

YOUETH SOLDIERS TOOK ME AWAY

Youeth lives in New York City with her parents and grandparents. She has had a difficult time adjusting to life in North America since she arrived in 1988. She has been responsible for caring for her elderly grandparents and parents, and this has made it hard for her to spend much time away from home learning English and about the customs of the U.S. Despite this, she has learned to speak English quite well and hopes to find a job doing housekeeping or child care. Her life has been very difficult, but she is looking forward to the future.

I left Cambodia when I was nine years old. Before the war our family had a simple life as farmers. The war was very bad. Then afterward, the whole country was terrible. Soldiers took me away from my family. I had to live with other children who were taken from their families too. We had to work very hard in the fields. Lots of us got sick. We were so hungry all the time. I was very homesick. I missed my family so much.

One time I tried to run away—to go back to my family. It was at night. When I was running through the streets I saw people killed. The soldiers cut the people's throats and left them dying in the street. It was like in the movie *The Killing Fields*.

