

## The Rice Mother Rani Manicka

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The Rice Mother Rani Manicka

Rani Manicka made Malaysia proud by being the first local author to win the Commonwealth Writers Prize for South East Asia and South Pacific Region in 2003, with her debut novel The Rice Mother.

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Five Malaysian books to give you a romantic rush on Valentine's Day

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At the age of fourteen, Lakshmi leaves behind her childhood among the mango trees of Ceylon for married life across the ocean in Malaysia, and soon finds herself struggling to raise a family in a country that is, by turns, unyielding and amazing, brutal and beautiful. Giving birth to a child every year until she is nineteen, Lakshmi becomes a formidable matriarch, determined to secure a better life for her daughters and sons. From the Japanese occupation during World War II to the torture of watching some of her children succumb to life's most terrible temptations, she rises to face every new challenge with almost mythic strength. Dreamy and lyrical, told in the alternating voices of the men and women of this amazing family, The Rice Mother gorgeously evokes a world where small pleasures offset unimaginable horrors, where ghosts and gods walk hand in hand. It marks the triumphant debut of a writer whose wisdom and soaring prose will touch readers, especially women, the world over.

A compelling glimpse into a captivatingly exotic world of myth and magic. Beguiled by promises of wealth, fourteen-year-old Lakshmi leaves her native Ceylon for Malaya and marriage to a man many years her senior. But Ayah has lied to her and her family about his circumstances and in fact he lives in poverty. A woman of formidable energy and intelligence, Lakshmi provides security, if not luxury, for her family, though at a considerable emotional cost. Then the Japanese army invades during WWII. The family bears deep scars and inflicts those wounds on the next generation. But in Nisha, Lakshmi's great-granddaughter, it is as if Fate has come full circle . . .

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THE BALINESE TWINS - Beautiful and exotic, they exchange an island paradise for the shabby squalor of London, and innocence for corruption. THE SICILIAN - Ricky Delgado strikes a devil's bargain with a blood goddess: 'Build my temple and bring me the souls of damaged people, and you will see what rewards I give.' THE COURTESAN - Elizabeth makes her living from men's desire. With a flick of the switch in her head, she feels nothing: no pain, no hate, no sorrow, no joy. THE ARTIST - Anis takes to painting as an outlet for his rage. His artist's eye knows his subjects before they know themselves, and he paints them all, a gallery of broken people. Can they escape the deadly web of decadence and sin?

A breathtaking and absorbing novel set in Malaysia propelled by the superb storytelling instinct of the author of THE RICE MOTHER. Parvathi leaves her native Ceylon for Malaya and an arranged marriage to a wealthy businessman. But her father has cheated, supplying a different girl's photograph, and Kasu Marimuthu, furious, threatens to send her home in disgrace. Gradually husband and wife reach an accommodation and the naïve young girl learns to assume the air of sophisticated mistress of a luxurious estate. She even adopts his love child and treats Rubini as her own daughter - a generous act which is rewarded by a long-wished-for son. But it is a life without passion and Parvathi dreams of loving - and being loved - with complete abandon. When the Japanese invade Malaya in WW2, they requisition the estate. Marimuthu dies and Parvathi is forced to accept the protection of the Japanese general who has robbed her of her home. For the first time she experiences sexual ecstasy. And gradually, her sworn enemy becomes the lover she has always yearned for . . .

The Flight of the Swans is a rich and fascinating family saga set in British India and Malaya. Cursed, and with blood on his hands, Captain Ramdas Rao Bhonsle is forced to flee Killa Fort, which has fallen to the British. A strange flight of swans signals his flight from Killa; a flight that will drive Ramdas and his family into further adversity. But great adversity spawns great dreams. Ramdas dreams of ousting the British from his motherland. His sons, the handsome and irascible Nilkanth and the plain and romantic Madhav dream of possessing the same girl, Tara Bai, who is the most beautiful courtesan in the land. And Ramdas' granddaughter, blind Arundhati, dreams only of seeing one day. Woven into this tapestry is a lone white swan inextricably linked to the ebb and flow of the Bhonsles' fortunes as they flee across India to Malaya.

This exciting collection brings together thirty-nine of the late Dr. Gopal Baratham's characteristic and revered pieces. In his usual blunt, strong and

controversial style, Baratham's socio-political critiques are 'peopled' by characters from virtually every background and class—with their frustrated hopes, wild illusions and excesses. Paired with a stylistic and evolving narrative voice, as seen in dialogue that fluctuates from poetic to quirky, this writer's ambivalent medium is also his message. Readers are drawn into the depth of his work, and left with a sympathetic, sensitive understanding of events, people, actions and the complexities of relationships

Named one of Pop Sugar's Best Books to Put in your Beachbag this summer and one of the best books of July. A Booktrib "Romance to get you in the swing for Wedding Season" of 2019 A Book Riot "Five New Diverse Romantic Comedies" Bustle's "21 new summer novels to spice up your summer reading" To Leila Abid's traditional Indian parents, finding a husband is as easy as match, meet, marry. Yes, she wants to marry, but after 26 years of singledom, even Leila is starting to get nervous. And to make matters worse, her parents are panicking, the neighbors are talking, and she's wondering, are her expectations just too high? But for Leila, a marriage of arrangement clashes with her lifelong dreams of a Bollywood romance, where real love happens before marriage, not the other way around. So she decides it's time to stop dreaming and start dating. It's an impossible mission of satisfying her parents' expectations, while also fulfilling her own western ideals of love. But after a series of speed dates, blind dates, online dates and even ambush dates, the sparks just don't fly! Now, with the marriage clock ticking, and her 3-month deadline looming in the horizon, Leila must face the consequences of what might happen if she doesn't find "the one..."

A flamboyant beauty who once partied with the Prince of Wales and who now, in her seventh decade, has "gone native" in a Ceylonese jungle. A proud, Oxford-educated lawyer who unwittingly seals his own professional fate when he dares to solve the sensational Hamilton murder case that has rocked the upper echelons of local society. A young woman who retreats from her family and the world after her infant brother is found suffocated in his crib. These are among the linked lives compellingly portrayed in a novel everywhere hailed for its dazzling grace and savage wit -- a spellbinding tale of family and duty, of legacy and identity, a novel that brilliantly probes the ultimate mystery of what makes us who we are.

From Giller Prize winner, internationally acclaimed, and bestselling author Vincent Lam comes a superbly crafted, highly suspenseful, and deeply affecting novel set against the turmoil of the Vietnam War. Percival Chen is the headmaster of the most respected English school in Saigon. He is also a bon vivant, a compulsive gambler and an incorrigible womanizer. He is well accustomed to bribing a forever-changing list of government officials in order to maintain the elite status of the Chen Academy. He is fiercely proud of his Chinese heritage, and quick to spot the business opportunities rife in a divided country. He devotedly ignores all news of the fighting that swirls around him, choosing instead to read the faces of his opponents at high-stakes mahjong tables. But when his only son gets in trouble with the Vietnamese authorities, Percival faces the limits of his connections and wealth and is forced to send him away. In the loneliness that follows, Percival finds solace in Jacqueline, a beautiful woman of mixed French and Vietnamese heritage, and Laing Jai, a son born to them on the eve of the Tet offensive. Percival's new-found happiness is precarious, and as the complexities of war encroach further and further into his world, he must confront the tragedy of all he has refused to see. Blessed with intriguingly flawed characters moving through a richly drawn historical and physical landscape, *The Headmaster's Wager* is a riveting story of love, betrayal and sacrifice.

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