

PALARI PUBLISHING

Potato Queen by Rafaelito V. Sy

Potato Queen starts off in Manila, Philippines, where a young Juancho Chu is living vicariously through reruns of US television sitcoms and dreaming of a life in the less oppressive land of America.

As a young man, Juancho makes his way to San Francisco to establish a life for himself in the United States. While working at a travel agency ironically selling tours to “exotic” locales like the Philippines, Juancho works toward his US citizenship.

It’s not long before he begins making friends and discovering the gay nightlife that San Francisco has to offer. Along comes Gerald, a white man who is attracted to Asian men – a “rice queen.” Juancho finds that he is usually attracted to white men, thus dubbed a “potato queen.”

Juancho and Gerald seem to be perfect for each other, but complications along the way include a variety of very willing Asian men and a surprisingly down-to-earth white porn star.

Will Juancho and Gerald remain “just friends”? Will Juancho secure the US citizenship he has always dreamed of? Will he actually meet the porn star he used to watch on the big screen in dark movie houses? Find out in **Potato Queen**.

Rafaelito V. Sy was born and raised in Manila, Philippines. He has also lived in Hong Kong, Tokyo, Paris, Boston, and New York. He earned his B. A. in English from Tufts University and his M. F. A. in Creative Writing from Cornell University, where he taught the personal essay and creative writing. He currently resides in San Francisco. **Potato Queen** is his first published novel. He has a yet unpublished novel-length manuscript set in the Philippines and tentatively entitled “Daughters of a Nation”. This novel is about the Spanish and American colonial effect on a young woman during the last decade of the Marcos regime.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Advance Praise for Potato Queen by Rafaelito V. Sy

"Very funny! It's what *Desperate Housewives* would be if it were set in The Castro."

RuPaul

"J'adorable!" - **Carson Kressley, *QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY***

"POTATO QUEEN is a wonderfully lyrical tale filled with detailed imagery and spot-on glimpses of realistic relationships. Throughout, there is a palpable, yet optimistic, longing for love. As I read it, I kept thinking, "That has happened to me!" (I also was thinking "Men are dogs," but that's another story for another time, or for my therapist). POTATO QUEEN is, quite simply, enjoyable and honest from cover to cover."

Dave Benbow author of *DAYTIME DRAMA* and *MALE MODEL*

"Potato Queen is hilarious - it made me laugh at myself! An Asian perspective of being gay, highlighting the universal challenges that we all have faced at different points in our lives. A narrator, that I fell in love with, took me on a journey from my first childhood crush to the wild world of living as a gay person today and every day. Let Potato Queen be another source to teach us that, in the end, we all want the same things: to trust, to feel safe, and to believe that we are worthy of being loved."

Reichen Burke, winner of *Amazing Race 4*

"POTATO QUEEN is a poignant tale of a romantic outsider always on the brink of true love. Filled with frustratingly imperfect and lovable characters that make you want to shout when they repeatedly fail to fall for Sy's adorably sexy and good-natured hero Juancho, POTATO QUEEN is a delightfully brisk, ten-year, multi-city, multi-ethnic tour of gay (love) life."

Scott&Scott, authors of *Romantics* series of gay romance novels

"Yes, POTATO QUEEN is about love, loss, and lifelong friendship; but, more notably, it is about a young man's journey to come to terms with – and reconcile – his sexual and ethnic identities. Rafaelito Sy has brought to life an innovative story with a unique voice, memorable characters, and subtle humor."

Rob Byrnes author of *TRUST FUND BOYS* and *THE NIGHT WE MET*

"POTATO QUEEN is a novel about East and West, immigration, homecoming and homeleaving, an odyssey in quest of the true sexual self. But most of all, in a world of canned culture and programmed tastes, it is novel about keeping the imagination alive, an accomplishment all readers can celebrate thanks to this remarkable debut by Rafaelito Sy."

Lamar Herrin author of *THE LIES BOYS TELL* and *HOUSE OF THE DEAF*

"Rafaelito Sy writes about a world of loyal friendship, disloyal love, and racial tension and obsession with unusual honesty, intensity, and style."

Alison Lurie, Pulitzer Prize winning author of *FOREIGN AFFAIRS* and *FAMILIAR SPIRITS*



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News Release

For immediate release:

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New Novel Follows Asian-American to US Citizenship

(Richmond, VA) - Building on his own experiences in the United States, Rafaelito V. Sy writes about the journey of Filipinos to the US in his new novel *Potato Queen* (ISBN: 1928662064) coming out in July 2005 from Palari Publishing.

Potato Queen starts off in Manila, Philippines, where a young Juancho Chu is living vicariously through reruns of US television sitcoms and dreaming of a life in the less oppressive land of America. As a young man, Juancho makes his way to San Francisco to establish a life for himself in the United States. While working at a travel agency ironically selling tours to "exotic" locales like the Philippines, Juancho works toward his US citizenship.

It's not long before he begins making friends and discovering the gay nightlife that San Francisco has to offer. Along comes Gerald, a white man who is attracted to Asian men - a "rice queen." Juancho finds that he is usually attracted to white men, thus dubbed a "potato queen." Juancho and Gerald seem to be perfect for each other, but complications along the way include a variety of very willing Asian men and a surprisingly down-to-earth white porn star.

Will Juancho and Gerald remain "just friends"? Will Juancho secure the US citizenship he has always dreamed of? Will he actually meet the porn star he used to watch on the big screen in dark movie houses?

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With his story, Mr. Sy hopes to shine a much-needed focus on the process of becoming a US citizen and learning to accept your own truths. Sy says, "I hope this book reaches out to others who feel alone in a new country." Among his other writing projects is a yet unpublished novel set in the Philippines tentatively entitled *Daughter of a Nation*. This novel is about the Spanish and American colonial influence on a young woman during the last decade of the Marcos regime.

Rafaelito V. Sy will be conducting book signings and interviews to support *Potato Queen*.



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History

Established in 1998 in Richmond, Virginia, Palari is a forward-thinking publisher committed to provocative and innovative books that educate as well as entertain.

Our Name

Palari is a variation of the word “polari” (also seen as “palare”) which is a gay slang language that has now almost died out. It was more common in the 1960's when gays had more need of a private slang. Palari itself was never clearly defined: an ever-changing collection of slang from various sources including Italian, English (backwards slang, rhyming slang), circus slang, canal-speak, Yiddish and Gypsy languages. In London, there was a West End dialect, based on theatre-speak, which was considered more upscale than the East End dialect, based on canal/boat-speak.

Our Mission

Through our hardcover and trade paperback originals, Palari Publishing provides authoritative, well-written nonfiction that addresses topical consumer needs and fiction with an emphasis on intelligence and quality. We specialize in gay fiction titles and a variety of nonfiction including Native American, photography, and fitness.

Our goal for fiction titles is to build a solid list of titles that promote quality reading, and provide literary and publishing opportunities specifically for the gay community.

Our Publisher

David Smitherman has been working in the writing and publishing industry for over 10 years in editing and acquisitions. He is focused on building a solid line of gay fiction and challenging nonfiction titles.



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