other than Mang. They sound great.

Vithy nods, holds Betty's gaze and smiles.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL HOSPITAL - OPERATING THEATER - DAY

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP.

A team of surgeons operate on one of the transported patients.

LATER

The patient lies unconscious on a bed, head bandaged and various tubes and machines attached.

EXT. KHAO I DANG - HOSPITAL - DAY

Vithy sits and watches some of the children kick a ball. Sen sees him and walks over.

SEN

Want a game?

Vithy shakes his head.

SEN (CONT'D)

Still nothing from your brother?

VITHY

No, are you waiting for anyone?

SEN

No, there's no one left to wait for.

Vithy nods.

SEN (CONT'D)

It's fine. This way I got nobody to worry about. There's just me and the camp and Ponary. That's all.

Vithy looks off into the distance.

SEN (CONT'D)

Perhaps he sent you a note.

VITHY

I am waiting for it.

SEN

No, I mean he might have missed your note. He might have got here first and sent you a note on the bulletin board.

VITHY

Why would he do that? I told him where I am.

SEN

He may not be looking at the  
bulletin board. He may have sent a  
message and now he's just waiting  
for you to read it. Have you seen  
the camp bulletin board?

Vithy leaps to his feet and races through the camp, past the  
front gate and into the next compound.

EXT. HOSPITAL ONE - DAY

Vithy sees a group of people in front of the notice board. He  
jostles his way to the front and scans the board. A crinkled  
piece of paper covers his own--

INSERT - NOTICE

...

'Thank you,  
Muong Vithy'

BACK TO SCENE

Vithy turns and walks away. At the gate of Khao I Dang, he  
sees two buses. People line up with bundles at their feet. A  
small group of soldiers stand by.

One soldier notices Vithy staring and raises his arm. Vithy  
screams and runs.

EXT. KHAO I DANG CAMP - TOYOTA LANDCRUISER - DAY

Frank and Betty drive through the camp. Betty sees Vithy,  
stops, leaps from the vehicle and grabs him. Vithy squirms  
and kicks.

BETTY

Hey, hey. It's me. Vithy, it's me.

Vithy goes limp, his eyes closed.

VITHY

The bus, the bus, the bus.

BETTY

The buses at the front gate? They  
don't do any harm.

Vithy shakes his head.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Is it the people? They are going to a transit camp near Bangkok. They want to go, they are just nervous. They are going to countries all over the world. To France, America, Britain, Australia...

Betty frowns.

BETTY (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

Vithy shakes his head.

Betty nods at Frank who waits in the vehicle. He drives away.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Just one bus scares you?

Vithy nods.

BETTY (CONT'D)

I think we'd better talk now.

INT. PONARY'S HOUSE - DAY

Betty and Vithy sit at the table.

VITHY

One night, the soldiers came to our house--

FLASHBACK - INT. SAMBOR - VITHY'S FAMILY HOUSE - NIGHT

Vithy's family minus Mang sit at the kitchen table. The radio plays in the background.

The faint sound of an engine.

A jagged light shines through the kitchen window. It increases in size as a motorcycle roars up to the house and stops.

Vithy's Father springs up, turns off the radio and runs to the door.

BANG. BANG. BANG. A soldier pounds on the door.

SOLDIER

Open up!

Phi speaks to a soldier in a peaked cap in hushed tones. Nobody in the house hears what he says.

The soldier nods. Phi turns and looks at his wife, Vithy and Sorei. He walks toward them and flashes a weak smile.

PHI

They want me to help them with a little job. For a while. Be good. Be careful.

He touches his wife on the cheek, then turns and walks out of the house.

FLASHBACK - EXT. SAMBOR - VITHY'S FAMILY HOUSE - NIGHT

A bus sits in the street, filled with the silent faces of teachers, doctors, engineers and monks.

Phi climbs the steps.

Gears grind and the bus drives away.

INT. PONARY'S HOUSE - DAY

Betty sighs and presses her fingers over her eyelids.

BETTY

That's not the end, is it?

VITHY

No. Mang returned and tried to find Dad. He couldn't find him and the soldiers came again. They took our house and everything and marched maybe a hundred of us out of Sambor. We walked for a week. Sorei rode on Mang's back for most of the time. We walked a few more days and stopped at the river where a lot of people were chopping down trees to make a very big paddy. Mum and Sorei and I were taken to some huts and the men and bigger boys were sent somewhere else. We didn't get much food and we got so tired.

