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News Release

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PNBA award-winning author Naseem Rakha discusses “The Crying Tree”

Author and journalist Naseem Rakha will read from and discuss her award-winning first novel, “The Crying Tree.” The event is from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 23 at the Olympia Timberland Library. Copies of the book will be available for purchase and signing.

The Crying Tree tells of a family just settling into a new life in Oregon’s high desert when the unthinkable happens. 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 story is told through Irene Stanley, Shep’s mother, and Tab Mason, the stoic and determined superintendent of the Oregon State Penitentiary who is preparing to execute the boy’s murderer. Irene desperately wants revenge, but as years pass, she finds herself questioning the hatred in her heart. The Crying Tree provides insight into how murder, death row, capital punishment, and enduring these experiences deeply impact victims’ families.



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, Marketplace Radio, Christian Science Monitor, and Living on Earth. The Crying Tree is a Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association 2010 award winner; Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers pick; BEA (BookExpo America) Emerging Voices selection; and San Francisco Chronicle Best Seller. Rakha’s website is naseemrakha.com.

The Olympia Timberland Library is located at 313 8th Avenue SE. For more information, call the library at (360) 352-0595 or visit www.TRL.org.

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