

Book Review: *A Chameleon's Tale*

by Lang Reid

Hot off the press is *A Chameleon's Tale*, and I was honored to be sent a publisher's proof copy before printing. Written by Mo Tejani, it is (on the surface) a travelogue of a wanderer who is seeking his true niche, a place he can call home.

I took the book with me on my last flight to Chiang Mai, and I was disappointed when we got there, requiring me to put the book down. Written in a conversational, easy-to-read style, Mo Tejani takes you from his birthplace in Africa, around the world and even to his country of parental heritage, India, and eventually arriving in Thailand, and Chiang Mai in particular. Not only does our Mo have cultural ties with many countries, but he also has the added problematical ingredient of religion.

He describes very well the family anguish that ensued after Idi Amin's unilateral decision to expel the Asians from Uganda, including an insight into bureaucracy which would split up a family unit because not all passports were from the same country.

On his travels through the world, Mo Tejani writes of the influences upon him from many mentors, and of the nights of congress with women travelers, which I have to say becomes a little tiresome, but does not take away from the main thrust of the book.

As Mo continues his journey, he becomes more and more skeptical of the work done in the name of do-gooders, and his final analysis should make some aid organizations cringe. Unfortunately, both Mo Tejani and I know this will not happen! They are too well entrenched, and well funded to listen to lone voices in the wilderness.

He does thank his mentors over the global years, "These wandering souls of the world – people who have, for reasons of their own, left behind the places where they were born and grew up, to criss-cross the globe – have but one mission: to help others make their lives better. Not only do they make me realize I am not alone, but also that I still have a long way to go down my own road."

Mo Tejani extrapolates from his own world situation to ponder the fate of the 'third culture' children born into intercultural marriages. "Where will be the home for these children? Do we really even have, or need, a traditional home any more? Surely it's not the house you live in, or its location, but who and what you put in it that makes it a home."

In the words of Hotel California, "We are all just prisoners here, of our own device", which in many ways goes to explain much of the expat presence in Thailand. And as the song carries on, "Relax said the nightman, we are programmed to receive. You can check out anytime you like but you can never leave!" Perhaps explaining while we (and Mo Tejani) are still here.

An interesting, deep, and yet entertaining book and well worth the B. 450 price tag at any major booksellers. You will see yourself in this publication. We wanderers have a common bond!



