



Best of
ASIAN EROTICA 1

Edited by **RICHARD LORD**

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Introduction

Eroticism is on the march; or maybe it's more apt to say, it's on the slink. Whatever the proper term, perhaps nowhere is that advance more evident than in Asia, which has by far the largest population of any continent. Asia practices eroticism in fascinating ways and, recently, Asian writers and writers based in Asia have been chronicling some of this eroticism.

In the second half of 2006, Monsoon Books (Singapore) published *Best of Singapore Erotica*, the first anthology of erotic fiction (along with a handful of erotic poems) ever released in Singapore. That volume proved to be a surprising success: not only did it dominate Monsoon's own bestseller list for many months, but just four months after the collection first hit the bookstores, we were going into our second edition.

Strongly encouraged by the success of this venture, Monsoon decided a few years later to come out with a second collection of erotic short fiction. This time, however, the company decided to cast its nets wider and brought out *Best of Southeast Asian Erotica*, in which four other countries were included. (The new territory included Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines.) Although it only appeared in late 2010, this book, too, seems to be a success, both critically and commercially. Now we are taking our erotic sampling out into a new frontier: the world of ebooks.

The stories included in these first two e-collections represent a mix-and-match of the best works from the two earlier print volumes. We have dropped the flash fictions and poems from our *Best of Singapore Erotica* collection

and then merged them in these first two volumes of ebooks with pieces from the *Best of Southeast Asian* collection.

As the first collection was composed entirely of Singapore stories, there is still a heavy presence of Singapore fiction in both of these first volumes. Subsequent volumes feature first-rate erotic fiction (and some non-fiction) from throughout Asia.

But what we offer here is exemplary of the principles we employed throughout in selecting stories for the first two print collections: good stories, well-written, though with a definite erotic flavour. This is not pornography; it is a sub-genre of full-bodied literature which looks at and celebrates the sensual and the sexual in the human experience. These stories were not chosen simply because they titillate (though many of them do that as well), but because they delight, inform and sometimes even enlighten and ennoble.

We enjoyed putting both collections together (as you might well imagine). We think you will enjoy reading these stories and seeing why Asia is fast becoming the world centre of eroticism in all its richness and variety.

A Dummy's Guide to Losing Your Virginity

Meihan Boeey, Singapore

“Shall I tell you what makes love so dangerous?
T’is the too high idea we are apt to form of it.”
—Ninon L’Enclos, 17th-century courtesan

I lost my virginity to a man named Pierre two weeks after meeting him.

Well, *of course*, Pierre isn't his real name. How many real Frenchmen do you know named Pierre? Enid Blyton names every other Frenchman “Pierre” in her kiddie novels, but in real life, most Frenchmen have names like Philippe or Jean or something entirely unpronounceable. It's never as simple as Pierre.

Anyway, Pierre isn't French, he's Belgian. He is whiter than white, has perfect skin (perfect enough, that is, to be remarkable for his age), brown eyes, sandy-grey hair, and a huge cock that swells up and sticks out perpendicularly from his very thin body like a rose-red battering ram.

I was saying that I lost my virginity to him two weeks after meeting him. I suppose you're wanting an explanation of this somewhat extraordinary

statement. It's just not worth the bother. Therefore, feel free to fit us both into any convenient category of human behaviour. Rest assured, I will not complain. Complaining, I find, is the refuge of the weak and unimaginative who have neither the courage to put up with shit nor the wherewithal to get out of it.

However I *will* answer the usual round of questions.

1. Yes, he is married.
2. Yes, I knew it.
3. Yes, he's a horny old man. Exactly 23 years older than me, if you like precise figures.
4. Yes, I am Asian—Chinese, if you also enjoy precise descriptions. And I therefore qualify, as my little brother pointed out with a shudder, as an SPG.
5. No, he didn't dump me after one night of sex ... BUT!
6. Yes, the relationship is pretty much all about sex.

