

A portrait of Rafidah Aziz, a Malaysian politician and businesswoman. She is wearing glasses, a pearl necklace, and a black and gold floral patterned top. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a gentle smile. The background is dark with bokeh light effects.

# **RAPID-FIRE** **RAFIDAH** Being Malaysian First

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**RAFIDAH AZIZ**



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# **RAPID-FIRE RAFIDAH**

**Being Malaysian First**

**Rafidah Aziz**



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To my late parents,  
my late husband,  
and my family.





## Chapter 1

# MY EARLY YEARS

My first early recollection was as a three-plus-year-old kid left behind at my grandparents' home in Selama, Perak. I was born there on 4 November 1943.

It was an idyllic kampong house on stilts that had a small rivulet that flowed into a culvert under the main road in front of the garden, and coming out at the side of the garden in a small pool with toads and little fighting fish – *ikan sepilai*. The water then flowed out of the pool as a small river, into a bigger river further to the back of the house.

The garden was a circular patch of grass, with rambutan trees and *jambu mawar* trees growing and fruiting. Surrounding the circular patch was a ring road, enough for a car to come through and be parked by the cement steps that led onto the wooden staircase to the entrance of the house.

I remember well the toilet, built as a small hut straddling the rivulet with planks to squat on. And *ikan sepat ronggeng* swimming back and forth, feeding on what was dropped to them. And there was the well across the rivulet, where the water was cool and opaque. My grandfather would drop the bucket tied to a long rope, to draw up the water from the well, for me to bathe. I had a clearer picture of the idyllic surroundings when we made return trips later, after I was taken back by my parents to live with them.

But still, I recall the sampan, the small wooden boat that my grandfather had tied to one of the stilts of the house. At one time,



there was heavy rain, and the river behind the house overflowed. The whole house compound was flooded. My grandfather took me down, and carefully made me sit in the sampan, which, by then, had also risen with the water, to the level of the house steps, making it easier to step into it. As I sat in the sampan, fish came up around it, and my grandfather pointed out the *ikan baung* swimming at the side. It was exciting for me.

I was a lonely child, wondering why my parents did not take me home with them. And there were hardly any children my age nearby, because much of the land around was paddy fields. And in one part of the house, was the granary where the huge pile of paddy was stored. And my grandmother would spend time pounding the paddy to get the rice. Sometimes she allowed me to use the *lesung* for a bit.

The house itself seemed spacious to me. There was the *anjung*, with a settee, and a long dining table. I enjoyed the ornately carved cupboards, discovering odds and ends in the many drawers. There was the head of a deer, replete with horns, on the wall, and the bedroom adjoining the *anjung* had a four-poster bed, and a cupboard with many scented batiks and traditional *sampins*. It was a guest room.

I slept on another four-poster bed in the central part of the house – the “lounge” area, as people who came to visit sat on mats there, or had meals at another long table on one side of the lounge space. And I slept with both of my grandparents on the four-poster bed.

My grandparents doted on me. I could climb the rambutan tree, and I had a small fishing rod, to fish in the rivulet. My grandmother was always in the kitchen, cooking. So I was also always munching something.

## **Back with my parents**

One day, my parents arrived in Selama, with my two-year-old brother, to take me back to Kuala Lumpur with them. I remember being happy to get into the car, looking forward to going home, and waving goodbye to my grandparents.

I was going to enter a new phase in my life, together with my parents and little brother.

However, we did not go to Kuala Lumpur, but rather to Kajang, to a house by the estate, off the main road. It was quite a big white-painted house, with some steps leading up to the main front door. I saw several other houses along the road to our house, with kids playing. It was not the idyllic kampong house of my grandparents. There was no rivulet anywhere. Only endless rubber trees as far as the eye can see, beyond the fencing at the backyard.

As such, there really was no play area as in the Selama house, although I discovered there were rubber seeds that I could play with.

### **Early encounters with communist terrorism**

Most of the evenings saw my father checking and closing all windows and doors, and turning off the lights when he had finished having dinner.

Then, one night, I heard what turned out to be shots being fired somewhere in the estate behind our house. This was the first time I heard gunfire. Instantaneously, my father turned off the light in the lounge where we were, and told us to lie flat on our stomachs at the corner of the middle part of the house. The shots continued, and I could hear the sound of people running over the dry rubber-tree leaves in the back of our house. My father signalled for us to keep silent. Surprisingly, even my little brother did not make any noise. Maybe he knew the need to be quiet. When everything fell silent again, my father turned on one light, and got us kids to get to sleep.

