Story Summary

This is a fiction story based on Cambodian history about a family during Lon Nol's time and the Khmer Rouge regime. It talks about a Cambodian man, whose name is Chort, who was married to a Chinese woman. They had a son, Nak, who was one of the most important family members. During Lon Nol's period, Chort's family lived happily with joy and peace. During 1975, the Khmer Rouge (KR) entered Phnom Penh and evacuated everyone out of the city, including this family, to the rural regions. Due to the fact that Chort's wife is not a Cambodian citizen, she got sent to S-21 prison. She suffered in many ways before she died. Chort tried many strategies to help his wife, but he couldn't save her. After that, the Khmer Rouge soldiers forced him to work on a farm, and his son was forced to become a soldier for the KR. Chort's son got brainwashed by the KR, and they forced Nak to control many other adults including..... his dad! On January 6th, 1979, Vietnamese soldiers entered Phnom Penh and all the KR soldiers, including Nak, fought against them. Chort's son got killed during that conflict so Chort is the only person who stayed alive in his family. 25 years later, Chort gets really old, and he passes away without taking any revenge for his family. Later on, the ECCC emerges and most of the senior leaders are tried in that tribunal.

Story Script

Scene 1: Before Khmer Rouge = 3 minutes (Visal - Director)

- → Rooster crowing in the early morning
- Narrator 1 (Somp): This is my story! I am Chort. Let me take you back to the 1970s in Cambodian history, where I found a peaceful life with my family.
 - ❖ Action: Chort walks in with his wife (Marady) and his son (DP) wearing nice clothes.
- Narrator 1 (Somp): I have a wife, who is of Chinese descent, and we have a son. We got married 10 years ago and our son is now 9 years old; his name is Nak. During this time, we are living under Prime Minister Lon Nol, who created a republic in the country for 5 years in total. During this time, because we were wealthy and educated, we had the opportunity to do things like play football together and attend concerts.
 - Play football together (Having fun)

Nak (DP): ប៉ាៗ កូនទាត់ហើយណាស់?

Chort (Vuthy): ទាត់មកៗ!

Nak (DP): លោកប៉ាៗ កូនចង់ទៅញ៉ាំនំរបស់មីងនោះ!

Chort (Vuthy): នៅតាមផ្លូវទៅការប្រគុំតន្ត្រី ចាំប៉ាំទិញឲ្យ។

Action: They leave the stage.

Narrator 1 (Somp): After independence, but before 1970, Cambodia is a great place to live. We do trading and conduct business with other countries. We construct new buildings. We create new products. We have new manufacturing. We sing. We dance. And we develop many skills in our society. Sadly, from 1970 on, there was a civil war between Lon Nol and the communist party. There weren't peaceful times for most, except the wealthy class in Phnom Penh.

Businessmen, singers, and foreigners walk in.

Singers put on headphones and hold paper (look like singing).

Businessmen and foreigners discuss and shake hands.

Narrator 1 (Somp): After five years of civil war, the Communist Party of Kampuchea or CPK, was smart and snuck into the city with their soldiers to gain control of the country and overthrow Lon Nol, who had ties to the US. Many rural farmers and communists join and fight for them, which brings us to the 17th of April, 1975, when the Khmer Rouge came into Phnom Penh. The sight of the CPK's weapons showed their strength and power - their soldiers, wearing the same clothes as typical peasants, come near my house, which makes no sense - what they are doing?

Action: the soldiers of CPK walk in

Scene 2: During Khmer Rouge = 7 minutes (Sovannou - Director)

Narrator 1 (Somp): The ultimate conflict of my people was that they were seeking out their new lives after the civil war, while at the same time, they started their new nightmare of genocide under the Khmer Rouge. After the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh silently, many tearful Cambodians heard their announcement of...