By the way, yes, you are free to join my brother and think of me as an SPG. I like the phrase "Sarong Party Girl" really. Wear a sarong, go out and party. Of course, the SPG's reason for wearing a sarong—or whatever conveniently unwrappable dress is in fashion these days—and going to a party is usually to pick up a White Man. Whether or not this was my specific intention while partying in a sarong, I'm not bothering to clarify. You are perfectly free to draw your own conclusions about me, as I am of you.

I became Pierre's mistress without intending to. What I *was* intending was to do was sleep with him so as to get rid of my tiresome virginity, which had been left stubbornly on my hands for 26 years.

I was telling you Pierre had a cock like a battering ram. A virgin pussy becomes deeply startled when faced with the prospect of penetration by a

battering ram. A pulse of sheer panic raced up and down me when the whole bulk of it emerged from between the silver teeth of his zipper.

“That’s not going to fit! It’s HUGE!” I bellowed, flinging all thought of seductive atmosphere, which I’d been carefully building up for three hours, to the winds. Pierre shook his head, disparagingly. “Average,” he murmured, “average.”

The average size of the male penis is six to seven inches erect. Proportionately, Pierre was not wrong, though, for he is six foot tall. His problem is that he is underweight for his height, so that a penis which would have looked relatively proportionate for a six-foot, 180-pound man, looks preposterously gargantuan for a six-foot man who only weighs 135 pounds.

Now, I am very short, even for an Asian girl. I didn’t even know if I had enough piping for this plunger.

“Think of it as a baby’s head,” he persuaded me silkily, pushing me quite firmly down under him. “That’s what it’s built for, right?”

“I suppose so,” I replied dubiously, and gritted my teeth.

Pierre had been told by a friend that I was a virgin. He did not believe I was a virgin. I did not act like a virgin and I hadn’t bothered to tell him. Because if I had, he wouldn’t have slept with me; it’s that simple.

“I shouldn’t have been your first experience,” he exclaimed in dismay when he finally asked and I told him.

This surprised me, because I had judged him at first glance very much the way you might have been doing up to this point. I had seen a nattily dressed, charmingly seductive older European man, freely discussing his experiences with many girlfriends. I had therefore fit him neatly into that handy category, the Horny White Man.

Oh, let me elaborate just a little. Horny White Man: Good in bed, generous with women, dislikes long-term relationships, probably divorced/

married, adulterous. The HWM is the antithesis of the SPG, which is why they are drawn to each other. HWMs are for the most part weak in character, strong in personality, easily led but difficult to pin down. It takes our strong-willed SPGs five minutes to lead a HWM to the altar, and an ensuing five years (or the equivalent in alcohol) to force them to sign the registry.

I suppose there are degrees of Horny White Man-ness, just as there are degrees of Sarong Party Girl-ness. Some are merciless, some are buoyant with random sincere affection, some are in-between. I am in-between; Pierre, as I grow to know him, is closer to the extreme of sincere, emotional attachment for every beautiful woman on earth, and some not so beautiful as well. (And a few who are not, technically, women. Don't ask.)

But we were talking about the sex.

I believe the secret to good sex is enjoying your own body. I am inordinately vain about my body. I have perfect breasts, each one a nice firm but soft handful, set high and full against my ribcage; I have a splendid waist, nicely tucked-in, and very comfortable, plus round, dimpled arms and legs. I have little love for my ass, but Pierre turned out to like it best, so altogether I believe myself a regular Aphrodite, and knowing oneself to be an Aphrodite does wonders for one's performance in bed.

A book called *The Satanic Witch* suggests that men are most turned on by underwear they're *not* supposed to be seeing (i.e. not the half-naked stripper doing the pole dance on the stage, but the primly dressed girl whose thong might be just peeking out over the top of her jeans). Most importantly, one must make the most of what one has, whether it be sexual charisma, bedroom eyes, or a good set of tits. The important thing is to seem accessible without seeming easy.