Sometime later, my mother explained what had happened. She told me that there were communist terrorists (*pengganas*) deep in the estate area, moving out from the jungle beyond the estate. Sometimes they got into clashes with our soldiers, and that was when the shooting began. The morning after the shooting, my mother and the ladies from the neighbouring houses were animatedly talking about it. I listened intently, and understood that such incidents happened off and on. So the next time it happened, we went through the same routine of falling flat on our stomachs with the lights all off, keeping still and quiet, until the shooting subsided.



It was my first introduction to the terrorism of the communist insurgents.

## **Another communist terrorist attack**

Another terrible incident involved me and my family directly when we were at the then famous Lucky World Amusement Park. It was Saturday night, and I recall standing just outside the low enclosure by the entrance to the *Pentas Joget* or *joget* dance stage. That night, many soldiers from the Malay Regiment were doing the *ram vong*, a type of Southeast Asian dance, with the *joget* ladies.

Suddenly there was a loud explosion. Pandemonium broke out. People were rushing out from the stage area, running out to the entrance. My parents and I were also running out. My father was carrying my three-year-old brother, and I was holding on to my mother's hand. Somewhere along the way, I got separated from them, and stood there panicking. Suddenly, a man passed by on my left, with his right arm covered in blood. I can never forget that image.

Then, someone picked me up and carried me to the park entrance, and when I saw my mother, I called out "Mak!" The kind man left me with my mother, who was crying, and he ran out of the park.

It was very traumatic for me, and I am sure for my parents too.

We walked back to our house in Kampong Baru. At home, my parents were still talking about the tragedy. The next day, my parents were told that a few soldiers died in the incident, and the soldiers were on leave from duty. For me, the terrorists seemed to be everywhere – in Kajang and now in Kuala Lumpur itself.

Much later, in the early 1950s, we moved to Kota Bharu, Kelantan, when my father was attached to the State Information Department. He had a Baby Browning pistol, which he took with him to work. And we often went with him to visit some relatives in Machang, and on one occasion, there was a clash between our soldiers and some communist terrorists, in the forest behind the house. Again, we went through the routine of switching off the lights and lying flat on the ground on our stomachs. This time, I was already 10 years old, and understood the situation better.

## Early life in Kuala Lumpur

Before we moved to Kelantan, we left Kajang to live in Kampong Paya, Kampong Baru, and then to Brickfields, to the Government Quarters.

We lived in rented houses in Kampong Baru. One house on stilts was by the bank of Sungai Bonus. As a child, the river seemed to be wide and deep to me. Today, it is more like a big drain. Each time the river overflowed after heavy rain, the entire area would be flooded. I feared the floods because when the water receded, there would be snakes under the house. And it would be quite a while before I would go out of the house after a flood.

As our house shared a community bathroom, with a pipe and a *kolah* (reservoir) made of cement and a shared outhouse, I had to get up early to bathe, in order to be in time for school. School then was the Kampong Baru Malay Girls School, first at the *Sekolah "Hitam"*, from Standards One and Two, then the *Sekolah "Besar"* for the remaining school years. The school buildings were within walking distance from my house, and along the way, one of my classmates would join me for the rest of the walk to school. The headmistress was Cikgu Zabedah, who I discovered much later on was the mother of the banker, Tan Sri Azman Hashim.

I remember some details of these school days in Kampong Baru. At regular intervals, all girls were required to have de-licing lotion applied on their heads to kill whatever lice some of the girls had, which were combed out onto the floor. I was lucky that I did not have such problems, although my mother had a *sikat kutu* (literally, "lice comb") ready at home.

Curly hair was the in-thing then. My mother would take me to the hairdresser to have my perm for Raya. That meant having my hair rolled up in curlers, the perming lotion "Toni" with its strong smell applied – AND long wires that are attached to one big strand of wire, which was then attached to the socket of the ceiling light above where I sat. Thinking about it now, it made me scared. Imagine having direct electricity to perm one's hair!

Maybe that was why I decided to keep my hair long – and until I was in Lower Six at the Victoria Institution, I had my hair in two “plaits”! I never needed to have a perm after that.

