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New short story collection goes to ‘Where the Durian Tree Grows’

Leela Chakrabarty’s tales steeped in Malaysian culture share hidden treasures akin to South East Asian ‘king of fruits’

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia – Leela Chakrabarty gives readers a compelling and nuanced display of Malaysian culture with her new collection of short stories that metaphorically takes them to “Where the Durian Tree Grows” ([published by Partridge Singapore](#)).

“The durian fruit should not be judged by its spiky outer appearance. When you pry open the fruit, it reveals a soft, succulent, fleshy yellowish pulp that you won’t find anywhere else. Locals in Southeast Asia revere the durian as the ‘king of fruits.’” Chakrabarty explains. She elaborates that her tales also reveal hidden treasures that are not immediately apparent, as they immerse the readers in the Malaysian identity, transporting them to the land by involving them in issues relevant to the region and its people.

In “The Mysterious Farm,” Amir spends his days scooping molten palm sugar, pouring it into small bamboo moulds, and packaging the finished product into treats. When he notices a truck dripping a red liquid that looks like blood, he sets out to solve the mystery. In “A Dream Comes True,” an adolescent boy named Chee Keong works tirelessly collecting all sorts of metal objects—mainly empty drink cans. Life is hard, but it gets even harder when he’s accused of a theft he did not commit. Readers will also witness a story of three boys who witness an attempted murder, a young girl who saves a cocoa plantation and two friends who work in a dragon fruit farm in this anthology that showcases the importance of fair dealing and hard work.

“I would like readers from all over the world to be exposed to places in Malaysia and at the same time get a feel of experiencing adolescence [sic] life in Malaysia,” she says.

“Where the Durian Tree Grows”

By Leela Chakrabarty

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About the Author

Leela Chakrabarty began writing more after a story she wrote—during the “Montblanc Preserve the Moment” campaign—won a first-prize award in 1997. She has been a teacher for more than 35 years and has written both fiction and nonfiction aimed to inspire children and young adults.

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