EDITOR’S FOREWORD

I feel deeply privileged to be invited to write the Foreword for this publication that documents the picture books, chapter books and young adult fiction written by Singaporeans and permanent residents of Singapore. The success of a country is usually measured in economic terms, and Singapore, a small country, is more renowned for its literary culture.

However, we need literature to give a country a soul. Literature mirrors our perception of life. We see in stories reflections of our own values, dreams and disappointments. Authors and illustrators invite us to see the world through another pair of eyes, to allow our imagination to take flight, or walk with the characters in their joys and in their sorrows.

Readers reading the works documented here – some serious, some humorous – will realise that feelings and themes such as love, kinship, loyalty and love for mother earth are universal. The works represent the rich pool of distinctive voices from Singapore’s diverse, multicultural, multilingual literary heritage. Some of these books are set in Asia, with Asian themes, but they all tell stories that will strike a chord with readers around the world. And one powerful and impactful way of nurturing and inculcating values is through literature. Hadijah bte Rahmat’s love for her mother is unmistakable in Bunga Kasih Ibu. Her simple, heartwarming verses both earn our respect as well as remind us that parental sacrifices are not exclusive to one ethnic group. In short, our local literature provides an avenue for us to celebrate the diversities in our community. We rejoice that we are different and yet the same.

The works featured in this catalogue range from fantasy adventures and animal stories to school encounters and Malay ghost stories, offering various colourful themes and images. Told with humour and wit, some of these stories convey a powerful message and provide fresh insights and perspectives. Some stories are set against a local context (for example, Malay kampong (village), mangrove swamps) and have local references (the Changi tree, pautun (traditional Malay poetry), satay, orang utans, gasing (Malay top), wayang (traditional opera), to name a few). Not only do these add and enrich the heritage of our country, they also acquaint the rest of the world with our culture.

On top of being regularly featured at the top literary festivals, some of our children’s and young adult writers have made waves in the international publishing world, winning awards and finding new homes with international publishers.

For instance, Jin Pyn Lee’s picture book Elephant and the Tree has been translated into Japanese, Spanish, Catalan and Chinese, while its English language edition is sold internationally. The story has even been made into an animation short in Japan. Others like SherMay Loh and Emily Lim have won prestigious awards like the USA Moonbeam Children’s Book Awards 2011 and the 2009 Independent Publisher Book Awards.

I am delighted by the multilingual diversity and cultural richness of the works presented in this collection. These are strengths unique to Singapore, yet universally relevant. I wish our authors and illustrators many more fulfilling years contributing to Singapore’s literature, and see more of their works take flight beyond our shores.

Ruth Wong Yeang Lam
Associate Professor
National Institute of Education / Nanyang Technological University
Singapore
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Bubu goes to the zoo with his mother and wanders around to see his favourite animals, leaving his mother behind. Later he realises that he loves his mother best.

Bubu has a big question in mind – What is the biggest thing in the world? He poses the question to a snail, a chameleon, an owl, an elephant and his classmate, Youyou. All of them have completely different answers. As they squabble, a teacher comes along and tells them “love” is the biggest thing in the world.

Bubu, an imaginative kid, wants to raise a pet. However, the pet that he wishes to adopt has to be an unusual pet - it should be able to fetch him to school every day, to bring him around the world, to form a choir, to protect him… and also, fly him to the sky to pick a star! But where can he find such a wonderful pet? Perhaps only in the world of the imagination…
Fei Fei was given a toy plane that could fly him high up into the sky at night. He flew so high that he reached all the stars and the moon. Mesmerised by the shiny stars, he decided to bring them all back home, resulting in a starry night without any stars. Will Fei Fei realise the mistake he has made?

A brother and sister, together with their pet dog, Kookie, accidentally fall into a hole in the ground and are transported back to the era of dinosaurs. They meet different types of dinosaurs and experience lots of adventures in their quest to return to the modern world. This is a story of kinship, teamwork between humans and dinosaurs, and a call to love and protect Mother Nature.

“The theme on dinosaurs is much loved by the young and old, and Edmund’s delightful story really appeals to the child in me.”

Peggy Teo, Assistant Vice President, Singapore Post Limited

EXTRACT IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The light was dim, and the pair looked all around them cautiously, feeling the cold, damp air close in around them. Ah Xi, pulling Xinxin closer, slowly surveyed their surroundings. He discovered that the whole area was covered with giant mushrooms. Each mushroom was as tall as a bush, and their tops were as big as a mattress. There were at least a thousand mushrooms, and they were standing on top of one of them. No wonder their landing had been so soft when they fell into this place, not causing them the least bit of harm.

All around, the mushrooms were surrounded by shiny stone pillars, towering up into the sky. Their tops looked like the peaks of tents at a campground. No, it was more accurate to say that it was like the lid of a teapot — of course, it was like the inside of the lid.
In the mangroves of northern Singapore lives an otter by the name of Ah Xiong. He is captured while looking for food for his pregnant wife. Ah Xiong’s wife, Xiao Fen, eventually gives birth to four unique baby otters, each with a special characteristic. When these baby otters grow up, they learn of their father’s story, which spurs them on to plan a rescue mission. During the rescue, they face obstacles and life-endangering situations. Will they be able to overcome all these and rescue their father?

**Little Otters to the Rescue!**

**Written & Illustrated by:** Edmund Chen

This book, accompanied by a CD of Malay songs for children, is an artistic fusion of various genres of rich Malay classical arts – art of writing ( Jawi script), traditional poetry (pantun), batik painting, architecture and folk songs. These art forms are synthesised to crystallise the natural charm of traditional habitat and kampung (village) life of Malays and their philosophy and values. This bilingual package provides a platform for children from various language and ethnic backgrounds to learn and appreciate the unique heritage of Malay culture and its universal values.

**Burung Kenek-Kenek**

**The Little Bird: Poetry, Art and Song for Children**

**Written by:** Hadijah Bte Rahmat

**Illustrated by:** S. Mohdir

**Music Composed by:** Zubir Abdullah

This book, accompanied by a CD of Malay songs for children, is an artistic fusion of various genres of rich Malay classical arts – art of writing (Jawi script), traditional poetry (pantun), batik painting, architecture and folk songs. These art forms are synthesised to crystallise the natural charm of traditional habitat and kampung (village) life of Malays and their philosophy and values. This bilingual package provides a platform for children from various language and ethnic backgrounds to learn and appreciate the unique heritage of Malay culture and its universal values.

**Hadijah Bte Rahmat**

Hadijah Rahmat is an Associate Professor and the Deputy Head of the Asian Languages and Cultures Academic Group at Nanyang Technological University. She received her PhD from School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (1996) and was Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the University of California Berkeley and Harvard University. She has won several literary awards, including the Hadijah Santos by the Malay Language Council Singapore (Mbahg) and the Tun S. Lanang Award in July 2011. Her poems and short stories have also been selected as literature texts in Singapore schools. She was awarded the Public Administration Bronze Medal, Singapore National Day 2001, for her contributions to education in Singapore.

**S. Mohdir**

S. Mohdir or Haji Mohammad bin Haji Abdul Kadir received his art education at the Famous Artists School in US from 1953 to 1956. He has widely exhibited in Singapore and the South East Asia region. His illustrations are in books published by Pustaka Nasional Pte Ltd and the Ministry of Education, Singapore. He passed away in March 2010.
Mom’s Bouquet of Love is an artistic fusion of various genres of the rich Malay classical art forms – traditional poetry (pantun), and watercolour art work. These art forms are synthesised to crystallise a special tribute to all mothers for their unselfish love, devotion and sacrifice while caring for their children. It is manifested in the contexts of traditional habitat, the kampong (village) life of Malays, and their philosophy and values. This fusion will engage the hearts and minds of children and imbue in them values that are desired by a community facing new national and global challenges.

**BLUE KASIH IBU**
**MOM’S BOUQUET OF LOVE: POETRY AND ART FOR CHILDREN**

**WRITTEN BY:**
S. MOHDIR

**ILLUSTRATED BY:**
S. MOHDIR

S. Mohdir or Haji Mohamed bin Haji Abdul Kadir received his art education at the Famous Artists School in US from 1953 to 1956. He has widely exhibited in Singapore and the Southeast Asia region. His illustrations are in books published by Pustaka Nasional Pte Ltd and the Ministry of Education, Singapore. He passed away in March 2010.

**HADIJAH BTE RAHMAT**

Hadijah Rahmat is an Associate Professor and the Deputy Head of the Asian Languages and Cultures Academic Group at Nanyang Technological University. She received her PhD from School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (1996) and was Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the University of California Berkeley and Harvard University. She has won several literary awards, including the Haji Ismail Award by the Malay Language Council Singapore (MBMS) and the Tun Sır Lanang Award in July 2011. Her poems and short stories have also been selected as literature texts in Singapore schools. She was awarded the Public Administration Bronze Medal, Singapore National Day 2007, for her contributions to education in Singapore.

**THE ELEPHANT AND THE TREE**

**WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED BY:**
JIN PYN LEE

A heartwarming tale of loyalty and love that begins between a small elephant and a tiny tree, and which quickly grows into the greatest of friendships. The best friends discover that while change can lead down a difficult path, as long as they have each other, they will never walk it alone.

"...Jin Pyn has an alarming instinct for the nub of what makes a great fairytale" - The Sunday Times, Singapore.

"Charming story... accompanied by deceptively sophisticated graphic design will have you smiling and feeling about five again" - Style magazine

**JIN PYN LEE**

Jin Pyn made her first pop-up storybook when she was eight. Jin Pyn Lee’s debut children’s picture book, The Elephant and the Tree (2009) is the first from Singapore in its genre to be translated into Japanese, Spanish, Catalan and Chinese, in addition to its English language edition being sold in English-speaking countries around the world. Apart from print, the animation of the story in Japanese also won a Best Animation award in Japan in 2009. In 2010, Jin Pyn’s ‘And the Dolphin Smiled’ was published as part of a collection of stories by internationally acclaimed writers in Just When Stories. She counts illustration as her favourite. They bring out the little simplicities so adored in childhood.