I have always loved my tits. The first man to squeeze them was a fellow called Jeff. He watched me dancing on a platform with my tits on the verge

of bouncing entirely free of my slightly exposed bra, until he approached me for a dance and took the opportunity to grope me, first one breast, then the other. Growing bolder, he pressed his fingers inside my blouse, then my bra, and fingered my nipples. That was rather nice, but then I decided he would be no fun as a First Experience (random gropers seldom are) and escaped.

On the whole, I am glad I waited for Pierre, who flirted before he seduced, and seduced before he groped, which is only polite.

The first part of me he saw naked was my left breast, which he peeked at by lifting the corner of my blouse. Being very pleased with my breasts, as I've explained, I allowed him.

"Now I can't stand up," he murmured, smiling faintly. "Everyone will see."

I thought this rather complimentary, considering the vast number of tits he has seen in his career as a ladies' man. We then progressed, after a great deal of impolite cuddling, to bed.

Having believed myself in possession of a perfect body for so long, it seemed a marvelous moment to finally show it off, in all its glory, for another human being's appreciation. It was unwrapped by stages; it was rubbed first, through my clothes, through my bra, then under my bra, which was finally unhooked. I presented my naked tits to him for further attention, which he gave most obligingly. He then searched under my skirt, discovered perfectly ordinary white cotton panties and was extremely pleased.

This is not to say that I lay there like a blow-up doll. I had saved my virginity not out of a sense of sexual morality, but out of an abhorrence of waste; I didn't want to waste that first, irretrievable experience on the male version of a blow-up doll. I therefore had no intention of being anything less than responsive. Being determined to leave my state of inexperience with a vengeance, I began with what would become my favourite beginning—a

blow job.

Blow jobs interest me. I have a friend for whom sex has been a matter-of-fact affair since the age of fourteen. She has made love in all conceivable positions, licked, sucked, tickled and teased every easily accessible orifice of her longtime boyfriend's body (and he hers), attempted interesting experiments with honey, wax, chocolate, whipped cream. Yet her imagination is not what one would call vast.

"What does cock taste like?" I asked her eagerly once.

She shrugged disinterestedly. "Like skin, lah," she replied.

Admittedly, her simple answer made me a whole lot less afraid of giving a blow job, and when I finally had the chance to fit a cock into my mouth, I went at it with enthusiasm. Let it never be said that I give a sloppy blow job! Oh no. The very idea of a blow job deeply entices me.

There is so much to a man's cock besides the taste of skin, lah. There is the thin, silky texture of the shaft as your tongue slides over it, the soft, warm marshmallow of the head that quickly tightens into a hot, quivering ball when your lips close over it. I have longed to give a blow job ever since I read about it in my mother's copy of *Everywoman*, to find all the tickly bits with my tongue and suck milk from the tip like an infant on a nipple. To feel the soft flesh grow hot and stiff in my mouth is an instant of the most irrevocable power a woman can have over a man. In short? Cock, basically, tastes pretty damn good.

Another question I asked my matter-of-fact friend: what does semen taste like?

"Salty," she said.

Another, more descriptive girl said, "At first, it's thick and goes goosh, goosh, goosh. After that it's thinner and kind of watery and it just goes spurt. Splut. Sppt."

I investigated with great interest the taste of semen. This particular batch was, well, salty. With a hint of cigarettes and alcohol. And it was something between the goosh and the splut.

Having been a virgin for twenty-six years, I'd had plenty of time to consider what a cock would feel like, as well as taste like. "It's a muscle," Pierre explained to me one day, much later, favouring me also with the various Latinate anatomical names for various regions of the male genitalia.

This includes the perineum, which is apparently the "male clitoris", the interesting wrinkly bit of skin between the end of the balls and the beginning of the asshole. For women, this is mainly just a bony bit that bruises if you're too skinny, but not for men, it seems.