Soldier 1 (Maya): ប្រជាជនជាទីស្រឡាញ់របស់ខ្ញុំ ពួកយើងដឹងថាអ្នកទាំងអស់គ្នាកំពុងតែជួបប្រទះនឹងបញ្ហាដោយសហរដ្ឋ អាមេរិកកំពុងតែធ្វើការទម្លាក់គ្រាប់បែកនៅក្នុងប្រទេសខ្មែរយើង ហើយប្រជាជនកំពុងតែមានបញ្ហាខ្វះចំណីអាហារទ្រទ្រង់ជីវិត។ Soldier 2 (Pich): ដូចនេះដំណោះស្រាយគឺថានៅឯជាយប្រទេសរបស់យើងគឺមានអាហារសល់ច្រើនណាស់ហើយនូវ ពេលដែលយើងទៅដល់ទីនោះ យើងនឹងនាំគ្នាដាំដំណាំនឹងបង្កើនផលដំណាំសំរាប់ធ្វើជាអាហាររបស់យើង ដែលគំនិតនេះ វាប្រសើរជាងរស់នៅក្នុងបន្ទប់ដ៏ស្រអុះស្រអាប់ទាំងគ្មានចំណីអាហារ។ ដូច្នេះសូមមេត្តារៀបចំទៅទីនោះទាំងអស់គ្នា ពុំនោះទេ សហរដ្ឋអាមេរិកនឹងធ្វើការទម្លាក់គ្រាប់បែកនៅក្នុងប្រទេសយើងជាក់ជាមិនខាន ហើយប្រជាជនយើងទាំងអស់នឹងជួបនូវបញ្ហា ខ្វះរបបចំណីអាហារ។

Action: The villagers cheer: Yeah! Yeah! with a smile!

Narrator 1 (Somp): Everyone comes and cheers, including my family, and they all leave this fallen city "Phnom Penh." Some were eager to leave, as they had been starving, without a place to live. Others were worried about leaving their homes and property, but knew they had no choice.

Action: The song "Or Phnom Penh Ey" starts to play and everyone walks inside the room with a bag of clothes SLOWLY.

Narrator 1 (Somp): On the evacuation day, the soldiers take my wife away from me because of her Chinese appearance, and later on, I found out that she was brought to somewhere that I never could find, a place where people go in, but never come out. My heart was pounding and I said...

Chort (Vuthy): សមាកមិត្តបង សមាកមិត្តបងឯងយកប្រពន្ធខ្ញុំទៅណា?

Action: Bow down and start to cry

Soldier 3 (Seyha): អត់ទេយើងត្រូវយកនាងទៅសួរចម្លើយ

Action: Yell aggressively

Chort's Wife (Marady): បងជិត បងជិត ជួយអូនផង!

Action: Trying to reach Chort's hand, but the soldier blocks

Soldier 3 (Seyha): ដើរឲ្យលឿនមក!

Action: Pulling Chort's wife

Narrator 1 (Somp): They took my wife away with tremendous brutality. I could feel her pain and her sadness, but what could I do? Even though I tried to run to her, the soldiers stopped me and were hitting me. My tears cascaded out from my eyes and I screamed my apologies that I couldn't do anything besides see her sobbing and hear her getting further and further away from me.

Note: Sad sound effects start to play and everyone leaves except the narrator

At S-21 (Menghouth Director)

Narrator 1 (Somp): At this time, I had no idea where my wife and other educated people like doctors, university students, engineers and monks were taken. We later found out that this unknown place was S-21, the deadliest prison in Cambodia, led by Kang Kek lew, also known as Duch. He was in charge of interrogating prisoners, and getting them to confess their crimes, most of which were invented.

- Note: Sad sound effects start to play, soldiers are trying to tie the victim's hands and hit them a little Kang Kek lew (Rathanak): មន្ទីរ ស២១ គឺជាកន្លែងដែលពោរពេញទៅដោយភាពសុចវិត ជនជាប់ចោទទាំងអស់ ត្រូវតែសារភាព នូវទង្វើដែលខ្លួនបានប្រព្រឹត្តិ បើរឹងរុសនោះយើងនឹងមានវិធានការរបស់ពួកយើងដើម្បីឲ្យជន ជាប់ចោទទាំងអស់សារភាព ។
- Action: The two soldiers is guarding the victims while they are listening to Duch
 Kang Kek lew (Rathanak): ជនជាប់ចោទគ្រប់រូបត្រូវតែសរសេរនូវកំហុសដែលខ្លួនបានធ្វើហើយមួយវិញទៀតជនជាប់ចោទ
 ត្រូវតែគោរពបទបញ្ជាទាំង ១០ ដែលមាននៅទីនេះ។
 - Action: Chort's wife and others tried to write their confession but then she is sent to the killing field and murdered

Narrator 1 (Somp): The last time that I saw my wife with my own eyes was on the day of the evacuation. I miss her, and I break down whenever I visualize her in my head. I was not only going through the devastation of losing my wife, but I also had to stand there and watch my son be recruited by the Khmer Rouge. Nak had gone to be a soldier, carrying guns and murdering people, when he was just a boy before! This is hard to talk about...

