

For Review Only

# Where the SUNRISE is Red

In 1950, young and naive Ruth sets out to look for her husband Mark in Malaya. Little did she expect to find herself in a country split by war and ideology, and a rival for her husband's love that is as lovely and exotic as May.

is a story of human resilience, lies, treachery and love set during the Emergency in Malaya.

The backdrop is Malaya in its twilight years as a British possession, and Malaysia at its dawning, with the cruel Emergency period between as centre ground. As ever, the author tells it how it was, with complete objectivity and fairness where concerns the evanescent expatriate Brits, the aristo Malays and the thrusting Chinese. A tangled web of love stories it may be, yet there is suspense on every page. But whatever else is suspended, it is never our belief in the characters or the action. An excellent, enjoyable read.

—Bill Jackson, Editor, *The Corporal and the Celestial*

Although Chinese May and English Ruth and their children become close friends, there have been many misunderstandings and intrigues along the way. What at first appears to be a conventional love story, soon develops into one of intrigue, sexual tension and tragedy. The pace is fast and there is plenty of action to keep you wanting to turn the page. This book enthralled me. I could not put it down.

—Julia Appleton, President, Princes Risborough Morning WI

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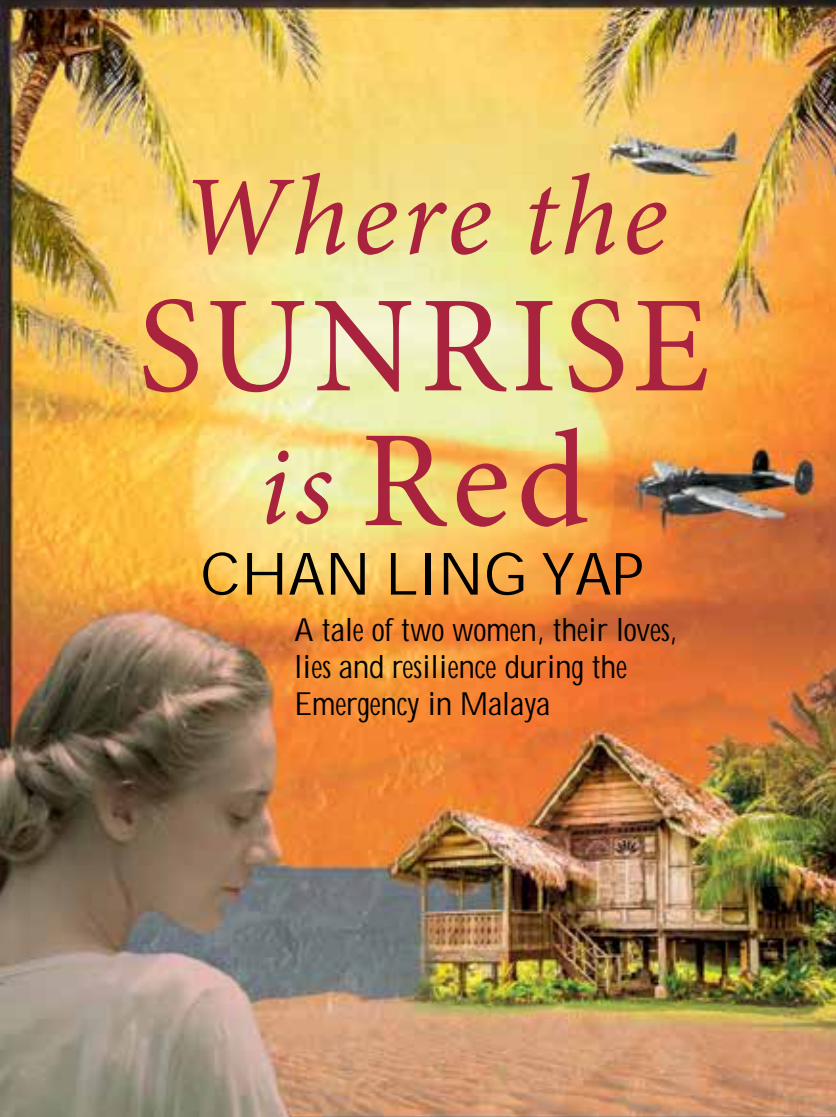
Where the  
SUNRISE is Red

CHAN LING YAP

# Where the SUNRISE is Red

CHAN LING YAP

A tale of two women, their loves,  
lies and resilience during the  
Emergency in Malaya



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“Once again Chan Ling has produced a pacey novel, her fifth, to delight her many fans. Her inventiveness is up there with Dick Francis and Jeffrey Archer, even if the context is totally different. The backdrop is Malaya (where the sunrise can be red) in its twilight years as a British possession, and Malaysia at its dawning, with the cruel Emergency period between as centre ground. As ever, the author tells it how it was, with complete objectivity and fairness where concerns the evanescent expatriate Brits, the aristo Malays and the thrusting Chinese. A tangled web of love stories it may be, yet there is suspense on every page. But whatever else is suspended, it is never our belief in the characters or the action. An excellent, enjoyable read.”