I once knew a girl who described a large bodybuilder as having a body that "felt like one giant, erect cock." So yes, I must say, a giant, erect cock feels rather like a miniature bodybuilder. The skin is soft, what's beneath is hard and pulsates with small movements like the smaller tendons and fibres in a very lean bodybuilder's arm.

Pierre took his time about putting his miniature bodybuilder to its appropriate use. The lingering moments he spent in fondling my breasts, running his tongue around my ass and flicking it across my clitoris, all reassured me more and more than I had picked the right man to be rapidly experiencing the First Time with.

I had to consciously refrain from reaching orgasm within five seconds of feeling his massive cock snugly slipping inside me. I will not attempt to describe how it feels, because English is woefully short of subtle language for sex. (Unlike, say, ancient Greek or Roman Latin, which got very specific about who was doing what to whom with what, and where.)

The earth didn't move. It didn't have to. I just had an explosive orgasm, with every muscle of my body. An explosive orgasm is as descriptive as it

needs to get, really.

Pierre himself took his time about it. This is rare for a man, but the whole point of picking him over any number of other men was the high probability that he knew how to do it.

That was the end of my virginity. And it's funny, but when I think back on it, there are two moments in my life that have been such great triumphs they fill me with a lasting sense of purpose and *joie de vivre* that continue to echo throughout my life.

One was losing my virginity to a stranger named Pierre. And the other is none of your business.

For now.

About the author:

Meihan Boey has been writing for pocket money since she was fifteen. (Fortunately her pockets are quite small.) By her current great age, she's published children's books, gay literature, pornography, religious propaganda, government propaganda, safety manuals, and a lot of comic book scripts. She currently works for a bookstore, making money for other writers, and is also an endurance athlete, because you get such great ideas while trying to distract your brain from intense physical pain for five hours.

And Then She Came

Jonathan Lim, Singapore

And then she came.

Across the wet grass between the dormitory blocks, heralding herself with a strident, indrawn wail like the sound of darkness laughing.

If any of the wakeful inmates heard her, they did not look up. If they had seen, they would not have dared to believe. Only he knew.

For she was coming to him.

The tree outside his dorm window shuddered, shaking off a night fragrance that was not its own—a scent pungent to the point of rot.

The boy lay naked on his bed, knowing there was no point in being anywhere else. She would have him there and had been violent getting him there on previous nights; he did not wish to extend the struggle or invite her wrath. Her affection was terrible enough.

One night, months ago, returning late from a party where he had drunk *almost* too much, he'd glimpsed her—a pale stranger, standing on the edge of a dark field. Not sober enough to be superstitious, he had lingered and looked. As he ogled, overstepping curiosity and forgetting caution, his as-yet-untried manhood swelled with lecherous urges. Then he had stumbled on his way.

But she had sensed him. Had heard his unworded lust, felt his molesting

thoughts as he passed into the night.

And she had responded.

Every night since.

Every single night since, he had refused all engagements, denied all company, in order to be in his room at this time, in his bed, waiting for her to come and claim him and take her pleasure.

He no longer even bothered to stay clothed. He knew how she wanted him and no longer had any desire to appear otherwise when she arrived. Her will was like white-hot iron—everything melted and cleaved to it before shrivelling to nothing in the heat. All his waking hours had yielded to the marauding night. Entire days shrank into a few sweaty hours. The nocturnal torments reverberated through his twenty-two-year-old mind all through the day. His body ached, his balls were knots of dull pain, taut with overuse. His cock, so unbelievably tender from having been so unbelievably hard, did not feel like it belonged to him any more.

And it didn't.

The curtains fretted in the otherwise still air. She had arrived.

The fluorescent tube coughed briefly, spitting darkness, then recovered. Two weeks ago, he had taken to leaving the lights on in the vain hope that this would either weaken her or strengthen him. Now, she liked it this way. It forced him to see his body being used, watch his cock take on the angles she imposed, watch it shiver uncontrollably as it spewed forth the essence she extracted from him with her mouth, her hands, her dead vagina.