## **Enrolling into Convent Bukit Nanas**

In Standard Three at the Malay School, we were asked to sit for an examination to select students who were qualified to be enrolled into English schools (*Sekolah Inggeris*). I did well in that exam and was selected to enrol into the premier girls’ school then, the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus at Bukit Nanas.

I knew of my success towards the end of the Standard Three school term but I did not tell my parents until the year-end school holidays started, and I told my mother that I needed new school uniforms. She told me my school uniform still fitted me and there was no reason to buy new ones. Slowly, I told her I needed “convent school uniform” – and explained what had happened.

My mother was elated. She always told me that her regret in life was not going to an “English school”, but rather had to finish Malay school up to Standard Seven. And here I was, in Standard Three, and already having the opportunity to do what she could not. My father was happy as well. He studied at Clifford School, Kuala Kangsar, and went to obtain his Diploma in Agriculture from the Serdang Agricultural College.

But my grandfather, who happened to be visiting us then, was not too pleased. He said it was a “*Sekolah Nasrani* (Christian school)” – and I might be influenced by the nuns and the school environment. Of course the convent had crosses everywhere, and statues of Jesus and Mary above pillars and against the walls. And all the nuns, the sisters, were in black habits, with cream and black head covers, much like the head covers many Muslim women are using today.

Of course my parents fully supported me. And when the school year commenced, I was in Special Malay Class 1 at Convent Bukit Nanas, where the medium of instruction was all in English. It was, for many of my classmates, a difficult transition.

I had a head start though. My father taught two adult education classes at the Goon's Institution in the evenings during the week, and one of the ladies living near us offered to walk with me in the evenings to attend one class, as she herself was doing so. My father relented and enrolled me into the other class, taught by Encik Ahmad Nordin, his good friend (who later became Bernama Chairman).

As the adult students all sat on the high stools in the class, I had to be lifted up on to my stool, each time I came to attend the English class taught by Encik Ahmad Nordin. When class was over, I waited for my father, and I went home with him. The classes were meant for adults and I was an eight-year-old. But the English lessons eased considerably my transition to the convent.

I already had a grounding in English, and it was easier for me to follow the lessons. Our teacher was an English lady, Mrs Marks, who often engaged me in conversation, in English. I did very well in my first-year exams but was *not* given a double promotion because I was much younger than most of my peers in the class. So I went into Special Malay Class 2, while the others went to Standard Three, to join the non-Malay girls in the school.

I was forced to do that extra year, before joining the "open" Standard Three. However, it was a blessing for me, as it gave me that extra year to strengthen my grounding of lessons taught in English, and I did very well in all my exams henceforth.

## Enjoying my school days

Convent Bukit Nanas was then known for its strict discipline, enforced by strict nuns and teachers. Detention class was *de rigueur* for anyone violating school rules.

We had moral classes, and the Christian students had Catechism and Scripture classes. During Scripture, they were expected to recite the verses in the Scriptures – and because it was a weekly lesson, and we non-Christians remained in the class, doing our own schoolwork for that one hour, I somehow picked up some of the verses and I was able to remember them. As such, when my neighbour in class was stuck when reciting some familiar verses, I would prompt her – until one day the sister told me, loudly, to stop prompting! There was



also Mass and retreats for the Christian students, while the rest of us were allowed to study in the class.

I realised that, in spite of the very Christian environment, I did not become a Christian, nor was I influenced by Christianity. I was sent to study the Quran at a neighbour's house and I had *Qatam* or completed my Quran lessons at age 10. In fact, Mak Cik Nab, the Quran teacher, made me teach the new kids who came to read the *Muqadam* – the Primer, before going to the Quran proper.

I did not become a *Nasrani*, as my grandfather had feared, when I enrolled at the convent. In fact, the moral classes taught us valuable life lessons, such as about discipline and honesty. I always quote what the sister told us regarding honesty. She said that if one found a five-sen coin on the floor, one should not take it because it could be someone's recess money or bus fare home. One should give it to the teacher to find out who has lost the five sen, and to return it to the owner.

In the convent, I enjoyed folk dancing, and participating in the year-end pantomimes, and the choirs, which saw me singing "Silent Night" and other Christmas carols. Again, all that did not push me into Christianity! They were just songs and part of the year-end festivities, especially for Christians.

