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Tall Story

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~~Editorial Choice:~~

~~New Talent~~

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Tall Story is told in turn by Londoner Andi who is a mean basketball player despite her short stature and her 16-year-old big brother Bernardo who lives in the Philippines. The two don't know each other because it has taken years for the Home Office to allow Bernardo to join his mother in London where she works as a nurse. When Bernardo finally gets permission to travel his family are in for a shock ? they have been told he is tall but Bernardo is 8ft ?

While height is an advantage for a basketball player, Bernardo hates to be invited to play because of his shock value. He is beset by other problems too ? the legend of the giant Bernardo Carpio who has the power to protect his village from earthquakes means that some villagers revere him as their saviour since he is so tall and also called Bernardo? Then there are his mysterious black-outs ? what is the cause?

This exuberantly written, many layered novel moves at a cracking pace with lots of short, pithy chapters. It touches with a light hand on the experience of a separated family learning to get to know each other again. The problem of gigantism is sympathetically broached and the reader can identify with Bernardo and with his feisty younger sister. This is an ambitious and impressive debut from Philippina journalist Candy Gourlay who has much to bring to literature for young readers.

Running Order:

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