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  - Website: www.elephantandtree.com
  - Agency: Andrea Brown Literary Agency
Just Teddy

Written by: EMILY LIM
Illustrated by: NEAL SHARP

In this story of self-acceptance, Just Teddy, a lonely teddy bear, tries hard to fit in with the toys in a toy factory. He goes to great lengths to blend in with the polar bears, pandas and penguins - to the extent of almost losing his identity. When he is mistakenly categorised and left on the wrong shelf in a toy store, he encounters a little girl who senses that he is different. Together, they stumble on a wonderful discovery about Just Teddy’s true worth as a one-of-a-kind bear and also his value as a one-of-a-kind friend.

“The Tale of Rusty Horse

Written by: EMILY LIM
Illustrated by: NEAL SHARP

In this friendship story, an old forgotten rocking horse longs to be a favourite with everyone. An old fairy grants him his wish, turning him into a real horse and a crowd favourite. However, the magic doesn’t last and Rusty turns back into a rocking horse, ending up as a playmate to a lonely handicapped child. When the fairy returns with a permanent spell to make him popular forever, Rusty has to choose between being popular to many and the friendship of one child. At that moment, Rusty learns that real magic lies within his power to choose what truly matters to him.

“Once again, Emily writes clearly and simply but manages to touch your heart with a story about how a lost bear overcomes doubts to know what it is to belong, love and discover yourself – all precious lessons we want to teach our children.” Yong Paitan, Singapore

EMILY LIM

Author of 11 picture books, Emily is the first outside North America to win three medals for children’s books at the IPPY Awards (the world’s largest book awards) and the first in Southeast Asia to win the US-based Moonbeam Children’s Book Award for the following books: Prince Bear & Pauper Bear (IPPY Bronze Medal 2008, Singapore’s First Time Writers and Illustrators Publishing Initiative 2007), The Tale of Rusty Horse (Moonbeam Gold Medal 2009), Just Teddy (IPPY Bronze Medal 2010, International School Library Network’s Red Dot Awards Shortlist 2009/10) and Bunny Puts The Right Stuff (IPPY Silver Medal 2010, Hedeg Amur Children’s Book Award Shortlist 2010).

Neal Sharp

American illustrator Neal Sharp’s warm blend of colours and rich textures result in beautiful illustrations which appeal to children and parents alike. Neal resides in Cincinnati, Ohio. Trained at the Art Academy of Cincinnati, he has illustrated several children’s books. Neal and Emily have worked on four books together.

“After her sweet tale of Prince Bear & Pauper Bear, she (Emily) manages this time to take a heart hit by turning an unwanted old rocking horse into a hero. A simple story can make your spirit soar and children will for sure remember Rusty Horse who found joy in making someone else happy. Lots of feel good elements – love, hope, selflessness, finding a soulmate... And the illustrations do justice to the words.” Vivian, Singapore

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North America to win three medals for children’s books at the IPPY Awards (the world’s largest book awards) and the first in Southeast Asia to win the US-based Moonbeam Children’s Book Award for the following books: Prince Bear & Pauper Bear (IPPY Bronze Medal 2008, Singapore’s First Time Writers and Illustrators Publishing Initiative 2007), The Tale of Rusty Horse (Moonbeam Gold Medal 2009), Just Teddy (IPPY Bronze Medal 2010, International School Library Network’s Red Dot Awards Shortlist 2009/10) and Bunny Puts The Right Stuff (IPPY Silver Medal 2010, Hedeg Amur Children’s Book Award Shortlist 2010).

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Chip Ear invites his good friends Red Hair and Four Tooth over to feast on his accidental catch – an enormous water buffalo! The trio divides the meat amongst them and devours it happily. In the end, all that is left is a cut of meat and Chip Ear hangs it up on a tree. As night falls, a mysterious shadow appears and steals the remaining steak. Red Hair is suspicious of greedy Four Tooth but Chip Ear thinks otherwise…

Stolen Steak is an imaginative retelling of the story behind the Chinese idiom “梁上君子” which literally means a gentleman up on a beam, implying a burglar or a thief.

Four Tooth is sleeping soundly under a tree when Violet the hare crashes into him. Enraged, he swallows little Violet in a gulp. Feeling lucky, Four Tooth decides to wait under the tree for more hares to turn up. He is unaware that Violet’s friends are waiting for a chance to save their friend…

Lie in Wait is based on the Chinese idiom “守株待兔”, which tells of a farmer who abandoned his fields and waited by a tree stump, hoping to catch a hare.

LOW JOO HONG

Joo Hong has always been a passionate artist, illustrator and creator of stories. He possesses a BA Honours in Fine Arts from the University of Leeds, UK, and a MA in Children’s Books Illustration from the Anglia Ruskin University, UK. He won the prestigious McMillan Prize 2009 for his book There is No Steak Buried Here, which was eventually translated into the Chinese language and became his first published book. His characters are often placed in quirky surroundings to bring out the emotions and humour of the story. Joo Hong hopes to inspire young creative minds as well as instil a love for Chinese idioms and the rich values that they convey.
"A leaf’s job is to cling on to a branch and make food for the plant using sunlight, carbon dioxide and water," explains his friend. But Nip argues, “There must be more to being a leaf.” Will Nip the Leaf discover something else exciting to do? Or, will he continue to dangle in mid-air?

When you blow a kiss, where does it go? What does it do? Follow one little kiss as it soars over snow-capped mountains and sweeps past hills of blazing desert sands and touches children of faraway places and faraway lands.

"There must be more to being a leaf."

By the next, he was mostly yellow and a little brown.

The harder Nip thought, the faster the yellow crept all over him.

“R CHANDRAN

R Chandran is founder-director of ACT 3 Theatrics, Singapore’s first professional theatre company. He has been a professional writer, director and actor since 1984, focusing on work for young people. Chandran has served on various assessment panels of the National Arts Council of Singapore. He is also a regular Guest Columnist for both the major newspapers in Singapore, The Straits Times and The New Paper. To date, he has published four books, the other two being I Have Touched the Moon and Makanplace a Singapore Musical.

PAUL KOH

Paul Koh is the artist behind the successful art series, Gormesara, a unique body of captivating and vibrant cat-inspired art.

BLOW A KISS

WRITTEN BY: DAVID SEOW | ILLUSTRATED BY: ENRICO SALLUSTIO

When you blow a kiss, where does it go? What does it do? Follow one little kiss as it soars over snow-capped mountains and sweeps past hills of blazing desert sands and touches children of faraway places and faraway lands.

David Seow graduated from the University of Portland with a BA in Communications. He is the author of several well-received children’s picture books, including the Sam, Sebbie and Di-Di-Di series. In 2011, his book There’s Soup on My Fly! was a finalist for the SCBWI Crystal Kite Members’ Choice Award. It was also one of eight books short-listed for the Hedang Anuar Book Award (HABA) at the Asian Festival of Children’s Content. David is an active member of the Singapore chapter of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators.

Enrico Sallustio qualified as an illustrator from the Fine Arts Academy of the City of Brussels. He has illustrated over 100 books and Blow A Kiss is his most recent book to be published in Singapore.

"There must be more to being a leaf."

By the next, he was mostly yellow and a little brown.

The harder Nip thought, the faster the yellow crept all over him.
THERE’S SOUP ON MY FLY!

WRITTEN BY: DAVID SEOW  |  ILLUSTRATED BY: YT CHEIU

Jeremy Alexander’s parents refuse to buy him a dog, cat or any other animal, so he adopts a magic fly. Jeremy thinks he’s found the best pet ever! But when Jeremy’s fly follows him to a restaurant, they both find themselves in very hot soup!

“The creative plot makes this a very funny read.”
Young Parents, Singapore

DAVID SEOW

David Seow graduated from the University of Portland with a BA in Communications. He is the author of several well-received children’s picture books, including the Sam, Sattle and Biko series. In 2011, his book There’s Soup on My Fly! was a finalist for the SCBWI Crystal Kite Members’ Choice Award. It was also one of eight books short-listed for the Hedwig Anuar Book Award (HABA) at the Asian Festival of Children’s Content. David is an active member of the Singapore chapter of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators.

THE ADVENTURES OF MOOTY

COMPLETE COLLECTION OF 5 BOOKS

WRITTEN BY: JESSIE WEE  |  ILLUSTRATED BY: KWAN SHAN MEI

The Adventures of Moopy, first published in 1980, depicts the delightful adventures of a lovable little mouse who endeavours himself to a community of animals, bird, and insects and becomes their hero. This new edition of five books, each comprising two stories, will find Moopy warming the hearts of the young once more.

JESSIE WEE

An experienced educator of 12 years, Jessie Wee has written 30 books, ranging from picture books such as A Home in the Sky (1982), A Friend in Need (1992) and the Five Little Kittens series, to books for older children which include Grandpa’s Remedy (1990) and Supercat (2003). Her books are imbued with warmth and humour and reflect a sensitive understanding of children. Three of her books won Commendation awards from the National Book Development Council of Singapore: The Adventures of Moopy in 1982, Best in 1984 and Grandpa’s Remedy in 1990. Five of her books were commissioned by British publishers and two by American Express International Incorporated. In 2009, she published Treasures of the Heart, her first book for adults.

OTHER TITLES IN THE SERIES

HARRY STRAW HAT

WRITTEN BY: SERENE A. E. WEE
ILLUSTRATED BY: CONRAD RAQUEL

Harry overhears his family talk about throwing him away. Hurt and sad, he runs away from home, only to be blown right back to where he is from.

SERENE A. E. WEE

Chairman of National Book Development Council of Singapore, President of The Society for Reading & Literacy, Steering Committee member for READ! Singapore, Serene Wee has a B Soc Sc (Hons) from the University of Singapore and two postgraduate teaching diplomas. Her poem ‘Beauty & Music’ won the Editor’s Choice Award for Outstanding Achievement in Poetry by the National Library of Poetry US. Her latest work is a Young Adult novel entitled Pensive. She has written and edited numerous books for children.

CONRAD RAQUEL

Conrad Raquel graduated cum laude from the University of the Philippines. He has illustrated books such as The Tale of Lady Cabbage (Tahanan Books/Causa Vera International) and greeting cards for the Museo Pambata Foundation. He is a member of Ang Ilustrador ng Kabataan (Ang I.N.K.), an association of Filipino children’s books illustrators. He lives in the Philippines.