Now into the room she came, and at once her presence pressed down on him. He sank into the sheets, paralysed. His eyes reeled, compensating for his body's immobility, and in answer to his search, she took form. Out of the still air, a faint haze became a fog, then developed outlines and contours, grew

solid and opaque ... and then she was there.

She was beautiful, but not in a way the living or sane could possibly comprehend. *What did that make him?* he wondered—but the thought flickered away, terrified of itself.

She, too, was naked—but while his body shuddered with shame, hers was defiantly bared. Her skin shone faintly with a glow that made him think of shapeless, writhing plant-things, fathoms deep in the sea. She must have been young when she died and took this form—how long ago? Decades? Centuries? Living death had drained her of moist youth and left her skin smooth but powdery, her breasts paler and colder than marble.

Her eyes were cruel and colourless. She rarely looked at his face or met his gaze—her obsession lay elsewhere, her control already complete. Her hair glistened but was not wet; moving in response to winds he could not feel. Her teeth were not sharp—she had bitten him often, yet he had never bled—still, they were a predator's teeth. She never touched his lips or kissed him, those actions meant nothing when she could bite, suck, swallow every other inch of him.

She was now stretched out in the air above him, looking ravenously at his meticulously gym-toned body. The inches between them filled with lead, crushing him against the mattress.

Her hands reached down and began to touch him.

Her fingers, cold and raking, ranged across his torso. In the beginning, he had expected to be repulsed by the touch of death, to seek refuge behind stubborn flaccidity. Let her mangle his limp body till she shrieked her way back into the night in banshee frustration, he'd defiantly thought.

But his body was a traitor. While his mind recoiled, scrabbling away from all that she was and everything she did, his body responded to that

ancient pact of flesh and lust. Even now, he shuddered and trembled at her touch; as his nipples tingled beneath her fingertips, humiliation rushed to his hot cheeks. He was more disgusted by his own raging flesh than by the outrage of her hands.

Her hands traveled downward, hard nails scraping faint red trails across his helpless abs. And still downward.

His humiliation was now complete. Even before he felt her touch on his cock, he had felt her desire; and already his cock strained towards her, mocking him. Was this the erection dead men had? The hardness of impassive death rather than vigorous life? Was it dead blood that was hardening in his veins, engorging his betrayed manhood?

Then she took him into her mouth, so deep that she would have choked if she could still breathe. With horror, he felt her lips touch his pubes, his cockhead rub against the flaking inside of her dust-dry throat. The only wetness was his—the shameful ooze of precum that his cock treasonously offered up to lubricate her impalement.

Would she drink his first load? She sometimes did, as if receiving a preliminary offering before the cruel consummation. She could afford to let a load or two go astray, as she seldom left him before he had surrendered his young seed three or four times. In the early weeks, he had felt as if she would empty his balls for good and leave him desiccated, but his body stunned him by repeatedly and consistently satisfying her hunger, against his will.

But this night, her hunger was acute, she wanted his warmth inside her. Already now she was poised over him, her body gaping over his turgid cock. Her eyes met his suddenly, pinning his frantic gaze, and her lips stretched into a merciless leer as she lowered herself onto him. Her cold clamminess drew him in, the emptiness of her pulling him deeper and deeper, as if she would suck his whole body into her—to fill her hollowness, to warm her

from the core to the underside of her skin. As if his hot wet life could quench the death that raged in her.

She began riding him, taking him deep with every downward thrust, her body never touching the bed. He could feel the dryness of her vaginal passage rasping against his swollen, throbbing cock. Her silence terrified him: her body displayed all the abandon of lust, but she emitted none of the noisy breathing that underscored physical pleasure. The silence seemed to sharpen her intent, to take all of him, to rape his body until he lost his mind and she possessed his soul.

