

## VAR ASHE HOUSTON

Var lived in Cambodia with her two children and her husband. Var was a teacher. The Khmer Rouge were in power.

The Khmer Rouge thought that all people should be the same. The Khmer Rouge made rules to stop people from being different: you were not allowed to have a religion, or to read books, or to own money, and you were not allowed to wear coloured clothes. The Khmer Rouge killed people for small reasons, because they thought those reasons were clues that told them that the people were different. Reasons like: wearing glasses, knowing how to read, having a white mark on your wrist (watch mark), even knowing how to open a car door.

The Khmer Rouge decided no one should live in the cities. They came to the city where Var and her family lived and made everyone leave. They did not let people take anything with them. The journey took more than a month. Then the Khmer Rouge put them in a train for three days. The train was so crowded that some people died, and had to be thrown out of the windows. They got to a village; the Khmer Rouge made everyone work in the fields. Lots of people got sick and died.

The Khmer Rouge killed Var's husband and made her watch as they hurt her children.

Eventually an army came and defeated the Khmer Rouge. Var began to walk to get to another country. The Khmer Rouge had left mines and traps to try and hurt people who escaped. Var made it through to a refugee camp where people helped her.



This is a picture of Var now:



The Khmer Rouge wanted everyone to be the same. They killed people who were different. Var survived but she remembers what happened and that makes her very upset. She says that hurting people because they are different is a very bad thing to do.