I HATE PEAS

WRITTEN BY: WICKED GILLY
ILLUSTRATED BY: SPARROWYRM

I Hate Peas is written in simple verse and describes the protests and naughty antics of a little girl, Sally, who hates peas. Sally tells her mother that she would rather eat dead bumble bees, pickled fleas and turtle poo than peas. She then resorts to hiding the peas creatively around the house. In the end, her mother cuts a deal with her to eat her peas. Sally starts eating her peas, but wait and see what she does with her fish…

“…I simply cannot swallow those bogger-coloured mushy peas,” declares the young protagonist in this delightfully written charmingly illustrated poem for children. I HATE PEAS will resonate with anyone who has been forced to eat food whose sole virtue is that it is good for them.”

EQUAL KANG, Singapore

WICKED GILLY

Alix Burrell was born in Scotland but moved to Asia with her family as a child. Her career in finance brought her to Singapore. She has published three books under her pen name Wicked Gilly and has given all the proceeds to charity. Children love reading about all things icky and Alix writes about everything from pants and poo to sneezing elephants in order to cater to that streak of humour in kids. She had a regular column of wicked verse for the Banter magazine over the course of a year in 2005 and has a website www.wickedgilly.com with samples of her work.
Chocolate Bunny is written in verse and describes the protests of a chocolate bunny as he is being eaten slowly by a little girl, Sally. Sally’s mother tells her to save some for her baby brother. Sally chooses to eat bits off the protesting bunny, leaving only the bum, which she puts in the fridge. Later she finds a lump of chocolate poo beside the bum with a note from the bunny saying, “Here, this is for you.” Well, as a good girl who listens to her mother, Sally takes the poo… and feeds it to her brother!

“Just in time for Easter, wordsmith Alix Burrell has come up with a delicious off-the-wall treat for lovers of zany tales for children. She joins a long tradition of writers whose alternative children’s book characters have become bedtime staples.” 

Expat Living, Singapore

**WICKED GILLY**

Alix Burrell was born in Scotland but moved to Asia with her family as a child. Her career in finance brought her to Singapore. She has published three books under her pen name Wicked Gilly and has given all the proceeds to charity. Children love reading about all things icky and Alix writes about everything from pants and poo to sneezing elephants in order to cater to that streak of humour in kids. She had a regular column of wicked verse for the Banter magazine over the course of a year in 2005 and has a website www.wickedgilly.com with samples of her work.

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PAULA PANG

Paula Pang is a graphic designer and children’s illustrator on a freelance basis. She kick-started her career by producing an animated series as editor and background artist. She has a strong passion for visual storytelling using drawings and colours. Very often, she enjoys giving a quiet whimsical life to her creations.

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**CHAPTER BOOKS**

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32 The Diary of Amos Lee: I’m Twelve, I’m Tough, I Tweet! by Adeline Foo
33 Wayang Girl by Ho Lee-Ling
34 Gasing Boy by Ho Lee-Ling
35 Ellie Belly: Follow that Bird! by Eliza Teoh
36 Ellie Belly: Cat’s Out of the Bag by Eliza Teoh
37 The Mudskipper by Ovidia Yu
38 Present by Serene Wee
What on earth is causing the orangutans of Mukada Nature Reserve to fall sick and head to the coast? Romy Alexander - on a visit to Borneo with her scientist father - isn't convinced by the park warden's explanation that overcrowding is the cause of the problem. The eleven-year-old soon discovers she has acquired extraordinary powers to investigate the mystery that brings her face to face with the dark forces threatening the creatures of the rainforest. Romy comes to realise that she alone can help break a curse that has brought suffering to generations of orangutans.

"Beautifully written tale of good vs evil that will inspire its readers!"
National Geographic Kids

"A gripping adventure with an important message."
Jeremy Strong, bestselling author

GRANT S. CLARK

Grant S. Clark is an author and journalist based in Singapore with his family since 2004. His first Monkey Magic novel was published in 2009 and has been acquired (with rights to the second book) by three publishers globally. For 20 years, Grant has worked for an international-media grant as a reporter editor and TV presenter. He currently runs a pan-Asia news service and writes when he can in the evenings and during weekends. Part three of Monkey Magic will be released in 2012, along with another kids’ novel and a collection of humorous verse.

GRANT S. CLARK

EXTRACT

Dad had always promised to take me on one of his faraway journeys, to an exotic land where the smells and tastes were as different to home as the sights and sounds. He’s a scientist: an expert on apes and monkeys. A “primatologist”, to give it the proper name.

My father, Dr Jeremy Alexander, had spent most of his life doing monkey business. Tracking baboons in the jungle or helping zoo-reared orangutans adjust to life in the wild — all part of a day’s work for Dad. He used to say his job was to protect apes and monkeys from their closest relatives.

He meant humans, of course.

For years, I hadn’t let myself believe he would really take me on a trip — mainly to avoid disappointment in case it never happened. But, deep down, I knew Dad would stick to his word, that’s how he was. When I was small, he once bought thirty bags of ice from the petrol station and crushed them with a spade before helping me mould the pieces in the garden. As I stuck a carrot-nose onto the icy face, he said: “There you go, Romy. So what if there’s no snow in London again this winter? I promised you’d see a snowman here.”

There was as much chance of finding a snowman where we were heading now as there was of spotting a hamster surfing on the moon.

He’d told me a month before the December holidays that the two of us were going to Kalimantan, part of the giant rainforest island of Borneo, in Southeast Asia. If you’ve heard of Singapore or Bali, Borneo is somewhere between the two and far, far bigger than both put together.

I should know – I spent every night for four weeks before we left scouring maps of Asia.

Dad’s task was to work out why orangutans were behaving strangely at the Mukada Nature Reserve. More and more of the ginger-haired apes were migrating to the coast, an area they normally avoided and that was home to proboscis monkeys. The proboscis — famous for their huge rubbery snouts — didn’t enjoy orangutans poking their noses around, and the orangutans were falling sick.

We were coming to figure out why.

“Look! The airport,” Dad cried, pointing through a window ringed by water droplets. He had to shout to be heard over the whining of the engine in our tiny, rickety plane. I’d held his hand most of the way from the last airport (our third on the journey) and got the feeling from his squeezes that he was almost as frightened as me.

My stomach lurched and his grip tightened as the plane suddenly dropped, then jolted upwards...
MONKEY MAGIC: THE GREAT WALL MYSTERY

WRITTEN BY: GRANT S. CLARK

DISTRACTED after a shocking turn of events in Borneo, Romy Alexander arrives in China to witness a wonderful and most unusual gathering on the Great Wall. In this second part of the Monkey Magic series, the 11-year-olds embark on nocturnal adventures and is drawn into a mystery that soon turns sinister.

THE GLASS TABLE

WRITTEN BY: LEIGH K CUNNINGHAM

Twin male and female monkeys are discovered on the banks of the river Kai. The room fell into silence when a knock came through the front door.

My fear that adults secretly read children's minds returns for an instant, but I realise he's not talking about the beard. Dad points outside and at last I remember. The three people met us at Beijing airport this morning after our overnight flight from Borneo. Dad is in China to speak at a conference and I have slept for most of the four-hour drive from Beijing. The adults are from Shendgang University, Professor Bo is running the conference. Dr Lim works with her and Pei is his nephew. The boy was reading a computer magazine when I dozed off gripping the monkey, a gift from the professor.

Trees, blue sky, some sort of castle or ruins rise higher than I can see through the car window. No, this most certainly is not Borneo. This is one of the wonders of the world. "Wow, I say. "It's... it's great."

Actually, you are correct," says Pei. "The Great Wall of China."

And we are about to climb China's famous landmark to witness one of the most unusual invasions in its 2,000-year history; a vehicle so plush the leather seats are as comfy as a sofa. Who are these people? Are we in Borneo? Why doesn't Dad shave his beard off?

"It looks amazing," Dad says. "Forget it, Lucy. It all tastes like fish."

"It might help persuade Arjun to form an alliance," said Jack, "knowing his parents are believers.

"Fused", screamed Lucy, lighting a buffet of cakes, scones, tartlets, and jam rolls.

Jack and Lucy were on the inaugural mission to attend the first meeting of the believers meeting, held at the Bintapple residence. A crowd was not expected since few people in Rumpole believed in the spell, and only some of those thought the old woman in the shack at the lake was the responsible. Most people still believed in the abduction theories, whether by aliens or a cult.

"That man looks just like Arjun," said Lucy, "except Arjun doesn't have a beard."

"It might help persuade Arjun to form an alliance," said Jack, "knowing his parents are believers."

"Forget it, Lucy. It all tastes like fish."

Ignoring the warning, Lucy ploughed her way to the fabric drool spilling down her chin into amarshmallow topped caramel tart.

"Oops!" she said with a laugh, as she hand selected the sash-covered treat. The room fell into silence when a knock came through the front door.

Mr. Bintapple stood aside the opened entryway with a bow and a wave, as if he was welcoming a queen. "May I introduce Madam Aurora," he said as everyone assembled in the living room.

Madam Aurora did not walk into the room, she swooshed, with layer after layer of different-colored sheer fabric floating around her movement.

"Madam Aurora," Mr. Bintapple began, having extricated himself from the billowing chiffon, "saw our notice in the Rumpole Tribune and contacted me to discuss our plight. We have spoken several times now, and she has a very interesting story to tell, so if you could please take a seat, we'll get started."

Mr. Bintapple moved quickly toward the seat beside the coffee table, which supported a mammoth bowl of potato chips. He nodded at Madam Aurora when all six seats were filled, encouraging her to begin her story. She leaned forward in her chair as if she was about to whisper a top secret.

She had received a visit, she said, from a boy called Zeb Fabergast. Jack and Lucy gazped, as did everyone else in the room. "He came to me as a spirit, a wood spirit. He called himself. Another gasp passed around the room and Jack's mother started to cry. "Is my boy dead, too? Are they all dead?"
This sequel to The Glass Table continues the story of twelve children transformed into spirits in live in the river Kai. The children struggle with rivalries and conflicting priorities while outside their river home, with developments threatening the ecosystem to which they are bound. And just as they come to grips with the rules of the spell that govern their existence, the witch has more surprises for them. Breaking the spell seems almost impossible, even without the brains of the river, 12-year-old Ming Zhi Chen.

