

“You will personally be inspired by Paul and Paula Jarot’s book *Daughters by Design!* In a very honest account, they share their longing to adopt two Cambodian orphans, the agonizing roadblocks, the answered prayers, and a faith in God that should challenge every believer. As adoptive parents ourselves, we highly recommend this book!”

—**Josh and Dottie McDowell**
Authors and adoptive parents

“*Daughters by Design* is just that, an amazing, faith-filled journey of how a couple willingly followed God’s design, not man’s; trusted the Lord to show them the way; welcomed two young Cambodian girls into their lives; overcame enormous hurdles; and finally adopted them—two daughters by *God’s* design.”

—**Judy Long, M.A.L.S.**
Head Librarian, Grace International School, Thailand

“My wife and I huddled over a computer on a commuter flight, each vying for a better position to read this wild and holy story. We wept. And by the time we finished, we were exhausted. It is a heartbreaking, impossible adventure that called us to ask the question: are we willing to wait and see the goodness of God?”

“But more than exhaustion or tears, we felt awe and gratitude to know this family and their amazing story. We know they are remarkable and normal, amazing and ordinary. They simply don’t see their faithfulness as anything other than what anyone who loves Jesus would do.

“Yet, their extraordinary faithfulness calls me to dream redemption for others, in ways that seem beyond my capacity. But it is not.

“And this glorious book allows us to see how those who dream redemption for others are themselves redeemed by the beauty of love. I love this family. I love their story.

“Most, I love the God who is revealed through the faces of Sivy, Sophie, Paul, and Paula.”

—**Dan B. Allender, Ph.D.**
professor and founding president Mars Hill Graduate School and
author of *The Wounded Heart* and *Leading with a Limp*

“Paul and Paula Jarot’s life is an exemplifying testimony of the love of God for others, specifically for Sivy and Sophie, as they walked this miraculous journey of love and faith that is lived out in this book.

“It brings to us a powerful, vivid, living example of the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 25:40, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these—you did it for me.’”

—**Ken Boland**

Retired pastor, international school instructor

“I’m so glad this story has been written down! The first time I heard Paula share their adoption story, I reacted, like so many others: “You’ve gotta write a book!”

“The Psalmist said, ‘God puts the lonely in families.’ You can trace the hand of God in this story and celebrate His watchful care over two very special orphan girls and the blessing they have become to two very unsuspecting but willing parents.

“Paul and Paula inspired us to follow God on a similar path, welcoming a Thai daughter, when we are old enough to be grandparents. We’re grateful that they had already forged this path. And in so doing, they gave us the courage to move forward with our adoption. So, read their book with caution. There’s no telling how this family’s story might inspire you.”

—**Matthew and Molly Veldt**

Adoptive parents

“It’s an amazing and barely conceivable story of international adoption challenges to build a ‘second’ family. I couldn’t put it down. But keep a box of tissue handy—the persistent hope and love shown here will grab your heart and shake you to the core!”

—**Penny Lent**

Contributing author in Max Lucado’s bestseller
It’s Not About Me, Teen Edition

Daughters by Design

"As adoptive parents ourselves, we highly recommend this book." –Josh & Dottie McDowell

Daughters by Design

The Miracle Adoption of Two Cambodian Orphans

Paula Jarot



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*Dedicated to Paul, faithful husband and father,
who obeyed the Designer*

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And to Paul, my husband and best friend, I thank you. You are everything to me, and without your faithful obedience to the Lord, we would not have these two precious daughters. Thank you for being the Daddy that every little girl needs!

Chapter 1

Normal is Over



THEY CAME WITHOUT suitcases. One wore borrowed shoes that needed to be sent back to the orphanage after she arrived. The other never had owned a doll or slept on a bed.

On Christmas night, 2004, two Cambodian orphans arrived at our home in Chiang Mai, Thailand, where we lived as American missionaries. These two beautiful girls had left everything they knew behind: a crowded orphanage, rice fields, the dirty streets of Phnom Penh, even siblings. But their fear of the unknown was soon overpowered by their bright future.

We had hoped and prayed that their fear of hunger and abandonment eventually would be replaced by trust and love. Yet little did my husband and I know how much these two girls would change our lives also.

Sivy was thirteen when we met her, the youngest of four children in a family left orphaned and devastated by AIDS. She was born in a small, rural village in the Svay Rieng Province of southeast Cambodia. Her family farmed several small plots of land and grew rice for a living.

Like many poor Cambodian children, Sivy began working in the rice fields at age eight. She also tended the family cow and nursed her

mother, who had contracted AIDS from her father after he returned from a civil war that defeated the Khmer Rouge.

Sivy's father died when she was eight years old. Her mother died two years later. By age ten, Sivy had known more grief and loss than any little girl should. Left in the care of the village, she and her sisters sang at the Buddhist temple and attended school sporadically.

Not long after both her parents died, her uncle placed her in an orphanage in Phnom Penh. Sivy was ten-and-a-half the day she was taken there, and she was not happy about the decision.

Sopheak was nine when we met her. She was born in an area of Phnom Penh known as "The Dump." It had no running water, no toilets, no electricity, and no paved streets. The occupants collected garbage off the streets of Phnom Penh at night and then hauled it back to the dump in push carts.

Sopheak frequently accompanied family members through the dark streets of the crowded city and played—without toys—in the dump. She was passed around, from her biological mother to later stepmothers, until her uncle took her at age five, with her sister, to the orphanage. He promised them many pretty dresses and a swimming pool in their new home. And she believed him. But she never saw pretty dresses or a swimming pool. As days plunged into weeks and months, the harsh reality of conditions at the orphanage frequently brought her to tears.

My husband, Paul, was fifty-seven, and I was two weeks shy of fifty-four, on the Christmas night when the girls arrived. We had no idea how rough our road would be for the next four years as we fought to make these girls legally our own. But we did have clear direction from the Lord when we said "yes" to taking the girls from the orphanage. Not long after, we realized we had not stopped to ask a few obvious questions:

Are these two little girls emotionally healthy? Can we legally adopt them? Will they ever be allowed to travel to the USA with us? How will we communicate, since they speak only Khmer? Will they even want to stay with us?

We knew God wanted these girls to have an opportunity to go to school, to have a family and a clean place to call home. Our hearts were bigger than our wallets, though we did have plenty of love and experience with children. So, convinced that God had led us to these girls, we were willing to follow Him one day at a time. And each day, for months to come, brought new adventures, filled with growth and miracles.