

Ghost Cave: a novel of Sarawak

Elsie Sze



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A tale of tragedy, rebellion and romance unfolds in the jungles and gold mining country of Borneo. Ah Min, a young Chinese immigrant, follows his best friend to seek his fortune in Sarawak in the mid-19th century. They labour in the mines alongside fellow Hakka and some native Dayak. Ah Min explores a humid land of beguiling women, of fragrant spices and of ghosts. But the oppression of the English White Rajah draws the men into a rebellion that will have catastrophic consequences.

Over 100 years later, Ah Min's descendant Ka Ming joins communist guerrillas in the jungles of Sarawak. Facing danger at every turn, he and his friends must fight for their ideologies against British and Malaysian troops. The stories of Ah Min and Ka Ming are told through the eyes of a modern young woman, Therese. A tattered journal, a mysterious stranger and the voice of Ka Ming ultimately reveal that the two men are connected by more than blood.

Winner of the inaugural Saphira Prize for unpublished writing

"The calm demeanour of the modern East Asian citizen belies the region's tumultuous history. In Ghost Cave, a modern woman investigates her family history to uncover a heart-rending tale of immigrants on the trail of gold in Borneo in the mid-1800s. Fans of historical drama will find this tale well-researched and satisfying." – Nury Vittachi, author of The Curious Diary of Mr Jam and The Feng Shui Detective series

"In the tradition of the folklorist, Elsie Sze presents a multigenerational tale of Sarawak past and present. Rich in historical detail, Ghost Cave unearths long-forgotten secrets and promises, to reveal the timelessness of human bonds." – Ania Szado, author of Studio Saint-Ex and Beginning of Was

"Elsie Sze writes an engaging story of Sarawak that is both wonderfully detailed and informative. Each chapter of this compelling novel takes us deeper into the history of Borneo and into the lives of the characters." – Leanne Liberman, author of Gravity, The Book of Trees and Lauren Yanofsky Hates the Holocaust

"Ghost Cave: a novel of Sarawak contains surprises at every turn. A long-ago tragedy, a buried treasure and a harrowing guerrilla war are just part of what makes this exceptional tale a highly recommended read. More importantly, it explores the heart and heartbreak of a family bound to each other across a turbulent time." — Shannon Young, editor of How Does One Dress to Buy Dragonfruit? and author of The Art of Escalator Jumping



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