

Chasing dreams to Cambridge

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Translated by Sharifah Nabilah

Title: Mina Meets Cambridge
Author: Hidayah Amin
Illustrator: Jafri Janif
Designer: Maya Gallery
Publisher: Helang Books, 2015

Entertaining and encouraging. This is the impact on the young readers that follow the journey of Mina, who is accompanied by her sister, Zara, to Cambridge University.

Once again writer and woman-entrepreneur, Hidayah Amin, has proven her creativity on the international stage.

Furthermore, Hidayah had completed a Master's programme in History at Cambridge University, one of the most prestigious institutions of higher learning in the world.

This book comes "alive" not just because of its impeccable story line but also the pastel-themed illustrations by Jafri Janif that looks simple but detailed and meaningful.

It is not surprising that this book received support from former President S R Nathan who also gave words of encouragement.

On top of that, the support of local company, CapitaLand, strengthened the publication of this book that demands a huge cost.

Meticulous planning was done to produce it – a simple story frame – about a young girl who misses her sister who is studying at Cambridge University. This also extended to the choice of fonts that make reading easier for dyslexic readers.

The history of the university is also explored from its earliest days (built by disappointed graduates or poets from the University of Oxford) to the line-up of its most notable alumni including Isaac Newton and Stephen Hawking, who is still teaching about the mysteries of the world despite his disabilities.

Every corner, building, river to the horizons of the university is explored, on top of channelling its contributions to the universal repository of knowledge.

There is some sense of curiosity, as well as an awakening with regard to chasing dreams, that Mina inspires.

Delivered in simple but succinct English, this book is an example for how to produce children's books that are aimed at inspiring and motivating.

Congratulations are in order for Hidayah Amin.

This book should be translated to the Malay language for readership within the Malay Archipelago.

For this purpose, perhaps Mina and Zara should be drawn in *baju kurung* in order to reflect their Malay heritage as they set foot in international and prestigious platforms such as Cambridge.

This book was published last year, as Singapore celebrates its 50th anniversary. It is a beautiful and meaningful gift for our country.