At the convent too, I did Domestic Science – where I learnt the basics of cooking, to sew, to crochet, and do smocking and knitting. And I participated in sports, playing netball and competing in the 4 x 400m relay. In short, I had an enjoyable time at the school, especially when participating in all the extracurricular activities.

When my father took on a new job in the Information Department on a three-year contract in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, I enrolled into the Zainab School in Merbau. It was a school with walls of woven bamboo strips, but with a big field and a corner set aside for students to do gardening. Each class was allocated space to grow vegetables, etc., and we competed to produce the best vegetables.

Again, there were many extracurricular activities, as in Convent Bukit Nanas. Throughout my primary and secondary education, I was a Brownie, then a Girl Guide, and finally a Ranger, reaching the rank

of Patrol Leader. I also joined the Red Cross to learn first aid and related activities.

Somehow, even with so many extracurricular activities, my friends and I still did very well in our examinations. We had a well-rounded education, and going to school was truly fun. I remember our dedicated teachers, who spared no effort to educate and nurture us, and complement our parents' efforts to instil discipline and good values.

I did my secondary schooling back in Kuala Lumpur at my old alma mater, Convent Bukit Nanas. I was reunited with my primary schoolmates, and continued the friendships we had forged three years before. By then the nuns had changed their habits from black to light beige, and the school had a more relaxed atmosphere, although the emphasis on discipline was still strong. I was living in Gombak then, and had to take the very early morning bus to school.

My father was looking for a new job, and in the meantime, he got a contract to supply breakfast to the Home Guard Station, about 300 yards from our shoplot dwelling (i.e., a shoplot rented from someone). Getting that contract meant that my parents would be up very early every morning to prepare *nasi lemak* and Malay *kuih*, to be sent to the Home Guard Station.

My brother and I would be awakened to carry the food in bamboo baskets to the station. We would take a path that cut through the *lalang* growing on some vacant land, carrying a torchlight and a basket of food each. In the evening, it was my duty to go to the Home Guard Station to collect the money from the sales of the *nasi lemak* and *kuih*, and the empty baskets. This routine went on daily until my father got a new job in Kuala Lumpur, and we moved to Petaling Jaya.

In 1959, my father was offered a high-paying job in Johor, which enabled us to have two cars and a driver to take us to school. Such were the ups and downs of life: from delivering *nasi lemak* to the Home Guard Station daily at dawn, on foot, to being chauffeured around in Johor Bahru.

Our two years in Johor Bahru were enjoyable, as we crossed over to Singapore very often to eat at the restaurants and shop at Change Alley. And as I was a Science student, my father enrolled me to join three friends at the Singapore Science Institute, to have extra lessons in Physics and Chemistry to complement what was taught at the convent, and at the once-a-week class at the English College (a boys' school). The driver took the four of us to Singapore twice a week, in the evenings.

At that time, those who wanted to go for the Science stream in Form Six had to sit for an entrance exam to qualify for a place in the only Science-stream Form Six class at the English College. I was doing well in the science subjects, and was confident of getting a place in the Form Six Science class. In fact, Chemistry and Physics were my favourite science subjects, although I was rather squeamish about having to dissect frogs during Biology class. And my ambition was to be a doctor!

I was quite ready for the Form Six entrance examination, having a good grounding on the subjects.

### **Bitter lessons learnt**

The last paper in the Form Six entrance examination was Chemistry – a subject I liked, and I enjoyed the laboratory work. And the paper was one I had no issues with. I finished it in good time, just as the invigilator announced, “You have five minutes left.” It was time to collate all my answers and tie them up with the *de rigueur* white string.

But, I could not arrange my answers in the proper coherent sequence. There seemed to be some disconnect amongst some of the pages, particularly those that had the formulae being solved. It did not take me long to realise what had gone wrong. I had carelessly did some of the trial formulae and workings at the back of some sheets of paper, which had *actual* answers to the previous questions.

There was no coherence to the answers and it was impossible to make any rectification. The only thing to do was to tie up the sheets of paper!

I remember palpitating hard as I knew I would surely fail my Chemistry paper – and the examination. I would not be able to get into Form Six Science. And there is no way I can achieve my ambition to take up Medicine. I quietly cried as I tied up the answer sheets, and rushed out to go home. It was a miserable time for me.

