

Excerpts from Sri Dean's* launch of

Stormy With a Chance of Fried Rice: Twelve Months in Jakarta (KPG 2015)

16 June 2016, Travellers Bookstore, 71 Smith St, Fitzroy

Pat's writing is full of curiosity and a sense that there is lots to learn from everyone... (*Stormy*) is an engaging book that covers a broad range of topics from the diplomatically serious to the whimsical and mundane. It reminds me of the work of Henry Green who was able to elevate the mundane to things of significance and beauty.

I wish I were a teacher again so I could discuss it with my students.

Sometimes the stories can be angry, yet whimsical and gently witty at the same time. Even when the topic is most confronting as in *Two Sharp Eyes*, there are moments of care, comfort and even self-mockery. The book portrays the experiences of the mundane lives of ordinary people like Bapak and Ibu Kumis the sellers of *nasi goreng* and the jamu lady – the vendor of a traditional tonic, to more serious matters such as the experiences of the women political prisoners at the Plantungan jail. Here the mundane is not necessarily trivial, as we can see from the story of Efi.

When I read Pat's first book *At the Scene of The Crime* I felt very sad and choked with emotions, yet at the same time I smiled like I had a split personality. I experienced the same feeling with *Stormy*.

Pat's musing with an ant in *Bandung the Bullant*, a story with so many layers, is loaded with philosophy. *Let Them Eat Golf Balls* is another story which hints at much deeper concerns than just a story of smart fossickers. Anguish and frustration to the response of the Indonesian and the international community as well as Timor Leste's parliament regarding the VCAR report *Chega!*, is evident in *Two Sharp Eyes*. I never imagined Pat, a gentle soul, could be so angry!

I want to thank and congratulate Pat for sharing his Jakarta experience in such an engaging, humane and humorous way. I strongly commend this beautiful book and trust that you will read it with two sharp eyes.



**Sri Dean is a broadcaster and journalist with the SBS Radio Indonesian program in Melbourne.*

To purchase *Stormy With a Chance of Fried Rice*, email
<shop@travellersbookstore.com.au>