His young body was stiff against the bed—arms useless, legs unresponsive. He could not resist, could not pull back his groin to deny her. Locked into place, his erection was like a skewed tombstone upon which her insatiable lust perched.

He was getting close. Soon he would offer up this night's first hot libation, a fluid guarantee of his enslaved virility. Any minute now, the dead muscles would gulp at him as his life spurted out in creamy ropes, flowing upwards into whatever emptiness comprised her insides.

As she dragged him towards climax, he understood with searing clarity that he would never belong to anyone else again. Least of all himself. Before anyone else had had the chance, her touch had claimed him. What remained of his life would be spent in the burning shame of nightly surrender ... until he had nothing left to offer, even to her.

And then?

Somewhere inside his head, plummeting downwards through the chasm that her lust had opened in his mind, his dwindling reason began to scream.

And then he came.

About the author:

Jonathan Lim is a director, actor and playwright. His dramatic writing ranges from 14 years' worth of the sketch comedy spoof show *Chestnuts* to WILD RICE's 2006 hit pantomime *Oi! Sleeping Beauty!!*, as well as musicals like *Women on Canvas* and plays like his one-man show, *Emerald Hole*. His poetry has appeared in *CAPSULE* and on the front page of Singapore's Today newspaper. His writings tend towards the ghostly in theme, such as the play *People Say Got Ghost*; his musical *H is for Hantu* (featuring a singing Pontianak); and his first book on the supernatural - *Between Gods And Ghosts* – which is out in bookstores now.

Awakening

Yusuf Martin, Malaysia

Syafiqah was not sure just where the old fragment of book came from, but she was bored and it was the only material to hand that she had not read. She had finished the American book about the teenage vampire, the slushy one that was made into a film, that one with that American girl whose father had been a mediocre country and western singer some years before. Therefore, as it was raining, she reached for the yellowing book, wiped the dust carefully from the first and last pages and the broken spine, sat on the corner of her bed and began to read.

In the golden morning kampong half-light, still slightly scented by a smoky mosquito coil, Amir Hussain, a bronzed, muscular young Indian stood in his newly laundered white dhoti, which lingered teasingly between the girlish curvature of his waist to a centimetre above his youthful knees.

Syafiqah noted that the book had no actual cover, only pages and a spine. Several of the first stories, in what appeared to be a volume of short stories, seemed to be missing. All the information Syafiqah had about the book was in fine print at the top of the page facing her—page 62. This suggested that the book, when it was whole, had been *The Best of Southeast Asian Erotica Volume 2*, whatever that was.

She shrugged; the title meant nothing to her, but, a little intrigued, she

began dipping into the story. At sixteen, with all the normal peculiarities of a mid-teen, Syafiqah readily found herself identifying with the main character, Farah, a Malay girl who, like Syafiqah, lived in a small rural kampong.

Eagerly, Syafiqah read on, but a little puzzled.

Shafts of Mediterranean yellow light pierced the musky ambience of the wooden lean-to's interior. It revealed a fresh glistening moistness on Amir's arms and upper torso as he strained to manipulate firmly resistant oiled dough, in preparation for making roti canai.

'Shafts of Mediterranean'. Syafiqah had read about the Mediterranean. It was in Europe, wasn't it? Why were there shafts of European light coming into a kampong lean-to. Was it a kampong lean-to in Europe then? How odd.

With a combination of curiosity and the need to be engaged in something, Syafiqah decided that to enjoy the story, she must really put her questioning aside until she had finished reading it, otherwise there was no way she was going to enjoy it. So, on she read ...

Small beads of sweat gathered at his brow, catching the sunlight as Amir toiled in the warmth of his father's morning shop, serving to highlight the smooth, rich, dark, chocolate brownness of his skin. Carefully, he wiped the salty, oily sweat away, preventing it from falling into the dough he was kneading and tainting it.

