

Film Pitch

Charlot



BOOK DETAILS

AUTHOR	Ian Masters
ISBN	9781912049
PUBLISHER	Monsoon Books
PUB DATE	2023
GENRE	Historical Fiction Cambodia
AGE RANGE	General adult
URL	Click for webpage
RIGHTS	World print World screen

Author Information

Ian Masters is an award-winning screenwriter who has worked across Africa and Asia for over twenty years. As a freelance scriptwriter and creative consultant for BBC Media Action he has developed and written TV and radio dramas from Bangladesh to Indonesia, Cambodia to South Sudan. His first produced feature film script, *The Last Reel*, was Cambodia's submission to the Academy Awards in 2014. In 2018 he returned to the UK, where he continues to write and work as an international script consultant from Somerset. *Charlot* is Ian Masters' first novel.

Charlot has been submitted by the publisher to the following awards: Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction; James Tait Black Memorial Prize; Nero Book Awards; Gordon Bowker Volcano Prize; Orwell Book Prize and Booker Prize.

TAGLINE The world's greatest silent comedian finds his voice in French Indochina

LOGLINE Unwittingly drawn into a plot against French colonial oppression on a visit to Indochina in 1936, Charlie Chaplin must choose between lending his voice to their cause or keeping silent.

GENRE Biopic / historical drama

SUBJECT Charlie Chaplin's transformative journey in colonial Cambodia

THEMES Finding self-awareness/personal transformation; artistry vs. politics; anti-colonialism; justice; intersection of celebrity and political influence

TONE Set against a bustling 1930s Phnom Penh and a mystical Angkor Wat, *Charlot* weaves political drama, internal conflicts and passionate relationship dynamics (Chaplin & Paulette, Chaplin & Phirath) with the delightful escapism of Chaplin's creative process: as Chaplin envisions a new film featuring the Tramp in Indochina, the viewer is exposed to a movie within a movie in the form of cutaways to imagined black-and-white comic scenes in the style of classic Chaplin silent films.

SYNOPSIS Indochina, 1936: Charlie Chaplin and his co-star and lover, Paulette Goddard, are on vacation in Asia following the release of the global superstar's silent masterpiece, *Modern Times*. Evading the press in Phnom Penh, he is inspired to work on a new film idea – imagining his iconic alter ego, the Tramp, in the colonial rubber plantations. But Charlie Chaplin's presence in the French protectorate has encouraged Cambodians to speak out for real against colonial exploitation and the authorities are nervous about his visit. As the middle-aged filmmaker grapples with his creativity and his conscience, a deepening friendship with a Cambodian comic actor and anti-colonial communist eventually forces him to choose between lending his voice to their cause or keeping silent. Fictionalised around real events, *Charlot* is a story about how an embittered Charlie Chaplin abandons his silent Tramp in order to find his own voice in the politically turbulent 1930s.

CHARACTERS **Charlie Chaplin**, a rich and complex character both instantly recognisable and little understood. A filmmaker soon to be eclipsed by technology, grappling with middle age and a desire to be heard.

Paulette Goddard, capable of giving as good as she gets, and a match for Charlie on every level. She adores Chaplin the genius, but struggles with Chaplin the man at this critical crossroads in his life.

Phirath, a Cambodian comic actor and anti-colonial communist with a political calling that enables him to see beyond the gestures of a global celebrity to act for real political change.

Various real characters from the time.

ENDING Chaplin misreads the reality of the political oppression in Indochina. When he's publically challenged to speak up for Phirath and his cause, he stays silent and Phirath is arrested for sedition. But this is Phirath's world, not Chaplin's – there is no easy white saviourism in Indochina. Chaplin is instead encouraged to focus his creativity on political causes nearer to home. As Chaplin leaves Indochina he considers a political satire, and a talkie, without the Tramp which will become his masterwork: *The Great Dictator*.