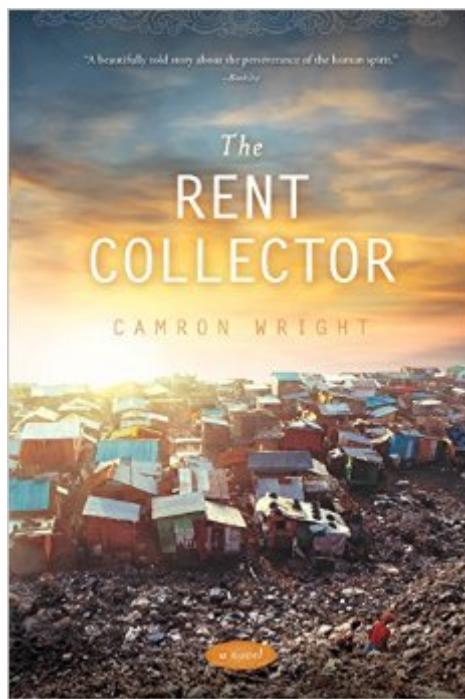


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# The Rent Collector



## **Synopsis**

Survival for Ki Lim and Sang Ly is a daily battle at Stung Meanchey, the largest municipal waste dump in all of Cambodia. They make their living scavenging recyclables from the trash. Life would be hard enough without the worry for their chronically ill child, Nisay, and the added expense of medicines that are not working. Just when things seem worst, Sang Ly learns a secret about the ill-tempered rent collector who comes demanding money--a secret that sets in motion a tide that will change the life of everyone it sweeps past. The Rent Collector is a story of hope, of one woman's journey to save her son and another woman's chance at redemption. It demonstrates that even in a dump in Cambodia--perhaps especially in a dump in Cambodia--everyone deserves a second chance.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

It took me a while after purchasing this book to actually read it because I mostly like to read positive and fun books, with a few downers thrown in between. I never write reviews, but I must comment on this one. It really made me see my own life differently. I was able to take a step back and appreciate all that I have without the cloud of guilt or darkness of some people's reality hanging overhead. It takes talent to write in a way that helps us see that even small and seemingly insignificant acts of kindness and generosity can mean a world of difference to someone else. I loved that I was still thinking about this book weeks after I finished it, and felt compelled to mention it to everyone I spoke with! There is a tiny bit of content that makes me hesitate in having my young teens read it, but I feel they have much to gain from it and will be sure to have them read it soon (the fact that I

hesitate makes it all the more inviting to them, and they are begging me to borrow it). There is definitely something valuable, worth while, life changing, and even beautiful, in the time spent with Sang Ly in this book that takes us to a dump in Cambodia.

It was one of the most well written and beautiful books I have read in the last few years. I am always looking for great, not good, books to read, and I was not disappointed in this book. The author is amazingly brilliant with the written word and the ability to share this story. LOVED IT!!!!!!! We are using it as part of our book club.

This is the second book that I have read about people living in a dump; the other one was set in India, this one is a big contrast to the other one, this is a book of hope rather than hopelessness. The Rent Collector by Camron Wright gives a look into the life of trash pickers living in a huge dump of Cambodia. Their daily life is roasting hot, dirty from the discarded articles, muddy from the rains, dangerous because of the smoldering piles, flies and vermin. What they retrieve from the dump is not a living but sometimes enough to sell to buy rice and if they are lucky. They are forbidden to build houses so they look for materials from the dump to build three walls and use a canvas cover to block the rain. Their clothing, cooking pots and all other possessions came from the dump. Sang Li is poor but is not aware of what people take for granted outside of the dump. This is her world. Her baby boy, Nissay is constantly sick with diarrhea and can't keep any food down so he doesn't grow. This is a constant worry of his parents. Sang Li's husband is Kim Lim, a hard working picker and loving father and husband. You would think that the pickers wouldn't have to pay rent because of where they live and the fact that they build their own day shelters. But Sopeap Sin, aka the Cow collects the rent every month. She seems to be just a very angry old drunk woman who hates everything except her high grade wine. But because of what Kim Lim finds in the trash one day, all of their lives change including the rent collector. This story is much than what it is a life of daily survival in the dump; it is the story of hope, understanding, redemption and secrets dating back the Pol Pots' devastating regime. I recommend this book highly because of the strong message of hope and the many questions for thought that it generates. One of them being, don't be to judge people. Read this book, you will learn! I received a copy of this book from the author for an honest review; I did not receive any financial compensation. The review reflects my own thoughts and feelings.

It was with a bit of hesitation that I picked up The Rent Collector. The summary doesn't exactly inspire life-affirming feelings, but that's exactly what The Rent Collector did for me. It affirmed life

and literature and, more than that, the goodness of humanity. The story centers around Sang Ly and her family, who live at a dump and eke out a living as best they can. Nisay, their baby boy, is often sick and needs medicine that they can never dream of affording. Sang Ly realizes one day that the rent collector can read, and this revelation starts her on a course of discovery & hope for a better future for her family. I have only a foggy idea of the struggles that Cambodia faced during the Khmer Rouge rule. Just when I thought that this story was only about a family at a dump, I realized it was about much more--a past filled with war and sacrifice and a future with redemption and a chance to do the right thing. There were a few times that I was moved to tears. The writing itself was simple, but doesn't need a lot of flashy embellishments. The story is simply beautiful.

The Rent Collector is a novel based on true happenings. I enjoyed the captivating way the book is written as well as the contents of the story. It comments on social injustice caused by the war in Cambodia and the aftermath of the communist takeover. In spite of the efforts of communism to eradicate the educated/rich class, the author takes the true story of one person and expresses how right can overcome might, how the ability to read is mightier than poverty. It shows how overlooking one's own problems by getting to know others is a better way to survive in hard times and it is strong evidence for the positive influence of education to better ones' self and to extend this success to help others. High Five.

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