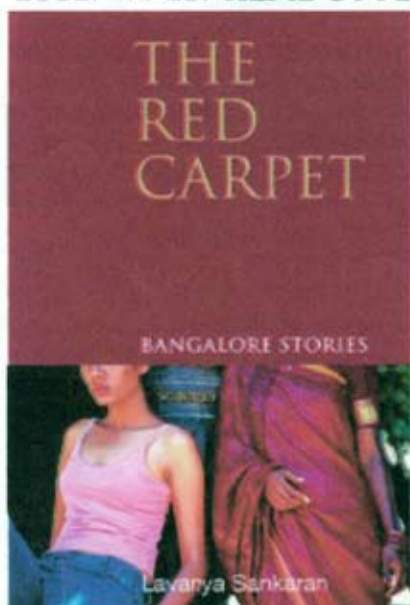


ELLE



Culture Clash

Cross-generational strife is the crucifix that all the protagonists of Lavanya Sankaran's debut short story collection, *The Red Carpet: Bangalore Stories*, must bear, often with surprisingly humorous results. The author knows whereof she writes.

Perhaps due to her own background as a graduate of Bryn Mawr, former New York based investment banker, and current—and future, we hope—Bangalore based fiction writer, Sankaran's tales of American-trained Indian professionals returning home to old-fashioned families and values seem incapable of hitting a false note. Unlike the easy exoticism some authors employ when writing about India, Sankaran's voice is mercifully sharp and wry. And, her Bangalore, a city in the grips of a culture shock where new and old schools collide on a daily basis—from a chauffer reeling from his employer's miniskirt to a mother plotting to subvert her Western-educated offspring's aversion to marriage—feels as real as the one in which you currently reside.

The Red Carpet: Bangalore Stories by Lavanya Sankaran (The Dial Press), \$23, at booksellers nationwide