

**Title:** The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down

**Author(s):** Fadiman, Anne

**Publisher:** Farrar, Straus & Giroux  
1998

**Synopsis:**

This book chronicles the struggles of a Hmong refugee family and their interactions with the health care system in Merced, California. On the most basic level, the book tells the story of the girl Lia Lee, who is diagnosed with severe epilepsy, and the culture conflict that obstructs her treatment. Broader themes include Hmong customs and culture, American involvement in and responsibility for the war in Laos, and the problems of immigration, especially assimilation. While particularly sympathetic to the Hmong, Fadiman presents the situation from the perspectives of both the doctors and the family. An example of medical anthropology, the book has been cited by medical journals and lecturers as an argument for greater cultural competence, and often assigned to medical and pharmaceutical students in the US. It won the National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction. (Excerpt taken from Wikipedia)

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