The Best of Times?

Alan Maley

‘It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.’

A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens
My thanks go to many friends and colleagues in Malaysia for their advice and most particularly to Stephen Hall, Lee Ming Chen, Lee Su Kim, Jayakaran Mukundan, Zarina Mustafah and to Savanhkeo Kanlaya for the loan of her laptop! Any shortcomings are my own.
Contents

Chapter 1  Visiting time  6
Chapter 2  The best of times  9
Chapter 3  The worst of times  13
Chapter 4  The aftershock  19
Chapter 5  Sons and mothers  23
Chapter 6  Trying to cope  32
Chapter 7  A new friend  39
Chapter 8  Party time  46
Chapter 9  Breaking out  53
Chapter 10  Jessica’s problem  62
Chapter 11  A way of escape  69
Chapter 12  The best plans …  76
Chapter 13  Pool party  82
Chapter 14  Beyond parental control  87
Chapter 15  Auntie Swee Eng takes charge  94
Chapter 16  Picking up the pieces  97
Glossary  109
Characters

Chee Seng: a sixteen-year-old Malaysian boy
Sammy Yeo: Chee Seng’s father
Linda Yeo (Wei Fong): Chee Seng’s mother
Auntie Swee Eng: a kind elderly relative
Uncle Krish (Krishnan): a close friend of the Yeo family
Auntie Veena: Krish’s wife
Puri (Purissima): the Yeo family’s Filipina maid
Jessica: Chee Seng’s girlfriend
Jane: Jessica’s elder sister
Dev (Devinder), Faisal and Ka Choon: Chee Seng’s three closest school friends
Ka Ting: a rich classmate of Chee Seng
Malaysia stretches from Thailand in the north to the islands of Singapore and Indonesia in the south. It also includes Sarawak and Sabah on the island of Borneo.