

Film Pitch

Samarang Hotel

TAGLINE Laos and the shared journey of two implausible friends

LOGLINE Julian Lockhardt, the alcoholic manager of Samarang Hotel – the most prestigious hotel in Vientiane, Laos, and a gathering place for diplomats and spies – has hit rock bottom in life but when Nancy Bacon, an argumentative, terminally ill elderly female guest checks in, Lockhardt takes a journey with Nancy into the hills of Laos, where he is presented with an opportunity to find himself and his place in society.

GENRE Drama / tragicomedy

SUBJECT Discovering self-knowledge

THEMES Finding self-awareness / learning from flaws to achieve happiness / refuting the supremacy of Western 'enlightenment' thinking

TONE Against an exotic backdrop of urban and rural Laos, the story invokes in the audience both tragedy based on human suffering, with its accompanying catharsis, and laughter with black comedy.

SYNOPSIS Julian Lockhardt, the bombastic, heavy-drinking expat manager of the Samarang Hotel – the most prestigious hotel in Vientiane, Laos, and a gathering place for diplomats and spies – is short on self-awareness, long on self-pity. Society, so he believes, has failed him. He is easily seduced by Asia's many charms and deeply resistant to any broader understanding of its underlying values. Julian's least favourite guest, a recent arrival called Nancy Bacon, seems to take hawkish delight in pointing out his many shortcomings. But when he discovers that Nancy is facing an ordeal he himself can scarcely contemplate, the two of them take a journey into the hills of northern Laos – a land he has never bothered to explore or understand. Awakened to the importance of symbolism and the power of myth, Julian returns to the capital with new insight into the ways of the world and his place in it. Perhaps society has not failed him. It might just be that he has failed society. Does Julian have time to put a few things right?

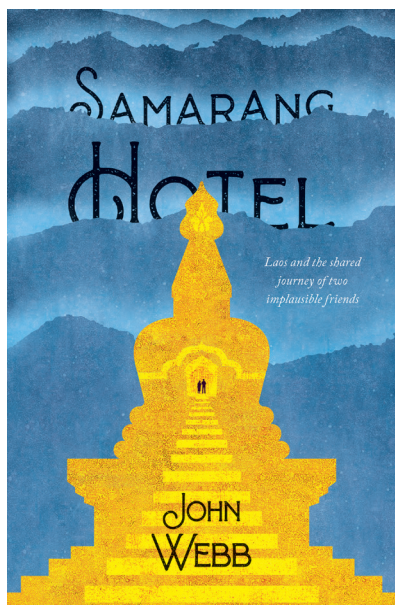
CHARACTERS **Julian Lockhardt**, the reprobate who comes good.

Nancy Bacon, initially an annoying character who we then learn is facing health issues and who cajoles Julian to help her and confront his own character flaws at the same time.

Various spies and consular officials provide comic relief and side stories.

Jacques, hotel assistant manager who we think is just trying to take Julian's job but actually turns out to have a very different role.

ENDING Barely surviving a downward spiral of addiction to booze, drugs and women, Julian eventually finds himself and his place in society, and he has a better appreciation of Laos and Buddhism. Life may not be perfect and he may never be able to fully control it but he learns to live a more fulfilling existence.



BOOK DETAILS

Samarang Hotel

AUTHOR	John Webb
ISBN	9781912049868
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PUB DATE	2021
GENRE	Fiction Laos
AGE RANGE	General adult
URL	Click for webpage
RIGHTS	World print World screen
TRAILER	click for Vimeo

Author Information

John Webb is a South African writer and lawyer, who has written for *GQ* and *Esquire* and whose first novel, *Nine Letters*, was published by Penguin in 2020. Webb is currently living in a colonial wooden house in the mountains outside Vientiane, Laos.