BETTY

How did Mang find you and lose you again?

VITHY

We got separated at the river, then one day he just returned. I told him about Mum and Sorei, he kept saying we had to go somewhere. One day, the soldiers took us into the forest.

(MORE)

VITHY (CONT'D)

We stopped in a small clearing and Mang shouted for everyone to run. We stayed together for a long distance with the soldiers chasing us, but I hurt my foot and Mang led them away from me. He said he would come here to the border.

Betty squeezes Vithy's shoulder.

BETTY

So you came here. Right across Cambodia, through jungles, bandits and a war, on the off chance that you can find him?

VITHY

Yes. He's all I have.

Betty pulls Vithy in and hugs him.

An announcement comes through the speakers. Vithy looks up.

BETTY

What is it?

VITHY

The loudspeakers. Are they in all the border camps?

BETTY

Well, most of them. Why? Oh, Mang.

VITHY

Can I send a message?

BETTY

I don't see why not.

EXT. KHAO I DANG CAMP - DAY

SUPER: ONE WEEK LATER

The speakers crackle.

VITHY (V.O)

Muong Mang. Muong Mang of Sambor, can you hear me? This is Muong Vithy, your brother. I am at the Hospital in Khao I Dang, waiting for you... Please if anyone has heard of Muong Mang of Sambor, please tell me. I am Muong Vithy at the Hospital in Khao I Dang--

INT. SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL HOSPITAL - WARD - DAY

A Doctor moves from bed to bed. One of the transported patients sits up. He is conscious, the machines gone. He takes the note pad and he writes down a name.

INT. KHAO I DANG CAMP - HOSPITAL - DAY

A YOUTH, 12, comes in on a stretcher. Orderlies carry him into a room and two patients nearby shuffle away. Betty and Vithy stand at the foot of his mat. Vithy looks at Betty.

BETTY

He comes from Nong Samet.

VITHY

What's his name?

BETTY

No one knows. He wouldn't speak to us at all.

VITHY

Is he a soldier?

Betty nods.

BETTY

I'm sorry Vithy, but we have to look after him. He's Khmer Rouge.

Vithy turns and walks out of the hospital.

INT. PONARY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Vithy twists and turns in his sleep.

FLASHBACK - EXT. SAMBOR STREETS - DAY

Women and children with suitcases are lined up in the middle of the road.

Children scream and soldiers randomly strike adults with the butts of their rifles.

Kanya, Mang, Vithy and Sorei huddle together. Mang carries Sorei on his back.

A SOLDIER sits on a motorbike and holds a bullhorn.

SOLDIER

You are enemies of the Party  
Angkar. The Party makes no  
mistakes, it has eyes everywhere.

(MORE)

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

If we have arrested the husband, we arrest the wife and children too. Espionage cannot be allowed to eat us from within. Only obedience and discipline can help you start again at zero.

A soldier with the butt of his rifle raised moves towards Vithy's mother and strikes out towards her--

INT. PONARY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Vithy jolts awake. He wipes the sweat from his brow and slumps back onto the bed.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Vithy enters the room of the KHMER ROUGE SOLDIER. Nurse Coldstream helps the soldier to eat rice. He shoves her away and grabs the bowl.

NURSE COLDSTREAM

You don't do that to me, boy!

She storms off. Betty hears the commotion.

BETTY

Come on Vithy, before we have real trouble.

They walk to the soldier's mat.

BETTY (CONT'D)

I am Dr Harris, this is Vithy. What's your name?

The soldier looks back and forth at them.

BETTY (CONT'D)

We are trying to help you. What's your name?

Betty sighs.

BETTY (CONT'D)

You have a bullet through your shoulder and if we don't help you, your arm will drop off.

The soldier stares at Betty.

BETTY (CONT'D)

What's your name?

The soldier opens his mouth, then closes it with a loud click.

BETTY (CONT'D)

I'm not going to play soldiers with you, boy. I want to change that bandage and have a look at your wound. If you cooperate, fine. If you don't, you'll get dropped off at the border today. Now, do I get to look at that arm? Just nod your head.

The soldier shifts his gaze to Vithy and sneers.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Well?

The soldier nods his head.

Betty helps him stand and sits him on a bench. She grabs a pair of scissors and snips at the bandage.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Now this will hurt a little.

