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Sellvi is country's youngest author

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SERDANG, Sat. - Little did Malarsellvi Joorindanjn know that whiling away her school holidays writing children's stories would place her in the Malaysia Book of Records.

The 15 year old who had her collection of five short stories published last month was acknowledged as the country's youngest author on Nov 2.

Her achievement was also recognised at the recent Mega Achievement Rally in Education, Business and Culture held for the Tamil community.

The collection, entitled Prince Inderasuria And His Hunt For Treasure, consists of Bear In Mama's Room, The Sneaky Owl, Steven And His Mean Tricks, Roses And Thorns and the title story.

In an interview today with the New Sunday Times, the author said she had decided out of the blue to pen children's stories to while away the year-end school holidays as a 13 year old.

Malarsellvi, or Sellvi as she is called, took up to one-and-a-half months to complete the stories.

While Bear In Mama's Room is based on a fear she experienced as a child, the other four are fruits of her imagination.

Younger brother and only sibling, Mugilan, 13, was the first to read her stories as well as contribute ideas, while her housewife mother K. Maliga provided moral support and ideas as well.

An aunt, Helen Tierney, was also on hand to help with grammar while Sellvi's father, R. Joorindanjn @ Rekoraju was a source of encouragement through his literary efforts in the Tamil language.

Re.Ko. as he is more popularly known, has authored four books on motivation and success in business and is also the owner and editor of a Tamil language monthly newspaper called Uyarvom (Success), which features business success stories in the Indian community.

He is also Great Eastern Life Assurance (Malaysia) Bhd's group sales manager.

A student of Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Seri Indah in Serdang, Sellvi has no plans to write professionally.

Awaiting the results of her Penilaian Menengah Rendah examination which she completed last week, Sellvi is now indulging in the things teenagers do - "eat, sleep, read and watch television".

She is also writing a letter to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, to be accompanied by a complimentary copy of her book "for him to enjoy with his grandchildren".

She plans to become a language professor.

The languages she wants to master? "English, French, Chinese, Japanese ...the possibilities are endless," she said.

Sellvi, who started reading at the age of three, counts Louisa May Alcott and Hans Christian Andersen among her favourite authors.

She is fluent in English, Bahasa Malaysia and Tamil. She is also a member of her school's English Language Society.

Both Re.Ko. and Maliga are naturally proud of their daughter.

Maliga said she first came to know of Sellvi's talent when she was 13. "She had written an English essay about the first week of school and her teacher was so impressed with it that she passed it around to the other teachers."

The parents, however, do not want to put pressure on her.

Hence, their refusal of an offer by a local publishing house to publish

Sellvi's work if she comes up with eleven more stories.

Re.Ko. and Maliga decided to fund the publication themselves but because raising the money took up time, the book was only published last month.

Re.Ko. and Maliga are now focusing efforts on ensuring the book, which is priced at RM14.90, finds its way to the bookstores.

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