—Bill Jackson,

Editor, *The Corporal and the Celestial*

“Chan Ling’s latest novel begins in Somerset in 1950 and ends there fifteen years later – with the intervening years taking place in Malaya as it moves towards independence. Although Chinese May and English Ruth become close friends, there were many misunderstandings and intrigues along the way. What at first appears to be a conventional love story soon develops into one of intrigue, sexual tension and tragedy. There are racial and societal differences, with rich and poor all added to the mix. The pace is fast and there is plenty of action to keep you reading. Post-war Malaya is brought to life with its mix of crowded cities, steamy jungles, white sandy beaches, and the heady scents of the flowers and spices. You also get glimpses of a different life in 1960s London. This book enthralled me. I could not put it down.”

—Julia Appleton

President, Princes Risborough Morning WI

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While some of the background and characters are based on historical events and figures, this novel is entirely a work of fiction. The names, characters and incidents portrayed are the work of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events or localities is entirely coincidental.

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# Part One

Somerset, England

1950

## Chapter 1

RUTH DUG DEEP into her pockets. Her fingers were frozen with cold. She stamped her feet and huddled her slight body further into the sheepskin coat. She loved the coat. Worn and almost bare in patches, it smelt of wood smoke and reminded her of the fire she would light when she returned home that evening. She cast her eyes in search of Buster. She called his name loudly, palms cupped round her lips to give her voice weight. She knew she should hurry, for dark comes suddenly in December. From a distance black clouds loomed; streaks scuttling towards her like a lion's mane flowing wild. A sudden wind whipped up. She shivered. The air had turned distinctly cold. She reached up to touch her nose. It was numb and she imagined it looking red. Not your best feature, her mother had told her solemnly when she was a child. But her mother was

no more. They said that a bomb dropped on Liverpool Station had killed her instantly.

A lump formed in her throat. Ruth swallowed and brushed the damp from her cheeks. She searched in her pocket for the letter. She had used the excuse of walking Buster to leave the house to read it in private. She had read it over and over again, examining each word, each line, in search of a deeper meaning in them. The words seemed distant. Did he not wish her to come, she asked herself. It had been almost a year since Mark left for Malaya. She had wanted to go with him. “No, Ruth,” was his answer, whispered in her ear. He had nuzzled her neck, his breath warm with a hint of tobacco. “Plantation policy does not permit it. I need time to settle and get to know the job. It would not be prudent for you to come. Things don’t look too good over there.” Mark had stopped short then. She could see that he did not wish to talk about his work in Malaya. “Anyway, what about your father?” he had challenged after a moment’s hesitation. “He has not recovered from the loss of your mother. He needs you.” Ruth could still see, in her mind’s eye, the flecks of light in Mark’s hazel eyes; eyes that commanded her to see sense, to yield to her responsibility to her father.

With a sigh, she called out loud for Buster again. He came bounding up the hill wagging his tail. His tongue hung out in breathless pleasure and his eyes were full of joy, the joy of running in the wild and the joy of chasing rabbits. A joy that she could not share.

“Come! Time to go home,” she said, ruffling the hair on his head.

“So what did he say?” her father asked the minute she stepped into the kitchen. He was seated hunched by the hearth. His face was wan and his cheeks bristly. The bags under his eyes told of sleepless nights and worry.

“Nothing much,” she replied hiding her face which had turned a deep red. She piled the wood high in the hearth and began twisting and knotting old newspapers to start the fire.

“Nothing much?” John’s voice was gruff in disbelief. “It’s been three months since he last wrote! I see you wring your hands each time the postman comes.”

“The mail is slow,” she replied lamely. “Mark said that security is tightening up in Malaya. It would not be a good time for me to join him.”

“*Hub!* Excuses! If security *is* being tightened up, would it not make it safer for you to go? You can’t remain apart forever. Since you married, Mark has been away for most of the time. I won’t be here forever. The farm has to be sold. I can’t run it, not even with your help. Labour is difficult to come by. All the lads have left for the city. And, my dear daughter, I don’t want you to waste your life sitting by me when I know you are pining for your husband.”

She knelt down and placed her head on his lap. “I love you Dad. I am not wasting my life. Mark knows best. I am sure he has good reasons for my not joining him.”