She was safe outside of the spell, and the other wood spirit was with so might Faith be whole, somewhere. And if she could prove Faith after turning into bubbles and floating away on the river Kai, then momentous task, Ming had to revisit the witch at the lake. She might eventually be forgiven. But before she could begin with that was on her now to get the law passed and break the spell, so all understand, the river spirits and the wood spirits, and she dared in,
THE DIARY OF AMOS LEE: I’M TWELVE, I’M TOUGH, I TWEET!

WRITTEN BY: ADENELE FOO  
ILLUSTRATED BY: STEPHANIE WONG

A third book in a series about growing pains and maximising life’s patient humour to cope with school life. This story follows Amos Lee’s journey from class wimp to swim champ. Amos finds his voice as a resident writer of the school’s first Poop Fiction magazine, and also runs in the contest to be crowned Tween Idol. Will he succeed?

WAYANG GIRL

WRITTEN BY: HO LEE-LING (STEPHANIE)

Eight-year-old Amber loves playing with her cymbals. Her mother is annoyed by the din and calls her “a whole noisy wayang rolled up in one small girl”. After watching a wayang (Chinese street opera) show, Amber decides that she wants to be a wayang performer. Lessons from her shifu (teacher) teach Amber the main roles in Chinese opera and the intricacies of this traditional performing art.

ADENELE FOO

Adeline Foo is an MFA graduate of New York University Tisch School of the Arts. She has 17 published children’s books, with four national bestsellers. The Diary of Amos Lee SL (Hwee), published in 2009, won the inaugural Red Dot award presented by the International School Libraries Network of Singapore in April 2010. Publishing and translation rights to the Diary of Amos Lee have been sold to India and Indonesia.

STEPHANIE WONG

Stephanie Wong lives in Singapore and is a designer at Epigram, an independent design house and publisher (www.epigrambooks.sg). Aside from designing, Stephanie also illustrates for magazines and books.

HO LEE-LING (STEPHANIE)

Ho Lee-Ling is a Singapore public historian and writer. A former teacher and museum educator, she has a passion for history and storytelling. Since 2006, she has written several books for children. Her first, Samsui Girl, was awarded a First-Time Writers & Illustrators Publishing grant in 2006. Other books written by her include four picture books based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child for the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports of Singapore. Her non-fiction work includes a reference publication, Culture and Customs of Singapore and Malaysia, published by ABC-Clio.

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Stephanie Wong

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CHAPTER BOOKS

**GASING BOY**

**WRITTEN BY:**

**HO LEE-LING (STEPHANIE)**

John Chow is in trouble. Sent away from his cosy home in Singapore, he unwittingly enters a top-spinning contest with a champion spinner. John can barely spin a bottle, let alone the traditional Malay top, the gasing. The stakes are high. The reputation of his uncle and friends ride on his shoulders. Does John have the determination, nerve and skill to withstand the whirlwind training and emerge as the champion, a true Gasing Boy?

**WRITTEN BY:**

**ELIZA TEOH**

The book features the 7-year-old title character, Ellie Belly, a bright and mischievous little girl. One day, Ellie Belly discovers that she can talk to animals! She hears a sunbird calling for help. She needs to sneak out of class to find out what’s wrong. Will she be able to help in time?

**ILLUSTRATED BY:**

**WOLFE (Main illustrations)**

**RACHEL LIAM (Diary entries and “Ellie’s worksheets”)**

Wolfe’s biography is as exciting as the label on the back of a shampoo bottle. He spent many years drawing funny pictures to entertain people. Then he figured that it made more sense to get PAID drawing those funny pictures and still entertain people. He is an illustrator, miniature-maker, sculptor, cartoonist... When he grows up, Wolfe aspires to be a professional online RPG farmer.

Rachel Liam is 16 years old. She loves doodling, dancing, playing on her keyboard and chasing Floss, her Mini Schnauzer.
Ellie Belly's adventures continue in the second book in the series, Ellie Belly: Cat's Out of the Bag. This time, Ellie Belly and best friend Cammy find a kitten. Before they can help the kitten find its mother, along comes the school principal! Are they in trouble again?

Ellie Belly: Cat's Out of the Bag is also filled with illustrated diary entries and more doodles, but this time, many of them were contributed by children and young fans.

Fun-learning moments appear throughout the book in the form of “Breakaway Boxes” on English usage and grammar.

**ELIZA TEOH**

Eliza Teoh is a Singapore Press Holdings scholar, a Journalist and Sub-Editor at The Straits Times and simultaneously, Executive Sub-Editor at the Today newspaper. In her day job as Editorial Consultant at Dotline Consultancy, she specialises in digital content development and strategic marketing for corporations and government bodies. When she is not dreaming in corporate jargon, you will find her dreaming up new characters and coming up with ideas for future books. The mother of two hopes to entertain children with her books, make them laugh, incite in them a love for books and create fun-learning moments.

**THE MUDSKIPPER**

Written by **OVIDIA YU**

Nicknamed ‘Mudskipper’ by her father, 10-year-old Lizhi has never seen the mudskippers and mangrove swamps her father loved so much till after his death when her mother is forced to leave her in Singapore with relatives who make it clear she is unwanted and unwelcomed. Undaunted, Lizhi’s curiosity drives her to explore below the surface of her new environment and new family. She plunges through unpleasantness and real danger and learns to value relationships with people and nature and to love the teeming life under the surface of the mangrove swamps.

**EXTRACT**

Coming through the path from the swamp they came to a road that led to a giant concrete square and beyond that to a pier that extended out into the sea. There was a row of low wooden buildings on each side of the square, with awnings extending out sheltering the walkway from the sun. Small wooden boats bobbed gently on the water or some were pulled up to rest on the sand with nets and clothes drying on top of them.

“Why aren’t there any people in the boats?” Lizhi asked.

“It’s the wrong time,” Ah Guan said. “Fishermen go out early in the morning or late at night to fish. In the day they tie their boats here and ride their bicycles or motorcycles home. It is a very old way of life. Every year there are fewer boats here.”

That was sad, Lizhi thought. “Where do the people go?” she asked.

Ah Guan made a vague gesture with his hands that included the sea and the rough country surrounding them. “Out even here the buildings are coming closer. When the environment changes, the creatures have to adapt. Come, what would you like to eat?”

A few people sat on stools around wooden tables in the shade. As Lizhi and Ah Guan walked past them some people called out greetings to him.

“Is that Mandarin?” Lizhi asked. “I learned some Mandarin but I can’t understand what they said.”

“That’s Hokkien,” Ah Guan explained, “and some Cantonese. If you stay in Singapore longer you will pick it up. Come and sit here.”

Eating in Singapore with Ah Guan was different from getting a snack anywhere else in the world with Lizhi’s Mother.

“Sotong balls, ok, pisang goreng, kueh lapis and prawn crackers,” a woman called out. Then she translated for Lizhi, “Sotong balls are a very popular fried snack. Often you see children eating them on sticks. Pisang goreng is bananas fried in batter.”

But Ah Guan said, “Not for her first real breakfast here.”
PRESENT

WRITTEN BY:
SERENE A. E. WEE

What can a boy do when a past mistake is torturing him? Mat wants to make up at the first opportunity, but he has to wait a whole year for the chance. His big challenge? Finding the perfect birthday gift for his mother. Searching with his heart and soul, Mat hopes he can find a gift beyond his wildest imagination... This is a heartwarming tale about a boy and his family – with a sprinkling of real magic.

“A charming story about a child’s need for love and approval, the importance of family and the mystically redeeming power of generosity.”
Dr Ken Spillman, award-winning Australian author

SERENE A. E. WEE
Chairman of National Book Development Council of Singapore, President of The Society for Reading & Literacy. Steering Committee and English book selection committee member for READ! Singapore. Serene Wee has a B Soc Sc (Hons) from the University of Singapore and two postgraduate teaching diplomas. Her poem ‘Beauty & Music’ won the Editor’s Choice Award for Outstanding Achievement in Poetry by the National Library of Poetry, US. Her latest work is a Young Adult novel entitled Present. She has written and edited numerous books for children.

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

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63 尤今小说选 (Collection of You Jin’s Novels) by You Jin
64 听，青春在哭泣 (Listen, the Youth is Crying!) by You Jin
A collection of twelve short stories about the magical encounters of children. The book touches on critical underlying values and themes ranging from the impact of environmental pollution to overcoming difficulties and working hard to achieve our goals.

WRITTEN BY:

AIYU

Liew Kwee Lan (Aiyu) is a freelance writer and has published five books. She worked with MediaCorp Singapore as a scriptwriter and story planner for over twenty years and has written over sixty television drama series, many of which were nominated and received Star Awards. She is currently the Vice President of Singapore Association of Writers, Vice Secretary of World Chinese Mini-Fiction Research Association, and member of Overseas Chinese Women Writers Association.

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EXTRACT

两人小心翼翼的趋近,左看右看,好像没什么啊?
可是就在两人最接近的时刻,书的封面突然鼓了起来,好像被风吹得很高的
样子,真是当中的空气里是不是有风吹过。这股风并没有吹到她们的脸上,而
是直接把书卷到了她们的手中。

好奇怪哦,书自己翻到最后一页就停了,只见上面有面已经有裂痕的镜子,一
道微微的黄光正从里面照了出来。

两人实在感到好奇,但同时又很害怕,到底是什么东西呢?
小祝大着胆子拿起一根树枝尝试去拨弄镜子,镜子一被移动,竟然列为两半,
只见黄光好像一下子从破镜里全泄了出来一样,照得周围都黄通通的。
黄光不断扩大,小祝和圆圆之间能够用手遮着脸,就在这时候,亮光突然变作一
阵强烈的风,卷起了两人, “啊” 的一声,两个人就被吸进破镜里去了!

应该是过了一些时候把,圆圆和小祝从光亮中醒过来,发现自己竟然坐在学校
的厕所里。这间厕所也就是早上让包迪依挨拳头的地方。
“我们为什么会在这里的? ”圆圆摸着胖胖的屁股站了起来,一脸茫然地问。
“我怎么知道? ”小祝也一脸的莫名其妙。
“我们不是被卷进镜子去的吗? ”
“还是出去看看吧! ”
圆圆点点头,两人开门走出厕所。
**TWO BOYS & A BOOK OF LOVE SECRETS**

**WRITTEN BY:**

ADELINE FOO

A fatherless street kid, Ayush gets accepted into one of Singapore’s oldest schools. He thinks he can start life afresh, leaving his delinquent past behind him. He befriends Lasso, a bumbling fat boy who is secretly in love with Ariel, a “mermaid”. When Ayush’s past catches up with him, he risks getting expelled from school for getting involved with gangsters. Will he sacrifice his best friend to save his own skin?