But it taught me a valuable lesson. I needed to always be careful, methodical and thorough, and be systematic. It was a lesson I carried throughout my life, and sometimes I even get stressed trying to get anything and everything to be “in proper order”. Some may regard it as OTT (over the top).

### **Form Six at Victoria Institution**

By the end of December school holidays, we were going to move back to Kuala Lumpur, as my father had completed his two-year work contract, and had a new job.

I had to wait for my Form Five Senior Cambridge examination results before applying to enrol in Form Six, as was the case in Kuala Lumpur (there was no entrance exam to sit for to enter Form Six).

While waiting for the results, which came out in late March, I applied for a job as a translator at the headquarters of the Road Transport Department in Petaling Jaya. I got the job, and each morning, I took the bus from my house, going directly to the Department. I was assigned to the Office of the Commissioner for Road Transport, Encik Jelani Kupah. It was quite a routine job, translating from English to Malay, and vice versa.

When the results were out, I obtained a Grade One, with more than the requisite points to enable me to be accepted into Form Six. I applied for a place in the Form Six Arts Stream, at Victoria Institution. I had decided to change my course, literally from the Science stream to Arts. I guess I did not want to relive my disappointment.

And it turned out well.

I did History, Geography, the Compulsory General Paper, and a new subject for me: Economics. Our teacher was Mr John Doraisamy, who made the subject very interesting. (I was so honoured that, on



the occasion of his 80th birthday, many decades later, he asked me to make a speech.)

My Form Six days saw me 'growing up'. I was invited by the then School Captain (and Hostel Captain, too) to be his guest at the "Freshie Dance". That was my first ever dance function. After that, I was a regular guest at all the hostel (boys) dances. I loved doing the cha-cha, including the off-beat cha-cha, rumba, the jive, and later on the twist.

Form Six was fun.

However, my growing-up had necessitated cutting off my long pigtails to shoulder-length. One day in the library, while I was engrossed taking notes from one of the textbooks, my classmate, Ahlan Razif, came to my side and talked to me, with another boy. He spent about five minutes chatting and left. I still continued reading and taking notes. About 20 minutes later, I was done and got up to return the book. To my horror, upon getting up, I found that I was also pulling up the chair when I stood up. Ahlan's friend had tied my pigtail ribbons to the back of the chair! I could have twisted my neck or dislocated a neck-bone. I gave Ahlan an earful!

That evening, I asked my mother to cut my hair to just shoulder-length. I had not cut my hair since I was in Zainab School, Kota Bharu! It was quite amusing that many could not make out it was me, when I came to school the next day.

Cutting my hair changed my outlook. I was ready to wear women's attire, and even put on lipstick to attend the school and boys' hostel dances. And I could style my hair – doing it myself! (Even today, I still trim my own hair, and I have not been to my hairdresser for decades.)

When I was in Upper Six, I met my future husband at a dance, at a mutual friend's birthday party. As it turned out, it was also his birthday! And he always said that I was his birthday present for life. He was already a First Year student at the University of Malaya, and as such, I had a chaperone from the first day that I attended the Orientation at the university.

As an Upper Six student, I also began to mix with the university students and attended several university dances and functions, at the Student's Union House by the lake, on the campus.

At the end of the final term of Form Six, after the examinations for the Higher School Certificate, I worked for three months in two places. In the mornings, I taught at a kindergarten in Petaling Jaya, and in the afternoons, I taught students in the remove class at the Assunta Convent. It was to earn some money to give to my parents, for my own expenses at work, and to put aside some money for university. I was quite confident of getting a place in the University of Malaya.

As it turned out, I was interviewed for emplacement at a university, pending my Form Six results. It was routine for all students. But the outcome was not so simple and straightforward as I expected it to be. I was offered (before the results were actually out for the HSC Examinations) to study under the Colombo Plan Scholarship at the University of New England at Armidale, Australia. And I was to be at the Mary White College.

There was a big problem looming. My mother was reluctant to let me go abroad. But my father was elated, as he himself missed out studying in England because his parents did not want their only child to go abroad. I heard that story told by my father over and over!

My boyfriend (my future husband) did not want me to go. He said that he wanted to marry me after graduation, three years later.

I was still in Upper Six, waiting for my examination results. Nevertheless, I had decided to do what was necessary to go to Australia. I got my passport, packed, got my vaccinations. But, when the subject of marriage was raised by my boyfriend, I did a rethink. I could not possibly go, as only my father was the one happy to see me go to Australia to study.

