

April 29, 2011

Award-winning author Naseem Rakha discusses “The Crying Tree”

Author Naseem Rakha will read from and discuss her award-winning novel, “[The Crying Tree](#),” at the [North Mason Timberland Library](#) on Thursday, May 12 at 7 p.m. Copies of the book will be available for purchase and signing.

The story tells of a Midwestern family just settling into a new life in Oregon’s high desert when the unthinkable occurs. Fifteen-year-old Shep is shot and killed during an apparent robbery in their home. The murderer, a young mechanic with a history of assault, robbery, and drug-related offenses, is caught and sentenced to death.

The Crying Tree offers insight into how murder, death row, capital punishment, and enduring these experiences deeply impact victims’ families. The story is told from the viewpoint of Shep’s mother, Irene Stanley, and that of the stoic and determined superintendent of the Oregon State Penitentiary, Tab Mason, who is preparing to execute the boy’s murderer. Irene desperately wants revenge, but as years pass, she finds herself questioning her hatred.



Rakha writes: “The murder of a child dredges up the most painful emotions. There is no justice in it, no justification, and no way to find solace... Yet, somehow there are inspirational stories of those who have come to forgiveness. I found this baffling situation as a reporter covering an execution for public radio and then later in interviews with the parents of murder victims. I wanted to understand how an individual can move from one place to another – hate to forgiveness, despondency to hope – what that road looks like, and what toll it must exact.”

Rakha is an award-winning journalist whose stories have been heard on NPR’s All Things Considered, Morning Edition and other programs. The Crying Tree is Rakha’s first novel. It was a regional and international bestseller and has won numerous honors. Among them are awards from the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association, Barnes & Noble, and BookExpo. Most recently, it was placed on the American Booksellers Association (ABA) Top 10 Indie Next List for Reading Groups. “This book will generate discussions on the death penalty, familial relationships, and family secrets,” wrote an ABA member. Rakha’s website is www.naseemrakha.com.

The presentation is sponsored by the Friends of the North Mason Timberland Library. The library is located at 23081 NE State Route 3, Belfair. For more information, please call (360) 275-3232 or go to www.TRL.org.