**HILANG DI BUKIT HALUS**

**WRITTEN BY:**

PETER AUGUSTINE GOH

An exciting adventure of four young Malay boys on a jungle trek at a resort chalet on Bukit Halus, which is inhabited by spirits called ‘orang halus’. What starts out as excitement becomes a nightmare when the four boys are lost in the jungle – will they ever be rescued?

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**Extract**

One afternoon, I met a strapping fat boy – a tall, bumbling idiot trying to do a three-point jump shot on the basketball court. He was trying so hard I felt sorry for him. His arms were short and pudgy. He just couldn’t jump high enough. But he kept trying. I stood and counted. He must have tried at least eighteen times before the ball got in. I was happy for him, so I clapped.

Fat Boy heard me and turned around. He looked at me suspiciously. I shrugged and threw a pass at him with my ball. Fat Boy grabbed it deftly and started dribbling around me.

“Come on, let’s go!” The girl was now wheedling at Fat Boy. He threw my ball back at me. I caught it and nodded my thanks. Fat Boy had a beautiful girlfriend, I thought to myself. I was jealous. And he was just as smitten by me. I could see him groveling.

“One more shot, pleaseee…..?” he pleaded.

The girl nodded reluctantly and put down her bag. Then, in front of both of us, Fat Boy stood at the three-point line, and with a confident leap, he buried his ball in the net. It had taken him eighteen times to do it before the Vision showed up, and now suddenly, he had scored in one try.

Bloody show-off. His girlfriend clapped her hands with glee, and then pointed to her bag sitting on the floor. Fat Boy came over to pick it up, but he was such a klutz that he dropped it!

What tumbled out was a strange sight. I saw a glittery green-and-purple-sequined fishtail on the ground. I looked at it with my jaw wide open a second time.

The girl giggled. She picked up the fishtail gently and shoved it back in the bag. She looked at me and said in a conspiratorial whisper, “I turn into a mermaid when the moon is full.”

Fat Boy and I couldn’t help but guffaw. He then took the bag from her, picked up his basketball and walked off with her.

I looked as they retreated into the afternoon sun. A fat boy and his mermaid girlfriend. Well, what do you know.

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**Extract Overleaf**
EXTRACT


“Patutlah anak-anak kita semua sukar ditemui pasukan penyelamat,” komen Mak Zainon apabila mengetahui khabar tentang penjelasan Orang Asli tentang ‘tempoh waktu’.

“Apa lagi yang dikatakan oleh Orang Asli itu?” tanya Mak Zainon.

“Itu yang boleh memberitahu ke arah mana mereka yang hilang itu tuli.” Wahi Hebat ya bang,” tingkah Mak Zainon. Air mukanya bukan saja berseri, malah menambahkan kepikunan bahawa anak-anaknya akan dapat ditemui.

“Tapi...”

“Tapi apa pula?” capit Mak Zainon memintai, kembali ragu-ragu apabila suaminya terkeru dalam. Diam.

EXTRACT IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Two days and two nights after Nizam, Nabil, Hizkiel and Azri got lost in the forest, the authorities were still continuing their search and rescue mission. They were neither disheartened nor discouraged.

After a deliberate negotiation, the administration of Daulat Putera District that encompassed Bukit Halus and Desa Andalas, agreed to seek the assistance of the Orang Asli from Desa Andalas near Bukit Halus.

The news quickly spread like a bolt of lightning. It was not that the police and military were inefficient and inept. In such a critical situation, the Orang Asli’s assistance was appropriate at that time and place. Hence, the head of the Public Order Department of Daulat Putera District obtained the services of three Orang Asli who were headed by Batin Cham. Batin Cham or also known as Penghulu (Chief) Cham was in his late 50s, whereas his assistants were around the age of 30s and 40s.

Before embarking on the effort to locate ‘a time lapse’, Batin Cham and his muscular and burly assistants said a prayer. They had an intuition that the missing children had strayed far into the right side of the original track, that is the right side of Kalana Track.

“Won wonder all of our children are not easily found by the rescue team,” commented Mak Zainon when she learnt about the explanation from the Orang Asli regarding the ‘time lapse’.

“Both did the Orang Asli say, dear?” asked Mak Zainon.

“The Orang Asli were said to have used ancient methods...”

“You mean the methods to locate our children?” Mak Zainon interjected.

“True. The Orang Asli are skilled trackers of footprints. In the past, there were similar cases of people getting lost in the forest. They don’t need a helicopter, night vision binoculars, dogs and walkie-talkie sets,” explained Pak Omar.

“When she heard her husband’s explanation, Mak Zainon’s face brightened. She hoped the Orang Asli rescue team would be able to meet her children including Azri.”

“What else, dear?” asked Mak Zainon. “What else did the people say regarding the Orang Asli rescue team?”

“Not long ago, Batin Cham merely followed the path used by the missing people. Whenever he failed to detect their tracks, he would sit down and pray, light up a cigarette and look at its smoke. The wind direction would then tell him which way the missing people were heading to.”

“Wow! Isn’t that great, dear,” said Mak Zainon. Her face not only looked bright, it even enhanced her confidence that her children would be found.

“But...”

“But what then?” Mak Zainon quickly cut in and became doubtful again when her husband knitted his brow. Silence.

“Phah Orang Asli disahkan menggunakan cara lama...”

“Maksud abang cara mengesakan anak-anak kita tu?” potong Mak Zainon.


“Abapa mendengarkan penjelasan suaminya, wajah Mak Zainon lebih berseri. Mudah-mudahan pasukan penyelamat Orang Asli dapat menemui anak-anaknya termasuk Azri.”

“Lagi bang!” pintu Mak Zainon. “Apa lagi yang dikatakan orang mengenai pasukan penyelamat Orang Asli tu?”

“Tak lama lalu, Batin Cham hanya mengikut jejak yang digunakan mereka yang hilang. Abapita tak dapat mengasaskan jejak, dia akan duduk berdoa, melayakan rokok dan melihat asap. Arah asap itulah yang boleh membentahubinya ka arah mana mereka yang hilang itu tuli.”

“Wah Hebat ya bang,” tingkah Mak Zainon. Air mukanya bukan saja berseri, malah menambahkan kepikunan bahawa anak-anaknya akan dapat ditemui.

“Tapi...”

“Tapi apa pula?” capit Mak Zainon memintai, kembali ragu-ragu apabila suaminya terkeru dalam. Diam.
The faceless figure whose feet did not touch the floor merely was (1996), and your younger sibling who is deep asleep, "said the faceless figure. "It’s futile to ask for help. They won’t be able to hear. So is straightaway, yet this voice did not come out. Haziq felt that the faceless figure beside his computer voiced rapidly. Its hoarse voice sounded threatening.

Haziq felt immobilised. He also felt kind of light. Yes, light as cotton, white, like the faceless figure was saying ‘he’ into the computer through the computer screen. Is this just my imagination or really happening to me?" Haziq whispered to himself."

"Don’t Help! Don’t hide me here..."
The strange figure merely laughed scornfully. He seemed to be unmoved by Haziq’s cry and plea.

Haziq felt fear in his heart when he was behind the computer screen. And the absurdity was heightened when the strange figure itself seemed to be sitting before the computer. In the blink of an eye, the computer screen turned dark, as if it was switched off.

"Help! It’s so dark in here! And help!"
The strange figure continued to laugh at him.

"How does it feel when hidden inside, huh?" chided the strange figure who continued to speak rapidly, but whose words could still be understood.

"Haziq felt it futile for him to shout because his voice could not come out indeed. Although he was screaming and crying to himself, the strange figure could read his heart. The computer screen turned dark again. Haziq could see the figure before him, which was in his chair.

Haziq screamed straightaway, yet his voice did not come out.

"Help me, mom! Help me, dad!"

"It’s futile to ask for help. They won’t be able to hear. So is your younger sibling who is deep asleep," said the faceless figure cynically.

The frustrations, hardship and political injustices of everyday life in Southeast Asia are dramatically revealed in the story of Dawan, a young Thai girl who seeks the opportunity to continue her education at a city high school by taking a special examination. But Dawan must compete with her brother, and face the disapproval of her father, who is convinced that city life and further education are not for a girl.
EXTRAC T FROM THE MINFONG HO COLLECTION

Dark grey storm clouds massed overhead, blocking out the morning sun. There was no hint of a breeze, and the air hung still and heavy. Jinda was oppressed with a sense of dread. She knew that this rally was crucial to the fight for lower land rents, that her father’s freedom, perhaps even his life, depended on it. Yet, Jinda felt now that she should have called the whole thing off if she could. Something was about to happen, she felt, something terrible.

But Ned had already walked to the podium, and was starting to talk. His voice boomed out, amplified by dozens of loudspeakers across the square, but Jinda was too nervous to concentrate. Partly it was because she knew she was to speak next, but it was also because of this awful foreboding. She felt as if she couldn’t breathe.

The uneasiness had been building up in her over the past week, as she sensed the mood of the city turning ugly.

A collection of the three most beloved and acclaimed books by award-winning author, Minfong Ho: Sing to the Dawn, Rice Without Rain and The Clay Marble. All three books are set in Southeast Asia, and each touches on a different theme: education, struggles for change both for country and within oneself. These books showcase aspects of Southeast Asian rural life in particular, and highlight difficulties that many farmers and peasants face under corrupt governments, political instability, war and even their own traditions. Minfong Ho’s simple yet poignant style of writing renders each story accessible to any reader, regardless of age or culture.
“Sarah, you kat mana, ni? Dah puak…”

“Nabil! Tolong, I! Nabil!! Tolong, Nabil!!”

“Hello? Fi!?”

“Sarah, you kat mana? Apa ni, halnya? You bergerak, ke?”

“Nabil, you jalan tenu, Jalan tenu, Nabil! Cepat, Nabil!”

“Yah, I jalan, ni. Tapi jalan ke mana? Sarah, apalah ni? You bergerak, ke?”