The next day after that chat with my future husband, I went to the Federal Establishment Office to see the person in charge of scholarships: Encik Hamdan Sheikh Tahir (later Tun Hamdan Sheikh Tahir, Governor of Penang) who was my father's good friend. I mustered the courage to tell him that I was not accepting the Colombo Plan Scholarship.



I knew what was coming. I was given a long, stern lecture, and he was going to talk to my father about it. As it turned out, he already knew that I had four principals, with all A's, and enrolling in a university was not at all a problem. I just listened to his scolding and went home.

I told my mother, who happily hugged me. My father, who was told in the evening (after Encik Hamdan had talked to him), was very upset. He gave me the silent treatment for almost three months!

My boyfriend was happy, and he even offered to pay for my Year One fees if I did not get a scholarship. And he suggested I apply for the Bank Negara Scholarship, as he himself was among the first batch of four recipients of that scholarship.

I officially rejected the Colombo Plan Scholarship and applied for the Bank Negara Scholarship to do a Degree in Economics, but at that time taught in the Faculty of Arts. Because of my good results, I was also offered the Federal Scholarship to study at the University of Malaya. I rejected that too, to accept the Bank Negara Scholarship that was also offered to me.

For me, and certainly for my parents, it was a great relief that I was given a scholarship to further my studies at university level. Still, I had to depend on the library for all of my references and textbooks. Buying the requisite books and publications was out of the question. Certainly my penchant for browsing through books in school libraries was a great help, as was also my habit of taking down notes.

As such, the University Library was an important feature in my university days, especially queuing early at the red-spot section. Speed-reading certainly helped me, as I could cover more material in any one library sitting.

## **Campus life at Universiti Malaya**

University life, albeit as an off-campus non-resident student, was a fun time.

I was one of the founder members of the Universiti Malaya Students Cooperative, which was set up under a staircase at the entrance of the Faculty of Economics. The small cooperative bookshop sold stationery and other materials students needed. I assisted in

purchasing of stocks, stock-taking of inventory, as well as doing my duty, on roster basis, to help the sales staff to sell goods.

Of course there were the many social events and dances to attend at the different students' residential colleges and at the students' union premises. As such, it was an all-rounded experience for me.

After the results of Year One came out, we had to choose – or, were offered – the area of specialisation for our second and third (and final) year of studies. I obtained distinctions in Economics and Islamic Studies, and was offered to specialise in both areas by the relevant departments. I really had no choice, as I was on the Bank Negara Scholarship, and had to do Economics subjects after my first year. I opted to do Rural Economics, although I also did subjects such as Commercial Law, Business Administration and papers in Analytical Economics.

Doing Rural Economics entailed spending time, during each long vacation, in the paddy-growing areas of Sabak Bernam and Sekinchan, doing surveys on the statistics of paddy farming and marketing in these rice-bowl areas. We hired bicycles to move around in the area and interviewed the farmers as well as the market intermediaries.

At that time the linkages between the farmers and the local market middlemen were strong, and the *padi kunca* system (basically with advance payments made to the farmers, and under valuation of the paddy harvest sold) was a factor that bound farmers to the local intermediaries. It was, again, a fun time, and an eye-opener for me, as we cycled for miles doing the interviews. The field work was a good grounding for exposure to the world of those in the agricultural sector, and especially in the country's rice-bowl areas.

Mosquitoes notwithstanding, I enjoyed our stint in Tanjong Karang and Sabak Bernam. The first time, in my second year in the faculty, partnering with a senior student and during the second field work in my third year, I was the senior student, guiding the Second Year student assigned to my two-student team.

While there were fun times to be had, as far as campus life was concerned, I was not part of the on-campus fraternity.



Sometimes known as “The Iron Lady” for her forthright manner and unflinching stances on matters related to her ministerial portfolio, among others, Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz has more than made her mark on domestic politics and the world stage as Malaysia's longest-serving woman Member of Parliament and longest-serving international trade and industry minister.

Now, more than a decade after retiring, she has penned this memoir, in which she reflects on her formative years, her political career and the personalities she met during her years of service, and her life in retirement. Pulling no punches, she also shares her thoughts on politics, the nation, and what Malaysians need to do to move the country forward.



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