Note: The narrator changes and the old narrator comes in. Nak comes out carrying a gun.

Zone Leader: Ta Mok (Rika Director)

Narrator 2 (Pan): During the Khmer Rouge regime, agriculture was seen as the key to success; once everyone was evacuated to the countryside, they were instructed to produce as much rice as possible.

While many Cambodians were sent to the Killing Fields as traitors, most people were left working in the fields. The killing fields were the most sorrowful for Cambodian citizens and other targeted ethnicities because people were executed in these areas, but another terrible place to be was working in the hot sun in the rice fields. I escaped the killing fields, but had to work all day long under Ta Mok, the zone leader in my region.

Tamok (DC): សមាកមិត្តទាំងអស់ដែលចូលរួមក្នុងការប្រជុំលើកនេះ ប្រទេសមួយនេះកំពុងតែជួបបញ្ហាខ្លះដែលត្រូវការ ដំណោះស្រាយ។ ដូចនេះសមាកមិត្ត ប៉ុល ពតយើងគឺទាមទាររាល់អស់ជនទាំងឡាយដែលជាកសិករត្រូវតែបង្កើន ផលស្រូវដោយក្នុងមួយហិចតា គឺត្រូវបានផលចំនួន ៣ តោន។

Action: meeting with other co-leaders

Co-leader 1 (SB): លោកបងតើធ្វើយ៉ាងដូចម្ដេចទៅ បើកសិករស្ទើរតែគ្រប់គ្នាមិនមានកម្លាំងក្នុងការធ្វើស្រែចម្ការនោះផងហ្នឹង?

Action: Stand up and question. Needs to be skinny and sick looking people nearby (Puthea, Soliday, SG) to show that they are too weak to work...

Tamok (DC): យោបល់ទាំងនោះគឺជាគំនិតរបស់សមាកមិត្ត ប្រសិនបើនរណាមិនធ្វើតាមបញ្ជាវិធីនោះទេ នោះអ្នកទាំងនោះនឹង ប្រឈមមុខជាមួយនិងរឿងដូចជាដាក់ទារុណកម្មឬក៏យកទៅសម្លាប់ ព្រោះសមាកមិត្តទាំងនោះមិនបានចូលរួមចំណែកជួយដល់ អង្គការ។

Co-leader 1 (SB): អរគុណសមាកមិត្តបង!

Note: sit down

Narrator 2 (Pan): After they had their disastrous meeting, all of the co-leaders started to turn darker and blacker; torture and murder started to happen on a larger scale. People were becoming exhausted from working so hard in the fields.

Soldier Nak (DP): ហេក! ធ្វើការងារកុំខ្ចិលពេក!

Note: fight that worker and kick them

Chort (Vuthy): ណាក់កូន កូនឯងកំពុងធ្វើអី? មកទីនេះមកកូន ប៉ានឹកកូនណាស់!

Note: he cries

Soldier Nak (DP): ទេ! សមាកមិត្តឯងមិនមែនជាឱ្យកយើងទេ! អង្គការទើបជាឪពុករបស់យើង!

Note: Yells, runs away

Narrator 2 (Pan): That was the first time my son had ever done something like this to me; I could not believe I had been witness to my own son doing such barbaric activities and forgetting me as a father. A few months went by and comrades from my zone started to disappear. I didn't know where they went...

Action: The soldiers start to take people to kill

Worker 1 (MH): សមាកមិត្តបង តើសមាកមិត្តបងកំពុងតែយកខ្ញុំទៅណាហ្នឹង?

