

## TV Series Pitch

# Kain Songket Mysteries

<b>TAGLINE</b>	Malaysia's most famous female amateur sleuth investigates
<b>LOGLINE</b>	Dismayed by murders being committed in the normally peaceful villages of northeast Malaysia and unimpressed by the abilities of the local police force, and men in general, Aunty Maryam, a <i>kain songket</i> (silk) trader turns amateur sleuth to solve the crimes.
<b>GENRE</b>	Cosy mystery / some comedy
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Good vs evil / society
<b>THEMES</b>	Solving crimes / change vs tradition / role of women in society / introduces traditional Malay arts
<b>TONE</b>	The crime and detection take place in the socially intimate community of traditional Kelantanese villages, and the middle-aged female protagonist is dismissed by men as a nosy busybody thus enabling her to eavesdrop, gather clues, and use her local intelligence and intuitive feel for the social dynamics of the community to solve the crime. Traditional Kelantanese pastimes – shadow puppet theatre, kite flying, top spinning, exorcisms, etc – are a prominent thematic element and provide the backdrop to each crime.
<b>SYNOPSIS</b>	In each book of the Kain Songket Mysteries set in the northern state of Kelantan, Malaysia, during the 1970s, Aunty Maryam, a smart and take-charge <i>kain songket</i> (silk) trader in Kota Bharu Central Market, solves murders that shatter the bucolic village world she thought surrounded her. While the new chief of police, a pleasant young man from Ipoh whose mother's admonitions about the wiles of Kelantanese girls still ring in his ears, wrestles with the bewildering local dialect, Maryam steps up to solve the mysteries herself, and she is assisted by her cousin and cake seller Aunty Rubiah. Maryam's investigations bring her into the closed world of traditional Kelantanese arts and mystic practises, worlds frequently riven by rivalries and black magic.
<b>CHARACTERS</b>	<p><b>Makcik (Aunty) Maryam</b> typical middle-aged Kelantanese lady – often the breadwinners, running the household while the husbands act important but mostly sit in coffeeshops discussing politics and gossiping. Deemed a busybody and acts confused but actually very astute &amp; wheedles information out of everyone. She weathers traditional spells sent to obstruct her and stands up to know-it-alls.</p> <p><b>Makcik (Aunty) Rubiah</b>, cousin and sidekick to Maryam.</p> <p><b>Osman</b> the police chief provides comic relief by being an outsider thus struggling to understand the local dialect and traditions.</p> <p><b>Maryam's family</b>, comprise a long-suffering husband, children and grandchildren, whose lives we follow across the series and who teach us about traditional Malay family life and customs.</p>
<b>ENDING</b>	Maryam often struggles to make sense of the crimes and unravel the mysteries, and she can find herself on the wrong end of black magic spells, but ultimately she always brings the culprits to justice – allowing the police chief to save face and make the arrests – and brings order from chaos in the villages as well as in her own family.



### BOOK DETAILS

#### *Kain Songket Mysteries, vols. 1-6*

<b>AUTHOR</b>	Barbara Ismail
<b>ISBN</b>	multi
<b>PUBLISHER</b>	Monsoon Books
<b>PUB DATE</b>	2012-ongoing
<b>GENRE</b>	Crime Fiction Cosy Mystery Malaysia
<b>AGE RANGE</b>	General adult
<b>URL</b>	<a href="#">Click for webpage</a>
<b>RIGHTS</b>	World print World screen
<b>TRAILER</b>	<a href="#">click for Vimeo</a>

#### Author Information

Barbara Ismail spent several years in Kelantan in the 1970s and '80s, living in Kampong Dusun and Pengkalan Cepa, studying Wayang Siam and the Kelantanese dialect. She holds a PhD in Anthropology from Yale University, and is originally from Brooklyn, New York.

#### Awards

The first book in the series, *Shadow Play*, won Best Debut Novel at the 2012 SBPA Book Awards in Singapore and was shortlisted for the Popular–The Star Readers' Choice Awards 2013 in Malaysia; the second book in the series, *Princess Play*, was shortlisted for the Popular–The Star Readers' Choice Awards 2014 in Malaysia.