

Unfortunately the book gives hardly any mention of Jesus' home country, or his life and family there. This book is part of the Matt Christopher series which is popular for the fast-paced sports action it provides. The very best descriptive paragraphs of the book are all about the baseball action not about cultural exchange.

Touch the Dragon **Connelly, Karen**

Turnstone Press 1992
Age Range 15 to 18
206 pages

Based on actual diary entries and letters, *Touch the Dragon* recounts the author's yearlong stay in Chiang Mai, Thailand through the Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship when she was 16 years old. When Karen Connelly first sets out on her adventure, she is confident that she will embrace the culture of her new home, but her self-assurance wanes when she comes face to face with the poor living conditions of her host country and the unexpected restrictions placed on her independence.

Soon after her arrival in Thailand, Karen discovers that language and cultural barriers, not to mention homesickness, are much more difficult obstacles to overcome than she had anticipated. Karen tells her story so naturally and with such honesty that the reader is constantly wavering between wanting to comfort the poor girl and giggling at her naiveté. *Touch the Dragon* is completely enjoyable for its youthful idealism, enthusiasm, honesty and sensitivity. The descriptive passages

are full of romantic emotion, written as only a sixteen-year-old could write.



During the course of her stay, the author becomes totally engaged by the tropical landscape and the colourful personalities and she learns to respect and love her new home. Instead of wanting to transplant her Canadian ideals, Karen learns to appreciate the Thai culture and traditions even though they place restrictions on her that she would never endure at home.

If you were not considering a trip before you read this book, or were the type of tourist who never leaves the resort, *Touch the Dragon* will send you running for your atlas and searching out a more authentic travel experience.

The Breadwinner **Ellis, Deborah**

Groundwood Books/ Douglas and
McIntyre 2000
Ages 10 to 14
166 pages