



“April 30, 1975. It would be seared in every South Vietnamese citizen’s memory forever, mine included. That was the day North Vietnamese Communists ripped freedom from my family.”

A story of enduring hope, resilience, and faith, *The Brave Who Crossed the Sea* is a moving true story of a couple, Anh and Hong, and their narrow escape from the oppressive and cruel North Vietnamese Communists and their Viet Cong forces in the 1970s.

Told from two points of view, the story sweeps you through decades and cities, following Anh and Hong from their tumultuous childhoods, to the invasion of the Communists, to the fateful moment they finally saw a chance of freedom—if they could only cross the sea.

As we follow Anh and Hong through many twists and turns, we discover that they must decide whether to stay loyal-to-country in Vietnam and face unbearable conditions or risk everything they have—and leave everyone they have ever known—for a chance at freedom.

*The Brave Who Crossed the Sea* will move you, inspire you, and hook you from the very beginning. A captivating, heartfelt account of pain, courage, and love that endures the tests of time, war, and poverty, this story will keep you reading from the first moment until the very last.

## The Brave Who Crossed The Sea

Author: Thao Nguyen Te

Available on Amazon

Book proceeds will go to **No Limits Charitable Foundation**, which seeks to foster environments where resilience, drive, and discipline are rewarded so people like Anh and Hong can receive the support they may need to thrive. The foundation encourages advancement by providing educational funding for those seeking to improve their quality of life. Learn more at [nolimits-foundation.com](http://nolimits-foundation.com) or e-mail [thao.te@nolimits-foundation.com](mailto:thao.te@nolimits-foundation.com).



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### Can you share the process you took to write this book?

I started gathering information by interviewing my parents and recording them on video. My goal was to have a low-pressure environment, where they could have a casual conversation with me and be comfortable with sharing. We would eventually have seven hours of footage, and I took some time to transcribe all the video interviews into written notes.

I also took a year to learn more about the Vietnam War, including watching and reading Ken Burns’ *The Vietnam War*. I wanted to make sure I fully understood the historical context that the events would take place and that it was as factual/historically accurate as possible.

With over 20 pages of transcribed notes, I then reorganized and created an outline that would ultimately become the framework of the book. I wanted to do justice to both of their stories, so I outlined the book chronologically, weaving back and forth between both of their story lines and significant events in their lives, until

## Q&A with Author Thao Nguyen Te

Born and raised in Denver, Thao is the middle child and only daughter to Mary Hong Truong and David Anh Nguyen. She wrote this memoir as a gift to her parents.

their stories eventually converged upon meeting, their escape, and their united lives thereafter.

With their 40 year anniversary (of arriving in the US and wedding) fast approaching, I had to switch into high gear to get the book across the finish line. I got in touch with a book coach and editor, who formalized the editing and publishing process. We went through three rounds of edits, worked with an artist to design a book cover and worked with a designer for the font and layout. We were then ready to submit to Amazon for publishing, just in time for my parents’ 40th anniversary party on January 15, 2022.

### What was most surprising to you about your parents’ journey?

Learning their story and journey has provided a deeper understanding of how my parents approach life in general. Countless times they didn’t know where their next meal would come from and they were faced with moral dilemmas, forcing them to make tough decisions in the name of survival. I was shocked at the amount of roadblocks they encountered. All of which brings me back to the present.

My parents have built a wonderful life for themselves, and they will likely never have to worry about their next meal again. Yet, if you ever find us at a restaurant and there are two dumplings left over, you better believe my mom would either pack them up or make room in her already stuffed stomach to finish them.

Some of those scars never fully heal. Coming from a state of true hunger and survival, those qualities are still a part of them. It is difficult to fully understand what it’s like to be in that state of mind, but hopefully this book and other similar ones out there provide a glimpse of that understanding.

### What message do you hope readers take away from the book?

In the back of my mind, I always wanted to document my parents’ story, so my kids and future grandkids would know where they came from, their family’s history, and the sacrifices that were made to provide the life we have. Furthermore, I knew that first generation Vietnamese Americans had similar immigration stories. Yet, their stories were not widely known by other Americans. Sources say, close to 1,000,000 Vietnamese attempted to escape Vietnam by boat after the Fall of Saigon, of which close to 25% of them would be lost at sea and never found again.

My parents’ story is one of hope, resilience, and faith. It’s an account of pain, courage and love that endured the tests of time, war, and poverty. While we can’t control the cards we are dealt, we can control how we play those cards. Their story helps provide understanding and awareness, especially given similar situations occurring around the world. If I can be part of the catalyst that helps build awareness, encourage grit, or motivate others to document their family story, I will consider the book a success.



Mary Hong Truong and David Anh Nguyen will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary and 40 years in the U.S. this January.