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## Moraga author brings Viet culture to America through young adult fantasy

Submitted by Meera Phadnis



Writing a novel, for many, is a difficult endeavor. But try writing one (or two) in your native language, and having it translated into English when names and cultural differences don't always compute.

"Translating `The Girl Who Kept Winter' was challenging because is was originally written for [the] Vietnamese market," said Moraga author Giao Chi (Annie) Phan, "so there were puns, poems, and cultural jokes that didn't translate." The book was also written in a genre Vietnamese are familiar with, so Phan said she didn't need to do as much world-building or establishing character archetypes, but English readers might find this too fast-paced.

Local author Giao Chi Phan Photos provided

"The Girl Who Kept Winter" is an English translation of "Tuyet Den" - a Vietnamese bestseller published in 2007 that is described as "an adventure in the fantasy martial art world of swordplays, air bending, wind walking and superpower."

An exciting young adult love story set in a fantasy world similar to ancient Asia, the protagonist, Luu Dong

Tu, becomes entangled in a dangerous love affair with Obsidian, the King of Poison. The first three chapters of the book were written on Phan's blog for her friends who were in their 20s. "It got picked up by a weekly magazine for middle school/high schoolers so that changed the tone, numbers of words per chapter, and the style of the story significantly from chapter 4 to 10," Phan said. The same publisher later decided to publish it as a book.

"`Tuyet Den' has a very large fan base over the decade so when I mentioned the idea of translating it into English, many of the readers volunteered to help," said Phan, who was a published mangaka (comic book/graphic novel) scriptwriter for over a decade in Vietnam before writing her novel. "Without the encouragement and the help, I wouldn't have been able to do it myself in such a short time."

The Viet version of the sequel to "Tuyet Den" - "Liet Than" - was published in Vietnam in 2020. The English version of the sequel to "The Girl Who Kept Winter" - "Frigid" - is available on Amazon.



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