“Nabil, cepatlah! Jalan terus saja. Cepatlah, Nabil. Tolong lah!”

“Nabil, hurry up! Just move on. Quick, Nabil. Please help me!!”

EXTRACTS
“Sarah, you kat mana, ni? Dah puak…”

“Nabil! Tolong, I! Nabil!! Tolong, Nabil!!”

“Hello? Fi!?”

“Sarah, you kat mana? Apa ni, halnya? You bergerak, ke?”

“Nabil, you jalan tenu, Jalan tenu, Nabil! Cepat, Nabil!”

“Yah, I jalan, ni. Tapi jalan ke mana? Sarah, apalah ni? You bergerak, ke?”

“Nabil, cepatlah! Jalan terus saja. Cepatlah, Nabil. Tolong lah!”

“Nabil, hurry up! Just move on. Quick, Nabil. Please help me!!”

“Sarah, where are you now? It’s already…”

“Nabil? Help me, Nabil!! Help, Nabil!!”

“Sarah! What’s going on? Why are you screaming Sarah? Where are you?”

“Nabil help me quick, Nabil. I’m behind you. Nabil, help me quick!!”

Nabil turned around but saw nothing. But Sarah sounded alarmed. She was howling. He was in a panic state.

“Sarah where are you? What’s the matter Sarah? Are you kidding?”

“Nabil, just walk! On keep moving, Nabil! Quick, Nabil!!”

“Yeah, I’m walking now. But where to? Sarah, what’s the matter? Are you pulling my leg?”

“Nabil, hurry up! Just move on. Quick, Nabil. Please help me!”

“Hello Fi! This Fi?!”

“Relax, Mac. Why are you talking like one who is out of breath?”

“Hey Fi! What message did you just send me, ahih?!”

“Message? What message? I didn’t share any message!”

“Nabil! Cepat, Nabil. I di belakang you. Nabil, tolong cepat!!”


“Sarah you kat mana? Apa ni, halnya? You bergerak, ke?”

“Nabil, you jalan tenu, Jalan tenu, Nabil! Cepat, Nabil!”

“Yah, I jalan, ni. Tapi jalan ke mana? Sarah, apalah ni? You bergerak, ke?”

“Nabil, cepatlah! Jalan terus saja. Cepatlah, Nabil. Tolong lah!”

“Nabil, hurry up! Just move on. Quick, Nabil. Please help me!!”

“Don’t lie! You messaged me. You said someone was going to kill me. Who wanted to kill me?”

“What are you ranting about, Mac? Don’t you try going around looking for trouble. I know that you’re upset that I bought this telephone. But don’t go to the extent of making up absurd stories. Have I gone mad to be sending you such an absurd message? Enough! I’m not in the mood to entertain a loony person like you!”

Excerpts from Saga - Antologi Cerpen by Ishak Latiff

EXTRACTS IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION
“Sarah, where are you now? It’s already…”

“Nabil? Help me, Nabil!! Help, Nabil!!”

“Sarah! What’s going on? Why are you screaming Sarah? Where are you?”

“Nabil help me quick, Nabil. I’m behind you. Nabil, help me quick!!”

Nabil turned around but saw nothing. But Sarah sounded alarmed. She was howling. He was in a panic state.

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“Ishak Latiff (Saga - Short Stories of Ishak Latiff) which won the Anugerah Persuratan (Malay Literary Award) in 2007 and 18 (2015).

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“Nabil! Cepat, Nabil. I di belakang you. Nabil, tolong cepat!!”

“Ishak Bin Abdul Latiff is a Lead Teacher in the Faculty of Mother Tongue Languages at the School of the Arts, Singapore. A prolific writer, he has published short stories and written plays as well as award-winning scripts for theatre, radio and television. His short stories were awarded the 2001 and 2005 Golden Point Awards organised by the National Arts Council of Singapore. Ishak has published two other collections of short fiction: Saga - Antologi Cerpen Ishak Latiff (Saga - Short Stories of Ishak Latiff) (2006) and Rona - Antologi Cerpen Ishak Latiff (2007).”

EXTRACTS IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

“Sarah, where are you now? It’s already…”

“You said someone was going to kill me. Who wanted to kill me?”

“What are you ranting about, Mac? Don’t you try going around looking for trouble. I know that you’re upset that I bought this telephone. But don’t go to the extent of making up absurd stories. Have I gone mad to be sending you such an absurd message? Enough! I’m not in the mood to entertain a loony person like you!”

Rona — Antologi Cerpen Ishak Latiff

Colours — Short Stories of Ishak Latiff

Written by: Ishak Bin Abdul Latiff

A poignant collection of twelve short stories for young people on issues of the supernatural, paranormal, relationships, poverty, unresolved love, the environment, and social status.

“13 year old student Nicole Arleth, read the short story ‘Six Hours’ four times as it was so mesmerising and full of mystery.”

Berita Harian, Singapore
ARCHIBALD AND THE BLUE BLOOD CONSPIRY

WRITTEN BY: SHERMAY LOH

Lord Archibald knows the school year is off to a bad start when he is kidnapped and then dramatically rescued by a sword-wielding stranger. No complaints if you're a princess - but not so great when you're a scrappy son of a duke in 19th-century England. When other boys are also attacked, it becomes clear that someone is out for blue blood in Wyndons, England's School of Kings. Archie must put aside his bumbling ways, don his sleuth's hat, and figure out who's behind the sinister attacks - and what they're really after - before it's too late.

*SherMay Loh holds the reader with enough twists and turns, and keeps pace with her readers. A page-turner not just for young readers but also for anyone who has ever been enthralled deep into the night by an Enid Blyton boarding school or adventure story.*

**NOVEL: *ARCHIBALD AND THE BLUE BLOOD CONSPIRY***

Lord Archibald, younger son of the Duke of Chactershire, let out a not-very-lordly ummph as a dama rap clamped over his nose and mouth.

Archie struggled and tried to hold his breath as he was whisked off his feet with mortifying ease (at thirteen years of age he was, as his grandma put it, “a crying waste of perfectly good use!”). The chemical scent fared up his nostrils and burned straight to his brain.

Everything went black.

When Archie opened his eyes, groggy and sick, the ground was galloping away under him. His hands were bound in front of him and his head was inside a sack, and there were a million things he should be worrying about, like what they wanted from him and whether they’d put bamboo splints under his fingernails to get it!

Instead a random thought popped into his head: he was the tag end in his dressing gown.

Not only the normal one he brought to boarding school, made of hand-woven silk and entirely befitting of the son of a duke.

No. It was his favourite cotton dressing gown, which he loved to wear back home. The one with green cleavers on it. And small rottenflower blue unicorns.

At least they were blue. Blue unicorns were all right—weren’t they? And no one would laugh if his body turned up somewhere in them. Instead they’d all say: oh bless him, the poor young lord who was cruelly taken before his time, he had a soft heart like side that no one knew about, oh, how tragic, how precious.

And not: BIVVIVAH AH, those baby UNICORNS!

Suddenly the horse under Archie neighed loudly and reared. His captor cursed the horse, its mother and its offspring, and Archie didn’t know which side was up as he tumbled off. He landed hard on his head—he saw starbursts of pain and Act One, scenes four and five of his life flashing past. Scenes one through three must have fallen out of his ears when he’d hit the ground.

Archie groaned, tried to turn over and promptly rolled into a pond.

One of those ponds that farmers dug near the edges of their fields to attract wild ducks so they could shoot them during hunting season.
A rift has appeared between the two realms of Reality and the Realm of Dreams, two realms which should never be allowed to meet. This rift seems to be connected to the strange happenings at Tamerek, a country in the Realm of Fantasy. Tamerek is in thrall to an evil sorcerer, and four friends are tasked to save their country, and close the rift between the two realms. They face zombies and dragons in their quest to acquire magical items with which to defeat the sorcerer.

**SERULING PERAK**

**SILVER FLUTE**

**WRITTEN BY:** MANAF HAMZAH

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**SERULING PERAK**

**MANAF HAMZAH**

**Award-winning author Manaf Hamzah is the pen name of Abdul Manaf bin Abdul Kadir. He has published five children’s books in the Fantasy Adventures series, Pelangi Biru (Blue Rainbow, 2002), Seniman Riauh Utama (The Pest Rasidah Garden, 2002), Sila Mata Kencana (A Golden Eye, 2002), Seruling Perak (Silver Flute, 2008), Deer Art Mata (The Years of a Goddess, 2008). He also writes adult fiction and has been shortlisted twice for the Singapore Literature Prize awarded by the National Book Development Council of Singapore. His various novels have won or been shortlisted for the Anugerah Peruran (Best Novel) award by Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura (Singapore Malay Language Council).**

**EXTRACT**


“Habis, macam mana dengan kita orang semuanya, Dillah?” tanya Firdaus.

“Aku tak tahuah tentang kau orang, tapi mungkin ada baiknya kau orang cari diri kau orang sendiri juga,” ujar Dillah. Dia lantas menjelaskan bagaimana mereka boleh buat begitu seperti yang telah dialjarkan oleh ayahnya.


Seperti yang pernah Dillah alami, dan ketika ini dialamai juga, Firdaus, Danial, dan Shafiqah menjadi tertakut oleh apa yang terjadi.

Namun begitu, ia tidak perlu kekhawatiran yang bolehlah dikatakan indah. Seolah-olah mereka berada di punca sebuah bukit dan sedang dihimpit angin yang dingin tetapi nyaman.

Tidak lama siswa itu mula dihadapkan menjalani wajah-wajah mereka dalam benak masing-masing. Wajah-wajah mereka berseri-seri sedang dihembus angin yang dingin tetapi nyaman.


“Bener, Dillah,” anggap Firdaus.

“Malah aku semacam merasaan sessato yang cukup indah dalam perasaan ini yang susah heidak aku gambarkan,” sambung Firdaus.

Danial dan Shafiqah mengangguk juga.

“Tapi apakah petunjuknya, Dillah?” Danial bertanya.

“Kau orang tengoklah sendiri,” ujari Dillah sembil menyurupu-sepuhnya mampusan sekeliling.

Sesungguhnya mereka tidak lagi berada di ruang diikili oleh tembok-tembok cermin atau kacat puthi di empat penjuru. Sebaliknya budak-budak bersepupu itu kini berada dalam sesuatu ruang yang cukup besar dan luas.