Betty tugs at the dressing under the bandage. The soldier opens his eyes--

KHMER ROUGE SOLDIER

Ahhhh!

BETTY

It's all right.

The soldier fights and twists away from Betty. He grabs her wrist and twists it behind her back.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Hey!

Betty is forced down onto one knee. The soldier grabs the scissors and holds them like a knife.

Vithy lunges at the soldier, grabs the scissors and twists them from his grip. The soldier releases Betty and the two roll on the floor.

CRASH. Vithy collides with the bench and a tray of medicine and instruments.

Vithy straddles the soldier. The soldier punches him in the face with his good arm and Vithy reels back.

The soldier straddles Vithy and grabs his throat. Vithy tosses and twists and punches up at the soldier.

Vithy's fist hits his face, he springs up and dives on top of him. He pins both his arms to the floor.

He still holds the scissors in his right hand. He punches the soldier in the face, then draws his arm back to thrust the scissors at his throat.

KHMER ROUGE SOLDIER

Ahhhh!

Vithy stares into the soldier's eyes and sees a frightened child. He lowers his arm.

Betty grabs Vithy's arm from behind and he drops the scissors.

BETTY

It's OK, it's OK. It's all over now.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Vithy sits on a bench in the sunshine. Betty joins him, her arm in a sling.

BETTY

I never got a chance to thank you before. Thanks.

VITHY

Are you hurt?

BETTY

Nothing broken. I'll just have to give it some rest for a few days. I've been meaning to speak to you.

VITHY

Oh.

BETTY

Have you heard anything about your brother?

Vithy shakes his head.

BETTY (CONT'D)

How long have you been looking for him now?

VITHY

A long time.

BETTY

What do you think?

VITHY

I don't know.

BETTY

Well, how long will you wait for him?

Vithy shrugs.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Vithy, I finish here in three weeks.

VITHY

But you said that wasn't going to be for a while.

BETTY

That was a while ago, Vithy. Other Doctors want to come here to help. I must make room for them.

Vithy hunches his shoulders and shakes his head.

BETTY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Vithy.

Vithy jumps up from his seat and runs away.

Betty's eyes follow him.

Frank notices Vithy leave. He walks over and sits opposite Betty.

FRANK

Maybe you crossed the line with Vithy. He's lost everyone else and now he's going to lose you too.

BETTY

I don't know if I'm going to lose him, Frank.

FRANK

What about us?

BETTY

I'm not sure there is going to be an 'us.' I've learned a lot of things being here.

FRANK

Like?

BETTY

Like there are more important things in life than a career in surgery and romance.

(MORE)

BETTY (CONT'D)

I never fully appreciated how beautiful and open-hearted Cambodians are -- they have so much pain and loss and yet they can still find some small joys in life. Life for them is just survival and it just makes me feel like I've been sheltered and spoiled all my life. I think there's more I can do for Vithy and others like him.

INT. PONARY'S HOUSE - DAY

Betty rushes into the house, grabs Vithy and sits him down.

BETTY

What do you say Vithy, want to come home with me?

VITHY

What?

BETTY

Home. America. San Francisco.

VITHY

Oh.

BETTY

If you can't find Mang of course.

VITHY

Go to America? It's a long way away.

BETTY

There are a lot of Kampuchians - Cambodians - in San Francisco. Do you want to come if I can get you out?

They sit in silence.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Tell you what we'll do. Just forget about Mang. Just for a moment. Without Mang, would you rather stay here in Khao I Dang or come with me?

VITHY

Stay with you.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Betty strides into the hospital and sits with Vithy. She has a pile of immigration forms for him to fill out.

INT. LANDCRUISER - DAY

Betty drives to the embassy in Bangkok.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Vithy makes a new tape for the loudspeakers.

EXT. PONARY'S HOUSE - DAY

Vithy sits at a table outside and does his schoolwork.

LANDCRUISER

Betty leaps from the car and races over to Vithy. She waves a letter.

BETTY

You, Muong Vithy are the luckiest  
boy in the world today!

VITHY

What?

BETTY

The Embassy people are really not  
that bad when you get them to move.  
So I found out some pretty  
wonderful things.

LANDCRUISER

Frank emerges and waves at Betty and Vithy. Betty takes no notice. She waves the letter again.

BETTY

If this is right, you can go to  
America. Just. Like. That!

Betty snaps her fingers.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Almost.

FRANK

Hi kids.