Note: taking workers off stage

Soldier 4 (Niron): អត់ទេ សមាកមិត្តនឹងត្រូវបញ្ជូនទៅនៅផ្ទះថ្មីហើយសមាកមិត្តនិងបានជួប ជាមួយក្រុមគ្រួសាររបស់ សមាកមិត្តវិញ។

Note: all the workers smile

Narrator 2 (Pan): A few weeks later, there was a rumor that the people who were missing from my zone were all dead. They were lied to by the soldiers that they were going to have better living conditions.

Note: Pause, 3 workers: Theara, Vattey, Soliday, come and look around to talk

Narrator 2 (Pan): The soldiers put all of the people on the truck, blindfolded them and tied their hands, but this deceitfulness was just to stop them from getting overwhelmed and knowing the evil plan. Those workers were sent to the killing fields, many of which have since been discovered. The most famous one is located outside Phnom Penh and is called "Choeung Ek."

Note: The soldier brings them to the killing field and kills them.

Killing and Forced to Marry (Theara Director)

Note: sneaking at night to dig potatoes to eat with her infant

Worker-digger (Sovannou): កុំយំៗ កូនគេដឹងឥឡូវហើយកូន

Action: pats her child to calm them

Soldier-lady (Makara): ហេ!! ធ្វើអីហ្នឹង?

Action: Yell! walk to the back of the worker and take a quick check

Soldier-lady (Makara): អីយ៉ា! សមាកមិត្តឯងហ៊ានក្បត់អង្គការផង! ទាហានឆាប់ចាប់សមាកមិត្តនេះយកទៅសួរចម្លើយភ្លាម!

Action: the soldier pulls her really strong

Worker-digger (Sovannou): ខ្ញុំមិនបានធ្វើអីខុសទេ លែងខ្ញុំទៅៗ សមាកមិត្តបង!

Action: she cries and keeps repeating the words, the soldiers still take her to the killing field

Narrator 2 (Pan): This is what happened to nearly 2 million Cambodians during that time; they went to the killing field and never came back. For the workers, the food that we got was so little, only two spoons of porridge per day. One day, everyone in my zone was called for a meeting and the announcement was:

The leader (Sovannary): សួស្ដី សមាកមិត្តទាំងអស់គ្នាថ្ងៃនេះគឺជាថ្ងៃជ័យ សិរីមង្គលចំពោះសមាកមិត្តទាំងអស់គ្នា។ នៅពេលនេះ

អង្គការបានសម្រេចចិត្តដល់ប្រជាជនទាំងអស់ដែលនៅទីនេះអោយមានសុភមង្គលក្នុងគ្រួសារដោយសមាកមិត្តប្រុស និងសមាកមិត្តស្រីនឹងបានចាប់ដៃគ្នាបង្កើតគ្រួសារជាមួយគ្នា។

The leader (Sovannary): ដូចនេះ គូរដំបូងគឺសមាកមិត្ត**ជត**ជាមួយសមាកមិត្តប៊ុន។

Action: The soldiers start to go and pair up the partners

The Leader (Sovannary): នៅពេលនេះសមាកមិត្តនឹងត្រូវនៅជាមួយដៃគូរខ្លួនអស់មួយជីវិត

Action: No workers are happy with that, but they just pretend they are happy

Meeting with every worker (Neang L - Director)

Narrator 2 (Pan): A few days later we have a meeting, a confession meeting.

Worker 2 (Rithy): សមាកមិត្តបង ខ្ញុំបានឃើញសមាកមិត្តនេះលួចដំឡូង។

Action: Stand up

The Leader (Sovannary): មើ! សមាកមិត្ត តើសមាកមិត្តបានលួចដំឡងដូចដែលគេថាមែនអត់?

Note: Ask with normal voice

Worker 3 (Soliday): ទេ ខ្ញុំមិនបានលួចដំឡូងដូចដែរសមាកមិត្តបាននិយាយទេ។

Note: Talk with soft sound

Worker 4 (Vattey): សមាកមិត្តបង ខ្ញុំក៏ឃើញសមាកមិត្តនេះលួចដំឡូងដែរ។

Action: point to worker 3

The Leader (Sovannary): តែផ្ដាស មានគេបាននិយាយថា បានឃើញសមាកមិត្តលួចហើយ នៅមានអីនិយាយទៀត?