Dillah terpaksa. Sesungguhnya dia lantas tengan tahan bahawa ruang tersebat yang tidak dia mimpikan sembilan tembok-tembok cermin itu muncul. Justeru dia lantas ingin tahu juga ruang apakah itu?

**EXTRACT IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION**

Dillah smiled when she saw her cousins’ reactions. To help them get a clearer picture, she then explained. “As you all know, I had the weird dream of being surrounded by mirrored walls. In fact, my reflections in the mirrors were mocking me. They asked me to see my self! if I wished to get out of there. So, I asked my father if he could interpret the dream. And he had given me some tips on how to do it.”

“The what about us, Dillah?” asked Firdaus.

“I don’t know about you all, but it would be good if you could find your own souls too,” said Dillah. She then explained to them how to do it as taught by her dad.

“Then afterwards, they made a circle by holding one another’s hands. They closed their eyes. They relaxed their hearts and minds. They concentrated on themselves.”

“Right,” Dillah had experienced. And was going through again, Firdaus, Danial and Shafiqah suddenly felt their body being overwhelmed by a cold sweat. However, it could be described as a nice sensation. As if they were atop a hill and were being caressed by a cold but refreshing wind.

“Now after that, they were able to see their faces in their own minds. Their faces looked radiant like a full moon.

“How everybody open your eyes,” Dillah instructed a moment later. And when her three cousins had done so, she added with a smile. “I know you’ve managed to discover your own selves. It’s evident from your amazed and amazed faces. Because that was how I felt when I first experienced it.”

“True, Dillah,” nodded Firdaus.

“In fact I was overwhelmed by a rather beautiful feeling that I can hardly describe,” added Firdaus.

Danial and Shafiqah nodded too.

“But what does it signify, Dillah?” asked Danial.

“You see for yourselves,” said Dillah, asking her cousins to look around.

In fact they were no longer a room in a room was surrounded by mirrored walls or white glass at its four corners. On the other hand, the couches were now in a spacious and big room. Its floor was of black and white chekered shiny marble. In fact, great and cylindrical stone pillars stood firm and proudly everywhere. They were spaced around one hundred feet from one another. The pillars had beautiful and unique carvings like snakes spiraling upwards to reach the top. Its ceiling was very high and colourful.

Dillah was spellbound. She remembered that she had been dreaming of this room indeed before the appearance of the mirrored walls. Hence, she was also curious about the room.

**TAMEREK**

**A SELECTION OF CHILDREN’S AND YOUNG ADULT BOOKS FROM SINGAPORE**

54

A SELECTION OF CHILDREN’S AND YOUNG ADULT BOOKS FROM SINGAPORE 55
An adventure and fantastic journey of four friends that brings them to the land Senadikka. They have been invited to attend a royal coronation of the prince but he has mysteriously disappeared. The coronation must proceed or the land would be cursed into chaos. Chasing time, the four friends befriend centaurs, three sheltered ladies and the lost soul of a midwife. With the help of their new friends, they must track down the missing prince and uncover the secret of the Goddess’s Tears.

EXTRACT IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Gandar looked at his siblings before giving an explanation. They nodded with understanding. They then turned his head to look at the kids again and sighed.

“Actually, the three of us have received a premonition through a dream. The dream had given us some kind of guidance and way out of our current dilemma. And we did not doubt it seeing that the three of us had experienced it simultaneously. In fact we had the same dreams in the night. In the dream, we were approached by an old woman in all white attire. She told us about the three disabled maidens who were siblings and that they would be able to help our sibling Kenur. They were also known as the three confined maidens.”

Syed and Bilak nodded.

“But I have some queries, Abang Gandar,” said Firdaus with his brows knitted. “You said the Abadi Foundation was closely guarded, it’s certainly not easy for its occupants to enter and exit freely. So, how did you guys manage to influence the management of the organisation to free the girl named Mawar?”

Firdaus’s questions made the Manuda smile.

“Oh, I see,” Dana voiced. Indeed we had to struggle to find an excellent way to get in touch with the three confined maidens. Hence we started to think of various plans and strategies. Since we were desperate as we don’t have the heart to see our siblings suffer any longer, we finally found an idea.

“That is, we would abduct the manager of the foundation while he was on his way home from town,” Bilak interrupted. Then he continued, “We hijacked the horse carriage he was riding in. We had first of all rendered unconscious the driver of the horse carriage. We had to carry it out efficiently so that the manager who was in the horse carriage wouldn’t realise what was going on. And we were successful in making him unconscious. Then we covered his head with a black cloth. As soon as he came to... we, intimidated him with threats and horrific tales and his impending death. In fact, we tried to confuse the manager into thinking that he was dreaming or having a nightmare. And if he did not comply or if he dismissed it, we did not stall him. We did it after learning that the manager of the foundation was a believer of dreams and its interpretations.

Gandar nodded and continued, “We did it on learning that the manager indeed believed in whatever dreams he had and their significances. Thereafter we made him unconscious and placed the horse carriage outside the compound of the Abadi Foundation. In order to further confuse the manager that he was really having a nightmare that needed to be heeded, we repeated the scenario a few times on him. Finally he was frightened as well as believed. The result was Mawar’s freedom.”

“How are you going to find the other two?” Shawfah asked.

“As I’m not sure if using the same method will be fruitful. In fact it would appear suspicious.”

“What sohaj said is true,” Firdaus supported.

“It did cross our minds,” said Gandar. “At the moment we’re looking for ways regarding what action to be taken to find the other two confined maidens. Because without them, all hopes to treat Kenur won’t be realised.”

“Where is the Abadi Foundation located?” Diahli asked.

“It is somewhere near this thick forest. Well, with regards to the distance from the plain in which the girl named Mawar was left behind.”

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EXTRACT


“Dia terkenal dengan tangan baik, kan?” syafizah bertanya kepada adiknya. Gandar memandang dengan hati yang berbeza kehidupan, melihat syafizah yang berbeza dengan tatkala malam bertahun-tahun.

Dalam mimpi itu yang dilalui oleh seorang wanita tua dalam pakaian serba putih, ia memerintah tatkala mengejutkan gading belakangnya. Dia tatkala merasa belas diri bila kehilangan dan dunia, yang memberinya kehidupan di dalam mimpi yang menyembahkannya kena kur terus. Mereka juga digelap oleh tatkala penanyaan itu.

Dana dan Bilak mengangguk.


Pertanyaan Firdaus itu membuat lelaki-lelaki manuda itu tersenyum.


“Ia tatkala menculik pengurus yayasan itu katikala beliau dalam melintasi putih dari jalan.” Bilakah mencela.


“Sebenarnya kamilah yang buat tanah itu, adinda- adinda,” syafuldina.”

“Tentang kamu memang terlalu jelas di benak kami, abinda- adinda,” syafuldina.”

“But I have some queries, Abang Gandar,” said Firdaus with his brows knitted. “You said the Abadi Foundation was closely guarded, it’s certainly not easy for its occupants to enter and exit freely. So, how did you guys manage to influence the management of the organisation to free the girl named Mawar?”

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“It is somewhere near this thick forest. Well, with regards to the distance from the plain in which the girl named Mawar was left behind.”
Towards the Blue is a non-fiction narrative about two city folks venturing into the wilderness of the Canadian Rockies and the Maritime Provinces. The writer and her fiancé take a trip into little-known but lovely Willmore Wilderness, coast down white water after local folklore, attempt personal hiking records without being eaten by grizzlies, push the boundaries of tendonitis and extended bladders while strapped into sea kayaks, discover the very real personalities of the Gulf of St Lawrence and the Atlantic thunderstorm, and tread through centuries-old scrub and millennia-old soil in national parks, all in search of the illusive ideal called Adventure.

Myths of the mountains and their spirits pervade stories of Shi Ying's mysterious origins. Abandoned to die but saved by a villager, Shi Ying is named the "lost child". When she befriends a village outcast with whom she feels a strange bond, her journey into the unknown, in search of her mother and her true identity, begins. Beyond the village gate, she finds that life need not be defined by what has passed but what is yet to come; she learns to fashion her own history, retell her own story, and ultimately, reclaim her old world and possess her new.

**TOWARDS THE BLUE: ADVENTURES OF A CITY WIMP**

**WRITTEN BY:** TAN MEI CHING

Towards the Blue

**EXTRACT**

I smiled bitterly. The wildlife I had encountered so far was one forest chicken (that's what Suzanne called the Ruffed Grouse, which is in turn called the carpenter bird by American Indians because of the drumming sound the male bird makes, once thought to be produced by beating its wings on a log, but actually made by cupping its wings and rapidly beating them against the air), and even then I would be hard-pressed to call it a real experience since I couldn't distinguish the brown bird from the tree it was on. No, the true adventure in the wild was pushing the limits of discomfort and sanity. And tasting how much water your bladder can hold and for how long.

If only the rain would stop! Then I wouldn't have to bother with the khaki overalls five sizes too large and the hooded jacket with its long arms. It was ridiculous that the time Ray and Allan took to put up this tent—reading the instruction sheet and discussing and measuring—produced only something of this size. It's only good for Hobbits. To put on raingear while avoiding teasing Allen and collapsing this contraption was too much of a challenge right now.

**BEYOND THE VILLAGE GATE**

**WRITTEN BY:** TAN MEI CHING

Beyond the Village Gate

**EXTRACT**

It is now the seventh month and I get more nervous every day. In this month, the gates of the nether world open and all the ghosts and spirits in the nether world are let loose. They pour out from the dungeons and torture chambers silently, their voices all spent screaming for mercy. They may come with a sudden gust of wind from the west, chilling even in the summer heat. The tired or lame ones move very slowly and if you're not careful and step on their heels or robes, they will turn and stare at you with bloodshot eyes, bright red tongues hanging over their chins, hair tangled like seaweed. Sometimes they appear like humans, like the one I saw. They can be hideous or beautiful, and they will entice you under their spell and then you are lost.

