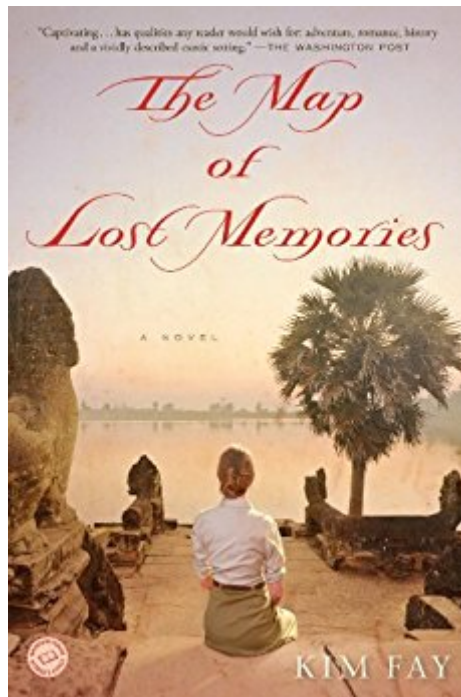


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The Map Of Lost Memories: A Novel



Synopsis

Edgar Award Finalist for Best First Novel by an American Author "Captivating . . . has qualities any reader would wish for: adventure, romance, history and a vividly described exotic setting." "The Washington Post In 1925 the international treasure-hunting scene is a man's world, and no one understands this better than Irene Blum, who is passed over for a coveted museum curatorship because she is a woman. Seeking to restore her reputation, she sets off from Seattle in search of a temple believed to house the lost history of Cambodia's ancient Khmer civilization. But her quest to make the greatest archaeological discovery of the century soon becomes a quest for her family's secrets. Embracing the colorful and corrupt world of colonial Asia in the early 1900s, *The Map of Lost Memories* takes readers into a forgotten era where nothing is as it seems. As Irene travels through Shanghai's lawless back streets and Saigon's opium-filled lanes, she joins forces with a Communist temple robber and an intriguing nightclub owner with a complicated past. What they bring to light deep within the humidity-soaked Cambodian jungle does more than change history. It ultimately solves the mysteries of their own lives. Look for special features inside. Join the Random House Reader's Circle for author chats and more. Praise for *The Map of Lost Memories* "In *The Map of Lost Memories*, Kim Fay draws us into a universe as exotic, intense, and historically detailed as the ancient artifacts her unforgettable heroine seeks. It's a deliciously unexpected journey: Indiana Jones meets Somerset Maugham meets Marguerite Duras." "Jennifer Cody Epstein, author of *The Painter from Shanghai* "A thrilling mix of adventure and personal discovery . . . [Kim] Fay crafts an intricate page-turner that will keep readers breathless and guessing." "Publishers Weekly "A ripping good tale . . . mysterious Asian locations . . . a driven young American heroine . . . an era no longer remembered but faded to romantic imagination . . . *The Map of Lost Memories* pulls the components together in a story that intrigues and rewards." "Lincoln Journal Star "Fay's extraordinary novel has everything great historical-adventure fiction should: a strikingly original setting, exhilarating plot twists, and a near-impossible quest." "Booklist (starred review)

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Customer Reviews

This book was a pleasure to read. It didn't, however, fully meet my expectations from the book description, so let me provide a brief overview so you can decide if it aligns to your particular reading interest. First and foremost, this is a character book more than it is an adventure book. The official description led me to expect a full-out, fast moving adventure in 1930s Southeastern Asia. It includes that, but not in the way conventional adventure books provide. Yes, there is an adventure as the protagonist searches for specific Cambodian relics, and the adventure is entertaining.

There's sufficient amounts of intrigue, exotic locales and historical infusion to make the adventure fun. But the focus is much more on the characters than the adventure, the consequence of which is a dramatically slower pace than would be expected for an adventure novel. For example, the actual adventure didn't fully begin until at least 1/2 way through the book; this is a major indicator of the focus. Nonetheless, the character aspect of this story is outstanding, with individual, palapable characters jumping off the pages. Many of the characters are particularly interesting members of the immediately pre-Mao revolution days in China, so the reader gets an interesting perspective of the political atmosphere at that time. More than anything, though, the book tells the story of a younger lady who comes to Shanghai, and then to Cambodia in search of lost scrolls described in an old manuscript her father left her.

From Seattle to Shanghai was a long journey in 1925, especially for an unaccompanied woman. But Irene Blum travels in a world of art trafficking on a mammoth scale. For her the globe is studded with treasures to be bought and sold, the crown jewels of the deposed Russian tsar, a ring that was

the Empress Cixi's prized possession, paintings fit for the collection of a Rockefeller, and most of all, the newly discovered glories of Cambodia's Angkor Wat."A woman with a calling, now that is a thing of beauty," is how one of Irene's oldest friends describes her, but Irene's calling has turned to an obsession, a means of revenge. Passed over for a coveted position at the museum she has made into a showcase for Asian art in favor of a man with little experience, Irene is out to find a key to the forgotten history of the Khmer Empire, something that nobody else knows about--a set of copper scrolls hidden in the farthest reaches of Cambodia. With these in her possession, Irene will have a place in any museum she chooses and a secure spot in the only world that matters to her. Irene's mentor, a man who has fostered her interest in Khmer art, has sent her to Shanghai to enlist the assistance of Simone Merlin, a woman who grew up among the Angkorean temples and knows them as few others do. Now married to a man who is devoted to Communist revolution, Simone is reluctant to return to the world she knew and loved, especially since her husband is both possessive and violent. So begins a story of adventure and mystery, one that is neither predictable nor ordinary.

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