♦ Note: Stronger voice

Worker 3 (Soliday): ទេ សមាកមិត្តខាងនោះកុហកទេ ខ្ញុំពិតជាមិនបានធ្វើមែន។

Note: Talk with about to cry sound

The Leader (Sovannary): ទាហាន ឆាប់ចាប់យកសមាកមិត្តទៅកែប្រែភ្លាម ពីបទលួចក្បត់អង្គការ!!!

Note: Yell!

Scene 3: After Khmer Rouge = 3 minutes (Kangna Director)

Narrator 2 (Pan): On January 1979, Vietnamese soldiers approached Phnom Penh and overthrew the Khmer Rouge soldiers and its leaders. Most of the Khmer Rouge leaders, including Pol Pot, Ta Mok and others, escaped to Anlong Veng, Oddar Meanchey, as their new home where many of them lived until their deaths. Even though my child had betrayed me, because of my father's love, I would never hate my son; I always forgives him. Sadly, he was killed before me, during the rebellion with Vietnam. I love you son!

- Action: Vietnamese soldiers came up and start the revolution on Khmer Rouge including fighting against the Khmer Rouge.
- ♦ Action: The Khmer Rouge run away.

Narrator 2 (Pan): After the Khmer Rouge fell, chaos began. Cambodia had no central unity, so after awhile, the United Nations came to us to help set up a new government by holding an election. The election went to Hun Sen, who became our new Prime Minister.

People: ជយោ! ជយោ!

Action: People were cheering, shouting and running around with the Cambodian flag.

Action: People running around, found their family, cry and hug each other from a very long separation.

Narrator 2 (Pan): From that time on, Cambodia has been more peaceful than during the terrible genocide and everyone tried to find their family. But all of those memories of sorrow and pain will stick to their brains forever. This tragedy will never fade away. Some Khmer Rouge soldiers escaped and lived freely until Pol Pot died in 1998; still today, many continue living as average citizens without punishment.

Action: People come do a normal trade

Narrator 2 (Pan): Times fly through very fast; I was at my home sitting on my wooden chair, looking through the window at my homeland -- Phnom Penh -- I think it is time for me now, it is time to say good...........

Action: Narrator 2 fall down

Narrator 3 (Veng Hour): Life never lasts forever: those were Chort's words. He died with all those memories, the sadness, tears and devastating experience. His hope was to find justice for all the victims, but he wasn't successful in this challenging intention, other than his last dream: "I hope someone in this country will help to find justice for the victims of the Khmer Rouge regime, especially my wife."

Action: The workers come and sing the "Ou Phnom Penh Ey" song for 30 second, and the other prepare to set up the stage for ECCC

Scene 4: Present (ECCC) = 2 minutes (SG Director)

Narrator 3 (VH): This is 2007, the year that the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia or ECCC, have finally established the tribunal with support and big help from the United Nations.

Note: Everyone needs to get ready

Judge (Ketya): ឆាប់នាំលោក នួន ជា ខៀវ សំផន លោក ឌុច ចូលមកក្នុងសាលាក្ដី។

Action: They come in by security guard

Narrator 3 (VH): Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan, Duch, leng Sary and leng Thirith were five of the top Senior leaders who were brought to trial; this list doesn't include Pol Pot, since he passed away in 1998, without experiencing any trial or sentencing after the Khmer Rouge. The tribunal is open and is starting to investigate and find evidence to prove the truth; because of the court procedures and the quantity of crimes, leng Sary and leng Thirith both died before the tribunals sentenced them, in 2013 and 2015 respectively.

Note: Pause

Judge (Ketya): សូមបើកសារនាការ!

Note: Take Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan, Duch inside.

Questioner (Malika): ដូចនេះចូលអ្នកទាំងបីប្រាប់នឹងបំភ្លឺការពិត ហើយព្រមទទួលកំហុសថាអ្នកបានបង្កើតនូវបញ្ហាដ៏ធំនេះ មក។ លោកនួន ជា ចូលលោកប្រាប់នូវការពិត ហើយបកស្រាយថាតើមូលហេតុអ្វីបានជាលោកនិងសមាជិកក្រុមរបស់លោកស ម្រេចចិត្តបង្កើតនូវរឿងដ៏អាក្រក់មួយនេះមកប្រទេសរបស់ខ្លួន?