One morning, the procession of fishermen returning from the sea is uneven, a small knot in the middle. In the field, I look around for familiar faces, counting to myself, thinking actually, only about one person. Xiao Ling hasn't been well for a while and she stays in her house a lot. I don't see her for days and then only a glimpse of her haggard body, sitting curled like a prawn by the little grave on the mountainside. I have left her alone since she never speaks to me. She doesn't speak to anyone, and nobody talks to her or about her. She is like a ghost, people avoid her and treat her with reserve. I remember I haven't seen her for many days. In a panic, I run down the road to the village gate to meet the fishermen, smelling the mustiness of salt and sand they bring with them.

What I see is another familiar figure, slumped and oddly lifted by the others, his legs weak as an infant's, his bare chest glistening wet and sallow. Father. I don't know if I am relieved it is not Xiao Ling or not. Before I sort it out, Ah Chang, looking pale, shouts at me not to stand there like an idiot and to go call Mother. "It's a hungry ghost!" Grandmother says in distress, as Mother and Ah Chang have Father snuggly covered in a bed. Mr. Bo is by the bedroom door, looking on; the other fishermen have dispersed to other work.

"We are not too sure what happened," Mr. Bo says, wiping his brow with the back of his hand. "He was pulling close to sea when he suddenly shouted that there was something really heavy in there. Said something like, something is pulling on the other end. Then he said to keep pulling while he goes check. He was quite careful, but all of a sudden, he fell. Me and Ah Nan tried to get him out, but he got tangled with the net. By the time we got him out, he must have swallowed a lot of seawater!"
追梦的翅膀

DREAMS ON WINGS

WRITTEN BY:
WANG WENXIAN

This book centres on the lives of a teacher and her students, and aims to encourage students to dare to dream and follow their dreams. The teacher believes that everyone has a dream; hers is to help her students achieve their full potential and become future leaders. A touching and inspirational tale about hopes and dreams.

爱城故事

STORY OF IOWA

WRITTEN BY:
WANG WENXIAN

Comprising 29 short stories, this book covers a Singapore secondary school student’s life, including his studies, friendships, overseas volunteer stint as well as other activities. The short stories also illustrate moral and traditional values. Readers will appreciate the beauty of the Chinese language and learn new words.
A collection of nine novels set in India, Saudi Arabia, and Singapore. These novels engage with a variety of themes from problems faced by families to broken marriages, and aim to help adults to make many adults that were faced by young people are caused by broken families. Through these books, readers get a better understanding of the lifestyles and values of Singaporeans and foreigners alike.

**JESSIE WEE**


**YOU JIN**

Tham Yew Chin is better known by her pseudonym You Jin. She is presently a freelance writer. Her vast collection of works includes short stories, novels and essays. She has published around 155 books in Singapore, Malaysia, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan and won many accolades. In 1999, she was the first writer to receive the inaugural Singapore Chinese Literary Award from the Singapore Literature Society. She also received the first Montblanc-NUS Centre for the Arts Literary Award in 1996. In 2009, she was awarded the Cultural Medallion from the National Arts Council. You Jin's literary works are studied in Singapore schools and as a thesis subject at local and overseas universities.

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**EXTRACT**

Suddenly, Yee Liang paused in mid-stride. Why was everything looking so different? Dusk! What was he doing under the table? Why was he on all fours? What was happening to him? Greatly alarmed, he looked down at himself. Then he jumped. He had not become invisible. Yee-ahh! He had turned into some furry creature instead!

He dashed to the wash basin, leaped on it and from there, jumped onto the top of a chest of drawers. He peered at himself in the mirror hanging on the wall. Yee-eow! He had turned into a cat! He started in horror at his twitching whiskers, his fly-away ears, his glittering eyes and his small, furry face. His tail shot up in alarm. Never, in this wildest dreams, had he imagined anything like this happening to him. What would he become? What would the world be like?

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**SUPERCAT**

**WRITTEN BY:** JESSIE WEE

Yee Liang’s experiments on a potion to make himself invisible lead him to the beginning of a great adventure. This lively, humorous and fast-moving story will keep readers entertained all the way to the end.

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**EXTRACT**

Suddenly, he paused to take a last look at his home. His eyes filled with tears. A sob started from the very depths of his being, torn through his heart and stuck in his throat. A quiver shook his body right down to the tip of his tail.

What was he to do? This home could never be his now. Oh, how he would miss his dear mother and his kind, generous and tender-hearted father. Would they miss him too, busy as they were with their own work? And what about his friends? Would they miss him, just a little? He knew he would never see, his parents most of all. The though made him tremble and, unable to help himself, he burst into a mournful yowl.

He yowled and he walked until his throat was sore. Then he stopped and looked around him miserably. No one could help him. He knew that, and there was nothing he could do except get as far away from home as he possibly could. As a cat, he was lost to his parents forever. How could he express the mess he had got himself into? His parents would never understand his loud and frantic mewing.

He shook his head. No, it would be better if he went out of their lives forever. Let his strange disappearance from his home remain one of life’s unexplained mysteries. With a choking sigh, he licked his paws and washed his face. Then he turned and, without another look at his home, fled into the night.

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**EXTRACT IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION**

Mohanad isn’t considered fat, but somehow, his belly was very big and very round. No matter how good a shirt was, when he wore it, it looked odd, especially the button nearest his belly that would look as though it was about to pop off, making people who spoke to him to face fear for it. They were worried that if he ever coughed or laughed, the button would be released and fired towards them.

Honestly, when I first met Mohanad, I really didn’t have a good impression of him. He was from Syria, a neighbouring country of Saudi Arabia, and was a legal counsel in a Jeddah company, specialising in managing all its business that had to do with the law.

As his home was quite near the white house, he often came over after dinner to visit for Shi Sheng for a chat. Every time he visited, he would wear an oversized pair of slippers and as he walked, he would always wriggle his toes. When the slaves were rolled up halfway without much effort; one side was too high and the other side was too low. What I could not stand was that no matter what he wore, his collar would always have a dark ring-shaped sweat stain; it was so dark, it burned my eyes, and made me wonder if he had never washed his clothes for months and years.

The drab-looking Mohanad spoke like a long river whose stream could not be severed and could not stop. The whole house, for the whole night, was filled with his voice. He would never leave, nor want to leave, until the wee hours. At first I thought he was there to discuss business matters with Shi Sheng, no; whenever he arrived. I would retreat into the room with Nini and read with playing blocks. But whenever I got tired of reading and when Nini was bored of playing, and both of us lay on the bed and dozed off, his voice would still be resounding continuously in the hall. Once, I really couldn’t take it any longer. I endured it until he left, and crawled out of bed to ask Shi Sheng, 

“Why, why don’t you you guys discuss business matters in the office? You often push me like this into the room, I’m getting suffocated to death!”

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**READERSHIP**

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**EXTRACT**

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EXTRACT
I pretended that nothing had happened, opening my textbook and teaching as I normally would. When the students saw me acting as if it were any other day, I caught them stealing incredulous looks at each other. A male student sitting in the middle row, normally subdued, prompted me in a soft voice, “Teacher, there’s a new student!” I nodded silently. He noted my lack of reaction and made a face in the direction of the window. Then he persisted, “That guy, he’s really famous!” I ignored him, turned around, and wrote some idioms on the board to test the students’ comprehension skills. As the students began answering the questions, I stole a glance at Zheng Hengyong and saw him looking, listening, writing and memorizing it all busily.

One period passed quickly. Before the bell rang, I took a minute to introduce him to the whole class. ‘Zheng Hengyong is our new transfer student. I hope everyone will welcome and help him get used to his new environment quickly.’

After the bell rang, I walked out of the classroom. Zheng Hengyong got up from his desk and quickly caught up with me. A thick smell of smoke flew towards me like an evil, pungent whirlwind, making me dizzy and disoriented. Up close, I discovered a scar below his left eyebrow, deep and short, like a small dagger that hid dark and deadly stories of the underworld.

EXTRACT IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION
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Literature - whether through the written or spoken word - is valuable as a medium of self-expression, as a canvas for our imagination and also of course, as a record of a community’s life to be passed down the generations. Its importance extends to the larger creative sphere and across different art forms, from theatre to dance and graphic novels.

That is why the National Arts Council of Singapore (NAC) has always supported the literary arts, and especially Singapore’s literature, through various initiatives, programmes and events. Its role in the larger cultural life of Singapore should not be underestimated and has much potential as the country matures.

Singapore’s literary arts scene has become more vibrant over the years and has flourished in Singapore’s four official languages - English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil. There are active literary associations in Singapore which play an important role in promoting writing, reading and publishing, as well as nurturing and grooming new writers in all four languages.

Singapore’s writers, some of whom have been published by major publishing houses, are now studied and appreciated internationally. The writers are also making their presence felt at international literary festivals such as the Hong Kong International Literary Festival, Edinburgh International Book Festival and Adelaide Writers’ Week, among others.

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NAC administers financial assistance schemes and development tools to cultivate a sustainable environment and promote continuing education for the Singapore literary arts industry at all levels, from the promising amateur and emerging publisher to the established writer or publishing company. NAC’s funding support operates through a comprehensive and holistic grants framework focusing on the creation and development of literary content, research, capability and talent development, organisational infrastructure support, publishing and translation, production and market development, and active presentation and promotion of the literary arts.

In addition to offering scholarships, NAC has also established the International Arts Residency Programme which supports the participation of Singaporean writers in overseas residency programmes as well as encouraging Singapore’s literary organisations and tertiary institutions to host inbound residency programmes conducted by established international writers for the Singaporean community.

One important event on the literary arts calendar is the Singapore Writers Festival, one of the few festivals in the world focusing on multilingual programming, with a strong emphasis on Singapore’s four official languages. The Festival, organised by NAC, brings together writers, academics and creative talents from Singapore and the world over, and features a variety of literary genres.

NAC also manages the biennial Singapore Press Holdings - NAC Golden Point Award, Singapore’s premier creative writing competition for short story and poetry. It aims to promote new creative writing and nurture potential literary talents by providing the opportunity for unpublished writers to be evaluated by a professional jury.

To raise the profile of the literary arts in schools and promote reading and creative writing from young, NAC also works with partners to spearhead platforms that increase accessibility to literature and enhance linkages between the literary arts and other creative industries.

For more information on NAC’s grant schemes and initiatives, please visit the Council’s website at: www.nac.gov.sg or email nac_literary_arts@nac.gov.sg
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For more information on NAC’s programmes and initiatives, please visit www.nac.gov.sg