'Eee—yuk, sweat,' said Syafiqah with a mock shudder, then 'Mmm ... chocolate.'

Amir was customarily focussed, earnest about his task as he continued massaging the moist dough until it became pliant, kneading the soft, slightly resistant substance, feeling it, in its tenaciousness, bouncing back at the touch of his firm masculine hands. For a moment, just for a moment, the soft silky dough enveloped his hands in a supple oily caress. Busy, Amir did not allow the dough to linger, rejecting its touch and the promise of soft intimacy.

Ten-what? What is tenaciousness, is it like nineaciousness, but with one extra. Syafiqah reached for her *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* and looked the word up. Ah, yes, okay. Well, why couldn't they say that then? she said to herself, frowned and once more began to read.

In the robust rhythm of his work method, Amir could feel the smooth slippery dough squeeze between his strong fingers like a gentle lover's kiss, warm, soft yet irrepressibly elusive. Repeatedly, Amir touched the waiting dough, and the dough, though to all intents and purposes inanimate, touched him gently, lovingly back. Even when Amir was a little rough, the dough embraced his roughness, subsumed it into itself and gave pliancy in return, understanding that tough love often came before the needed tenderness.

When the initial pulling and touching were spent, when Amir understood that the dough, despite qualms, was truly ready, Amir would take firm hold of the oiled, manipulated dough in both of his strong, damp hands, lift the dough and toss it back firmly, almost roughly onto its oiled bed. He stretched the dough, massaged it, feeling it relax, become more submissively elastic under his sturdy, determined hands. Again, the supple dough would be lifted and thrust back, down onto the waiting surface, and again, and again, adding to its already acquiescent suppleness. A total of eight times, the now obedient dough would be lifted and returned, forcefully, manfully to the oily surface, its compliance subtly growing with each vigorous stretch.

Quickly, the dexterous Amir would flip the corners of the oily dough over, side by damp side and side over oily side into the centre, until all four sides of the griddle bread lay together at the centre of the dough, forming closely intimate layers. Then, the mass would be lifted once more and, deftly grabbing one side, Amir would gently pull it over the whole—a headscarf over a newly married woman's wanton tresses, indicating her freshly found sensual status, binding the succulent, moistly accommodating layers together.

These infinitely smooth layers of kneaded dough and oil would aid the bread to become crispy, comfortably hard when heated on the sturdy flat griddle, separating them out, giving the roti canai its traditional crusty layered texture and deeply delicious flavour. Amir would manhandle each roti canai in exactly the same way, resolutely stretching and pulling, grasping and caressing until the whole batch was ready for the griddle and, ultimately, the ecstasy of gratuitous consumption by some waiting, welcoming, mouth.

Mmm, this is making me hungry; I wonder what *Mak* is making for lunch. Syafiqah tried to ignore her growing hunger pangs and returned to the text.

Most days, in the glow of the early morning and in the failing roseate light of evening time, Amir worked hard for his father—making roti canai at their rural wooden lean-to and making money by selling the crispy, slightly oily, unleavened griddled breads to their eager regular customers.

Through his ardent toil, Amir gained in stature both in his family and in the local community. The heroic Amir's hard working diligence was the talk of the kampong. He was regular, punctual, and served the best-made roti canai for miles around. Everyone knew this, everyone appreciated this.

For the few idle female customers—those with nothing better to do than to dream, sigh over young athletic men—and the few heavily breathing male customers too, it also helped that Amir was devilishly handsome, with sharp, aesthetically pleasing Indian features. For he was as close as the kampong dwellers would ever get to the uncommon beauty of an Indian movie star. No doubt, Amir being comely added more than a frisson of spice to the kampong dwellers daily lives and to their purchasing of the layered breads, knowing that, inevitably, Amir was there waiting, silently servile to service their pleasure.

Because of Amir's youth, his gentle, yet firm mannerisms and his

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