



Rice without Rain

By Minfong Ho

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Another dry season -- another silent harvest!

The parched yellow fields outside the village where seventeen-year-old Jinda lives are her family's only source of income. How can the rain-starved crop produce enough rice to feed them, much less pay the rent? Perhaps the recently arrived young strangers from the city are right about the need for centuries-old traditions to change. At least when she listens to their talk, she feels the stirrings of hope...

Hesitantly, Jinda grows to trust the outsiders. There is Sri, who brings with her life-saving medicines and knowledge of how to use them. And there is Ned, who talks of taking charge of one's own destiny, and fighting those who would stand in the way. It is almost too late when Jinda realizes that her trust is misplaced -- that to Sri and Ned their cause is more important than the lives it would affect. Against a vividly evoked backdrop of rural and urban Thailand, Jinda heroically faces the challenges of holding on to who she is as the world around her revolves in what seems to be never-ending change.

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Rice without Rain By Minfong Ho Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Seventeen-year-old Jinda's life is irrevocably changed when Ned and three other students from Bangkok visit her village. Inthorn, Jinda's father and the village headman, listens to Ned and resists paying the usurious land rents. Inthorn is jailed and eventually dies in prison; Jinda journeys to Bangkok to take part in student rallies for the farmers. Love interest is provided by the growing mutual infatuation of Ned and Jinda, sensitively and realistically handled. The main characters are especially well-drawn, although the others are stereotypes or, at worst, mere ciphers--the mother of one of the students is particularly offensive. A tad too predictable and polemically quite heavyhanded, Ho's novel nonetheless gives an interesting and at times absorbing glimpse of class struggle in the Thailand of the 1970s. Village scenes are especially effective evocations of simple beauty and somnolence. Not a masterpiece, but a novel from an author to watch. --John Philbrook, San Francisco Public Library
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About the Author

In Her Own Words...

"I grew up on the outskirts of Bangkok, Thailand. Home was an airy house next to a fishpond and a big garden, with rice fields, where water buffalo wallowed in mudholes, on the other side of the palm trees. I liked the usual things--eating roasted coconuts and fried bananas, chasing catfish in the grass in the rain.

"Although I write in English, my first language was Chinese. Because my parents are from China, they praised me, scolded me, told me long bedtime stories, and recited poetry to me all in Chinese. No wonder, then, that I think of Chinese as the language of my heart. As I grew older, I absorbed Thai from interacting with people in the busy streets and marketplaces and temple fairs of Bangkok. Thai for me is a functional language, and I think of it as the language of my hands. Only much later did I learn English from strict teachers in school, and so I think of English as the language of my head.

"I started to write only after I left home, as a way to conjure up Thailand for myself, to combat homesickness while studying at Cornell University. There was a greenhouse on campus with a single potted banana tree in it. During my first winter, I used to sit near that tree and imagine that I was home. Soon, however, I realized that words could evoke images of home even more effectively than the banana tree, and I began to write down notes about the things I missed. My first book, *Sing to the Dawn* (1975), grew naturally out of those notes.

"I met my husband, John Dennis, at an antiwar demonstration while we were both students at Cornell. In 1976, six years and more than three hundred letters later, we were married. It took a Catholic church wedding and a Chinese tea ceremony (both in Singapore) and a Buddhist wrist-binding ritual (in a Thai village) to satisfy our families and friends.

"I am lucky that John has learned fluent Thai and some Chinese, and that his work often takes us to Asia. Our three children--Danfung, Mei-Mei, and Chris--have had a chance to live in Thailand, Laos, and Singapore, so they have experienced many of the sounds and sights that I did as a child. Like me, and I hope like many children today, they are growing up comfortable with a blend of several cultures and languages."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Michele Anderson:

Book is actually written, printed, or outlined for everything. You can learn everything you want by a publication. Book has a different type. As it is known to us that book is important issue to bring us around the world. Alongside that you can your reading proficiency was fluently. A book Rice without Rain will make you to be smarter. You can feel far more confidence if you can know about everything. But some of you think in which open or reading some sort of book make you bored. It is not necessarily make you fun. Why they may be thought like that? Have you looking for best book or ideal book with you?

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