BETTY

And you didn't need me to sponsor you.

FRANK

So ignore me, already. I've only found Mang.

Betty stares at Frank. Vithy smiles.

BETTY

Are you sure Frank?

Betty stuffs the letter in her pocket.

FRANK

Yes. I met him.

Vithy grins.

BETTY

Where?

FRANK

Nong Samet 007. He heard Vithy's message yesterday. Skinny Khmer, but a bigger version of Vithy. Said he was Muong Mang from Sambor.

Vithy leaps to his feet and hugs them both.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I guess he won't be going to America after all. Sorry, Betty.

Betty waves him off.

BETTY

It's what's best for the boy that counts. We'll go and see this Mang tomorrow.

EXT. NONG SAMET 007 REFUGEE CAMP - DAY

Vithy notices fire damage to Cafe de la Boheme and men fill in a large crater between the cafe and the hospital.

Vithy scans the people outside the hospital for Mang.

VITHY

What happened?

BETTY

Another fight. Nasty one.

Frank exits the vehicle on the opposite side and greets a STRANGER, 17.

STRANGER

Hello fella.

FRANK

Hi Mang.

Vithy runs around the car.

STRANGER

You come to take me away, yes?

Vithy stops dead in his tracks. He sees a young, tall, Khmer dressed in rags with a smile on his face.

FRANK

Not yet, but here's someone to see you.

STRANGER

You don't understand, I got to go with you. I am Muong Mang from Sambor. I got to see Veethy in Khao I Dang.

Vithy shakes his head, and runs away.

EXT. NONG SAMET 007 REFUGEE CAMP - SMALL HILL - DAY

Betty walks up to Vithy at the top.

BETTY

I'm sorry, Vithy. It was a rotten trick. He got frightened by the fighting here, so he thought he would get into Khao I Dang by pretending to be somebody else.

VITHY

It doesn't matter.

BETTY

You're not angry?

VITHY

What's the point?

BETTY

Do you want to go back?

Vithy shakes his head and stares out into the jungle.

Betty touches the letter in her pocket.

BETTY (CONT'D)

I don't know if I'm doing the right thing. But after that boy pretending he was Mang--

VITHY  
Mang's dead.

EXT. KHAO I DANG CAMP - HOSPITAL - DAY

Vithy mopes around. Betty and Frank drive off to visit other camps.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Betty and Vithy sit at a table. Vithy writes on forms, then Betty takes blood, checks his eyes and gives him various needles.

BETTY  
You're off the day after tomorrow!  
Get ready.

EXT. KHAO I DANG CAMP - DAY

Vithy walks around the camp. He says goodbye to Sen and Ponary and various other people. He runs over to Betty and Frank. He shakes his hand.

FRANK  
Sorry about that Mang stunt, son.

VITHY  
It's not your fault.

Betty holds a file of immigration papers. She embraces Frank.

BETTY  
Am I doing the right thing, Frank?

FRANK  
You'll know soon enough. Good luck,  
Vithy.

Betty and Vithy board a bus and drive out of the camp.

INT. BANGKOK - HOTEL - NIGHT

Vithy looks out the window. He sees huge freighters and a magnitude of cars, buses, trucks and motorbikes. He looks at the tall buildings, the river and the sheer size of the city.

INT. BOEING 747 - DAY

Vithy sits by the window.

The plane roars down the runway and lifts into the air.

BETTY  
Still thinking of Mang?

Vithy looks out the window at the scenery below.

BETTY (CONT'D)  
You know, this is not the end. He  
might still be alive.

VITHY  
No. Not anymore.

LATER

Vithy sleeps. He wakes and looks out to see blue water below.

VITHY  
Where are we?

BETTY  
Almost in America. Are you excited?

VITHY  
Yes.

The blue water disappears and grey clouds slide under the  
plane.

VITHY (CONT'D)  
What's going to happen to me,  
Betty?

BETTY  
I haven't told you, have I? For a  
start, you'll be going back to  
school. And you'll be meeting  
people.

VITHY  
School? Am I going to stay with  
you?

BETTY  
Don't you worry. It's all fixed up.

VITHY  
Are you going to be my Mother?

Betty holds Vithy's hand.

BETTY  
Vithy, I'm anything you want me to  
be for as long as you want.

The fasten seat belt sign illuminates and the plane descends  
over the East Bay and into San Francisco.

Vithy looks out the window.

