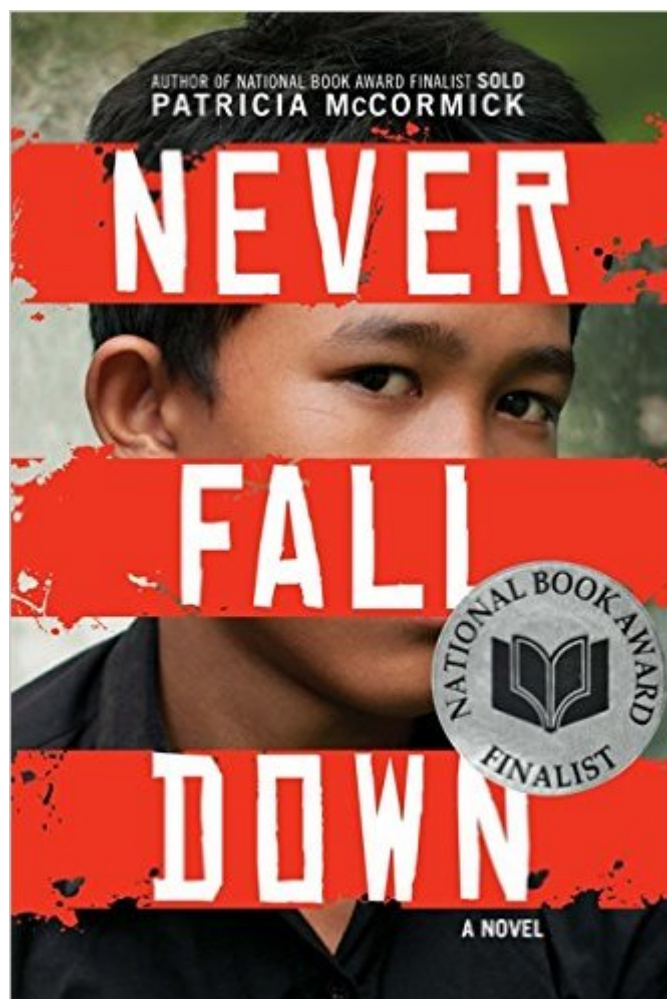


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# Never Fall Down



## Synopsis

This National Book Award nominee from two-time finalist Patricia McCormick is the unforgettable story of Arn Chorn-Pond, who defied the odds to survive the Cambodian genocide of 1975-1979 and the labor camps of the Khmer Rouge. Based on the true story of Cambodian advocate Arn Chorn-Pond, and authentically told from his point of view as a young boy, this is an achingly raw and powerful historical novel about a child of war who becomes a man of peace. It includes an author's note and acknowledgments from Arn Chorn-Pond himself. When soldiers arrive in his hometown, Arn is just a normal little boy. But after the soldiers march the entire population into the countryside, his life is changed forever. Arn is separated from his family and assigned to a labor camp: working in the rice paddies under a blazing sun, he sees the other children dying before his eyes. One day, the soldiers ask if any of the kids can play an instrument. Arn's never played a note in his life, but he volunteers. This decision will save his life, but it will pull him into the very center of what we know today as the Killing Fields. And just as the country is about to be liberated, Arn is handed a gun and forced to become a soldier. Supports the Common Core State Standards.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (235 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Never Fall Down was one absolutely devastating read. I was not prepared for its searing authenticity and intensely emotional message; it took me by surprise, broke my heart to pieces and left me drained and breathless, but also very satisfied and enriched. Reading this book was an experience like no other. Profoundly harrowing and cathartic, Never Fall Down tells a true story of Arn Chorn-Pond, a child soldier in Cambodia who later became famous for his advocacy of peace and

civil rights. With her raw and painfully realistic prose, Patricia McCormick weaves a gripping tale of death, abuse, starvation, terror, and brainwashing. A poignant story of survival against all odds and keeping one's humanity. This is a book with a beating heart, and one that everyone - and I mean EVERYONE - should read. Arn Chorn-Pond was born into a family of performing musicians that owned and ran a famous opera in Cambodia. When the Khmer Rouge (a ruthless organization that was following the Communist Party of Kampuchea) came to power, Chorn-Pond (and hundreds other children) was separated from his family and sent away to a work camp, where all the kids were forced to work in rice fields from sunrise to late night hours. Starved, terrified and growing weaker with every passing day, Chorn-Pond witnessed people dying all around him: from exhaustion and starvation, from sickness (like malaria), or simply being executed by the Khmer Rouge "Camrades" (for having too pale a skin, or too soft hands, or for not working hard enough). He had to learn how to bottle up his emotions, how to make himself numb and desensitized to all the death and horrors around him. He had to adapt and find a way to survive. Later on, Chorn-Pond and a group of other boys were chosen to play propaganda songs for the camp soldiers.

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