NuonChea (Mengthong): ខ្ញុំមិនបានធ្វើនោះទេ ហើយខ្ញុំក៏មិនបានសម្លាប់ប្រជាជនខ្មែរទាំងអស់នោះដែរ។ ការសម្លាប់ ទាំងអស់គឺដោយសារតែពួកទាហាន ជាអ្នកបាញ់សម្លាប់អ្នកទាំងនោះដោយខ្លួនឯងទេ។

Note: Explain in an old manner

Narrator 3 (VH): How ironic! Nuon Chea rejects that this is his fault!

Note: Yelling

Questioner (Malika): លោក ខៀវ សំផន ចូលលោកបកស្រាយនូវកំហុសដ៏ធំរបស់លោកមួយនេះ។

Khieu Samphan (Kimseng): លោក ខ្ញុំមិនបានធ្វើខុសទេគឺខ្ញុំមិនបានសម្លាប់អ្នកណានោះទេ ខ្ញុំគ្រាន់តែនៅក្រោមបញ្ជារបស់ លោកប៉ុល ពត ប៉ុណ្ណោះ។

Questioner (Malika): អស់លោក សូមប្រាប់ពួកយើងនូវការពិត យើងត្រូវការការពិតសំរាប់ប្រជាជនខ្មែរទាំងអស់គ្នា!

Duch (Rathanak): បាទលោក កាលនោះដែរខ្ញុំមានតំណែងជាប្រធានគុកសន្តិសុខទួល ស្លែង ស-២១ ហើយខ្ញុំបានធ្វើបាប មនុស្សជាច្រើន ដែលពេលនោះខ្ញុំបានបញ្ជាអោយទាហានធ្វើទារុណកម្មទៅលើប្រជាជនទាំងអស់នោះ ទាំងខ្ញុំមិនដឹងថារឿង នោះបានកើតឡើងដោយវិធីណា។

❖ Note: Pause

Duch (Rathanak): ខ្ញុំពិតជាមានភាពសោកស្ដាយ ចំពោះអ្វីដែលខ្ញុំបានធ្វើណាស់។ ហើយខ្ញុំព្រមទទួលកំហុសថានេះជា កំហុសរបស់ខ្ញុំ។ ខ្ញុំដឹងហើយខ្ញុំនឹងទទួលរាល់នូវទោសទណ្ឌកម្មទាំងឡាយដែលខ្ញុំបានធ្វើ។

Note: bow to other

Judge (Ketya): ដូច្នេះ លោកដុច ត្រូវបានសារភាពថាលោកបានចូលរួមក្នុងការរួមគំនិតសម្លាប់ប្រជាជនខ្មែរ។ លោកនឹងត្រូវកាត់ទោស និងជាប់ពន្ធធនាគារ អស់មួយជីវិតក្នុងបទឧក្រិដ្ឋកម្មប្រឆាំងមនុស្សជាតិ។

❖ Note: Explain briefly

Judge (Ketya): ដូច្នេះយើងនឹងបន្តធ្វើការកាត់ក្តីអំពីរឿងនេះថ្ងៃក្រោយបន្តទៀត។ សូមបិទសាវនាការ!

Narrator 3 (VH): Kang Kek lew or Duch's case has closed. The two remaining senior leaders are Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan, both of whom refuse to confess. This trial has gone on for 10 years now, and we are all waiting for the day that these men finally get their sentence and spend the rest of their lives in jail!!

Note: Everyone come up and bow to the spectators

Scene 5: Everyone come together and SING = 3 minutes (Neang L Director)

Narrator 3 (VH): At this moment, we want to bless the souls of every person who died during the genocide to rest in peace with a poem written by Sreyneang L.

នាវេលានេះដែល ពួកយើងសូមលើកម្រាមដៃដប់គោរពនិងរំលឹកទៅដល់វិញ្ញាណខន្ធនៃប្រជាពលរដ្ឋខ្មែរដែលបានបាត់បង់ជីវិត នៅក្រោមរបបខ្មែរក្រហម នឹងសូមឲ្យវិញ្ញាណខន្ធរបស់ពួកគាត់បានទៅកាន់សុគតិភពនិងសេចក្តីស្ងប់ ដែលកំណាព្យនេះត្រូវបា ននិពន្ធនិងសរសេរដោយ លឿង ផូស្រីនាង។