John laid a hand on his daughter’s head and ran his fingers through the blond curls that refused to lie flat. He could not bring himself to tell Ruth that the creditors had been. The farm had to be sold sooner than he had anticipated. He knew that he had himself to blame. He had allowed himself to wallow in the loss of his wife and had done little to redeem the situation after the war. First he lost the wheat crop in 1946 as a result of



incessant rains. Then the following year, the potato crop had failed because of hard frost and snow. The little he had set aside for rainy days had all vanished. Now, with the farmhands almost all gone and no land girls to call upon, it was mechanisation or sink. Investing in machinery was not an option he could afford.

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Ruth opened her eyes and pulled the blanket right up to her chin. She wriggled her toes to get some warmth into them. In the silence of the night, an owl screeched. A silvery beam of moonlight peeked through the gap between the curtains. She shivered. A little warmth would be lovely, she thought. Shadows played in the room, shifting with the movement of the curtain. The room was draughty. Mark had told her about the heat in Malaya. She could not imagine such heat. Relentless, he had said. She didn't quite grasp what that meant. She had never been abroad. The nearest to being hot was that one sunny day they had had in Brighton. Lying on the beach with the pebbles and fine sand round her, it was the nearest thing to heaven. She had been so in love. She remembered licking ice cream from a cone. She could even taste it now. Yes, a little warmth would be wonderful.

Perhaps she had imagined it all. Perhaps she had read into the letter something that was not there. Mark must just be busy. After all, his job was a difficult one. He had hinted at dangers that he might have to encounter but had never elaborated on them. She had tried to find out more about the situation in Malaya, 'The Emergency' they called it. She had failed. All news seemed focused on the situation in England itself. The war had virtually bankrupted the country. Just getting bread, meat and

enough to eat, became an all-consuming activity. Feelings ran high and people vented their pent-up frustration through strikes and demonstrations. Page after page of news was devoted to the never-ending problems in England. What news they had of the colonies was few and far between and centred mainly on India and Burma. Their demand for independence and subsequent gaining of it caught the attention of the media as did the turmoil and massacre that followed the partition of India. Malayan news seemed, however, to be buried somewhere, inaccessible. Perhaps she just didn't know how to find it.

Ruth turned on her side dragging the blanket around her shoulder. She wanted desperately to know more; she wished not to show ignorance when she wrote to Mark. She wished he would talk to her, write more. She wished that she was with him.



## About the Author

Born in Kuala Lumpur, CHAN LING YAP was educated in Malaysia and the UK. She has a PhD in economics and was Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Malaya and then Senior Economist in the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations in Rome. She now lives in the UK. Her novel *New Beginnings* won the Readers Popular Choice Award in 2014 in Malaysia while both *Sweet Offerings* and *Bitter-Sweet Harvest* were shortlisted for the award. Her fourth novel, *A Flash of Water*, was published in 2015. For more information visit [www.chanlingyap.com](http://www.chanlingyap.com).

## Also by Chan Ling Yap



### **SWEET OFFERINGS**

**ISBN: 978-981-4328-44-9**

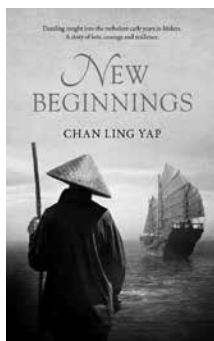
Set in the late 1930s and 1960s, this is the story of Mei Yin, a young Chinese girl from an impoverished family. Her destiny is shaped when she is sent to Kuala Lumpur to become the companion of the tyrannical and bitter Su Hei who is looking for a suitable wife for her son Ming Kong ... and ultimately a grandson and heir to the family dynasty. *Sweet Offerings* is not just a fictional story of the events that ripped one family apart, but a taste of Malaysia's historical, political and cultural changes during its transition from colonial rule to independence and beyond.



### **BITTER-SWEET HARVEST**

**ISBN: 978-981-4351-68-3**

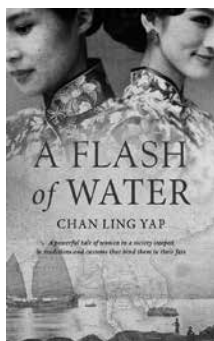
Set in a Malaysia emerging from the outbreak of racial conflict in 1969, *Bitter-Sweet Harvest* tells of the difficulties and tensions of a marriage between a Malay Muslim and a Chinese Christian. Atmospheric, dramatic, action-packed and intriguing, this novel is peppered with local flavour evoking the heat, colours and sounds of Southeast Asia.



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## **A FLASH OF WATER**

**ISBN: 978-981-4677-76-9**

The year is 1883. China is teetering on the verge of bankruptcy. In the countryside antagonism against foreigners and missionaries is growing and the warlords are at large. Li Ling, a young peasant girl in China, flees to Malaya to escape being made a concubine to a warlord only to find herself tricked into becoming a second wife to a rich man with sadistic tendencies. Her life becomes intertwined with that of her rescuer, Shao Peng, in a Malaya that is rapidly transforming under British rule.