VITHY  
It can't be that big.

INT. SFO AIRPORT - BAGGAGE CAROUSEL #5 - DAY

Betty and Vithy wait for their bags.

VITHY  
I'm going to be a Doctor.

BETTY  
Uh-huh.

VITHY  
I will work hard, Betty. Thank you  
for bringing me here.

BETTY  
I didn't bring you, really. I just  
helped. You would have made it on  
your own, given a little time. I  
tried to tell you.

INT. SFO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - ARRIVALS HALL - DAY

Betty lifts her head to catch the eye of a Red Cross worker  
and a Cambodian youth who stand near the exit.

The worker waves at them.

Vithy walks behind Betty. He moves to her left, looks at the  
youth then stops.

He's pale, leans on a walking stick and has a large scar over  
the right ear on his shaved head.

He looks old and weak.

The stranger sees Vithy, cocks his head to one side and  
grins.

Vithy pauses, then looks again at the youth's face.

FLASHBACK - EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Mang cocks his head, grins and snaps his fingers.

INT. SFO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - ARRIVALS HALL - DAY

VITHY  
MANG!

Vithy leaps at Mang, who somehow catches him. He presses Vithy to his shoulder and Vithy bear hugs him.

MANG

Hello, little brother.

Vithy's eyes fill with tears.

Betty takes the letter from her pocket and puts a hand on Vithy's back.

BETTY

Oh yes, US Immigration bend over backwards to help people with relatives already here.

SUPER: TWO MONTHS LATER

INT. PROTRERO HILL - APARTMENT - NIGHT

Betty enters the apartment with a paper bag full of fruit and vegetables. Vithy sits at the table. He's dressed in western clothes and writes in a school note book.

VITHY

Hi Betty!

Betty puts the bag on the counter and hugs him.

BETTY

Hey Vith!

Betty walks into the bedroom, Vithy unpacks the groceries.

Betty returns to the kitchen.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Quick, we better run.

Vithy grabs his coat and they race out the door.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO FERRY BUILDING - NIGHT

A red pedicab is parked in front of the doors, its rider has a leg dangled over the side of the seat.

Betty looks at Vithy and puts a finger to her lips. She disguises her voice. Vithy suppresses his laughter.

BETTY

Excuse me, we'd like a ride to Fishermen's Wharf please!

A fit Mang turns around. He sees it's Betty and Vithy and flashes a big grin.

MANG

Hey! Yes ma'am. I can offer a special price for you - one fish and crab dinner with ice cream!

BETTY

It's a deal!

Betty and Vithy climb on and Mang pedals the bike along the Embarcadero towards the wharf.

VITHY

Faster Mang! Faster!

The pedicab disappears into the night, filled with the sound of laughter.

FADE OUT:

SUPER: Muong Mang established San Francisco pedicabs and the first Fishermen's Wharf bike rental business. After much negotiation with the Bay Area Ferry authority, he started Golden Gate 'Bike the Bridge' tours. He is married and his son is a team rider for BMC Pro cycling.

In 2010, Dr Betty Harris was awarded the Florence Nightingale Medal for her dedicated service to the International Red Cross. Under her guidance, Red Cross programs for health care, disaster response, poverty reduction and land mine clearance were implemented in Cambodia.

Muong Vithy graduated from UCSF Medical School with Honors. After 5 years in the ER at San Francisco General Hospital, he started the Muong Phi Memorial Pediatric clinic. He is married and his daughter is an accomplished classical musician and dancer. He recently authored a book on the history of Angkor Wat.

THE END

Little Brother is the epitome of the "blue-collared MC," with lyrics that can relate to virtually everyone whether your bank statement reads well into the six figures, or negative thirty dollars. In the crusade to preserve quality Hip-Hop, Big Pooh and Phonte rank amongst those who can be considered as Hip-Hop's top activists in the cause. Get the latest info related to Little Brother. 2007 - And Justus for All [160 kbps] + iTunes Bonus Tracks[192 kbps]. little brother. A male who has a preference for platonic "fraternal sibling" relationships with women as opposed to sexual relationships. The "little brother" may not necessarily reject a sexual encounter with a woman with whom he has developed a "fraternal sibling" relationship, but it is not the primary motivation for initiating or continuing the relationship and generally not the desired outcome. "Don't start unless you're up for it all the way. I don't need another little brother". by Dylan1982 April 29, 2010. 42. 20. Flag.