

# Karung Guni Boy



LORRAINE TAN & ERIC WONG

For God, the Maker of all things,  
my parents who taught me to make things,  
and my husband, for sharing in my journey.  
— Lorraine Tan

For my dearest wife.  
— Eric Wong

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Ming was a boy with big ideas.  
He loved coming up with inventions.



However, there was just one problem.

Inventions were built from things,  
and things cost money.

Alas, Ming had no money.





While he sat thinking about what to do,  
a familiar beep beep beep sound  
drifted in from his bedroom window.

Looking outside, Ming saw the  
neighbourhood Karung Guni man  
collecting old newspapers  
in the carpark below.

And instantly,  
Ming had an idea.







A week passed.

Everyone wondered what Ming was building.  
Was it a time machine? An origami broom?  
Or maybe a giant lantern? Nobody knew.





And of course,  
Ming no longer just had big ideas.

He built them too.



## What is a Karung Guni man?

The Karung Guni man is a rag-and-bone man who goes door-to-door to buy or collect newspapers and unwanted household items.

They would usually shout "Karung guni" or honk a horn at intervals to announce their presence.

"Karung guni" is a Malay phrase for gunny sack, which was used in the past to hold the newspapers. The Karung Guni man would haul the heavy sack on his back as he walked his rounds to do the collection. Today, most of them use a trolley instead.

The practice of Karung Guni was common in Singapore till the late 1990s but is a dying trade now.



Ming loves to make things.

But he doesn't have any money to help him create his inventions.

One day, hearing the "beep, beep, beep" of the Karung Guni man's car horn, he is inspired to make something out of the unwanted things he collects. So he asks his neighbours, who are only too happy to help. With a plan in mind and tools in hand, Ming surprises everyone with a wonderful creation that they can also use!

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