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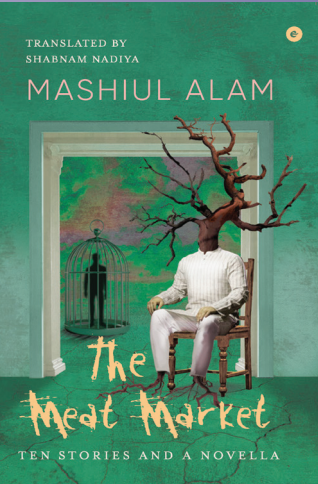
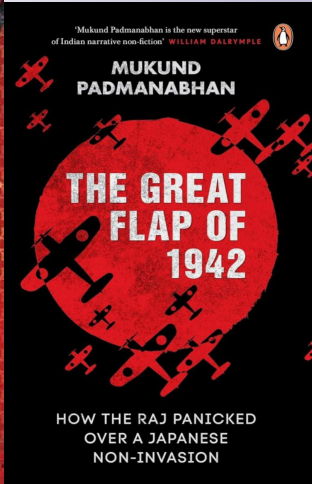
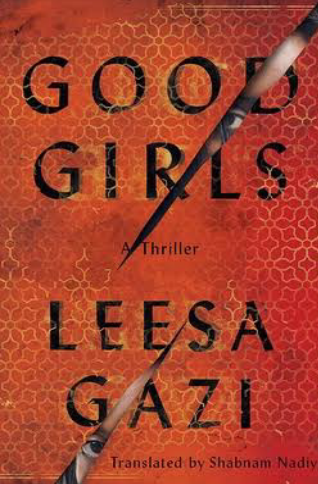
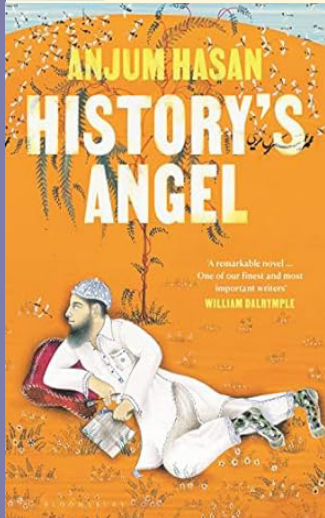
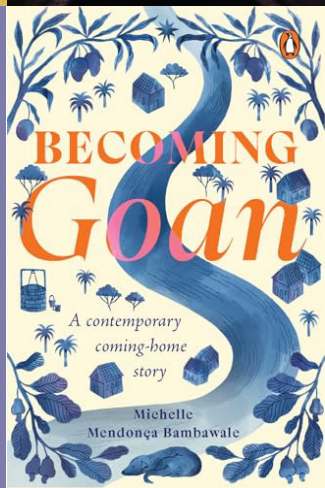


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FICTION



BONNIE BAKER IS HAVING A PANIC ATTACK

by

Maán Jalal

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About the Book

Bonnie Baker is an Arab millennial who hates her job as a junior associate at one of London's most prestigious law firms. She prefers fashion, is passionate about baking, loves pop culture and has a particular Britney Spears obsession.

Bonnie also suffers from panic attacks. It all started when her now-ex fiancé cheated with She Who Shall Not Be Named—a person and situation she refuses to think about. Bonnie tries to move on by attempting to bake the most perfect pistachio cake for her baking group which she documents on her blog. But it's more difficult than she imagined with panic attacks getting in the way, her hilariously inappropriate grandmother trying to set her up, her perfect sister acting erratically, and friends harbouring secrets. And of course, snobby, snarky, sneaky D4, the partner at her law firm who wants Bonnie fired... or does he?

Bonnie soon understands that to get the recipe for life (and the perfect pistachio cake) just right, she'll need to stop making a complete fool of herself and face some harsh truths about her past and herself.

This irreverent and intensely relatable adaptation of Bridget Jones's Diary also indirectly plays on Pride and Prejudice in a bright and snarky way by weaving in Britney Spears lyrics and pop culture references.

Bonnie Baker Sequel: Bonnie Baker is Literally Losing her Mind

Bonnie Baker is living out her perfect happily ever after. She has the perfect man, is launching her perfect business, and is posting perfect snippets of her perfect life on social media. So why can't she breathe when everything is supposed to be absolutely, wonderfully, picturesquely perfect?

Because... it isn't.

After months of ghosting them, Bonnie's panic attacks are back with a vengeance. It's a total mystery! Or is it? Bonnie's best friends, Amal, Dana, and Rania should be happy for her, yet Bonnie feels judged and unsupported by them. Bonnie's ex-best friends are also complicating her life. Ahmed is galivanting across the world, seldom replying to her and seems not to care about their lost



friendship. There's also She Who Shall Not Be Named whom Bonnie refuses to think about. This impossible since the best friend who broke Bonnie's heart is now officially famous, and literally everywhere. Then there's her boyfriend, best friend, the love of her life. Wonderful, amazing, intelligent D4 is practically perfect in every way... until Bonnie discovers his deal breaker, his strangest, saddest, secret.

And now, nothing makes sense.

At least Dana's epic, extravaganza wedding in Dubai is the perfect distraction. From chic parties, amazing fashion, delectable food, to the beautiful desert, Dubai is offering Bonnie what she never knew she needed. Including, handsome, wholesome Saif, an old high school flame who is helping her make sense of her life while also complicating it. Bonnie's only source of refuge is writing in her blog and her interactions with one of her readers - the funny, profound and mysterious Mr. M who desperately wants to meet Bonnie. Between trying to make her baking business go viral with a new perfect desert, avoiding telling her parents that she's no longer a lawyer, Bibi trying to match her with eligible bachelors, and blaming everything on Oprah Winfrey (yes, that Oprah) Bonnie Baker is literally losing her mind.

About the Author

Maán Jalal is a writer of mixed Arab heritage who grew up between Auckland, New Zealand and Dubai, UAE where he is now based. He has spent a lot of time in the UK visiting family and friends. For the last decade he has worked as a journalist covering arts, culture and entertainment regionally and internationally for the Middle East. His work has been featured in many national and international publications. His writing has also been published in Anthologies such as *The Fish Anthology* where he was selected as a winner of their Short Memoir Prize in 2020. Maán holds a Masters in Creative Writing from the University of Auckland where he spent a year interviewing survivors of the 1991 Iraq Gulf War. He also co-founded and launched *The Arab Edition* a volunteer online portal which covers stories from Arabs across the world. A manic bibliophile, obsessive reader and lover all forms of media from art history, classic films, romantic comedies, and a fascination (that some may deem unhealthy) with reality television.



Apart from writing fiction and non-fiction about love, war, humour, identity and the immigrant experience, Maán delves into the many facets of contemporary pop culture as well as the books he's fanatical about and currently reading on his Instagram account and website www.maanjala.com.

Bonnie Baker Is Having A Panic Attack will be Maán Jalal's debut novel.



GRIEF BURNS LIKE FEVER

by

Minakshi Thakur

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About the Book

April 2021. As the deadly second wave of Covid-19 swept through India, it added a record 2,17,353 new coronavirus infections, taking the total tally of cases to 14.29 million, while active cases surpassed the 1.5 million mark. India accounted for one in every four cases reported globally every day in that week. On 16 April, the death toll increased to 174,308 with 1185 new fatalities, the highest since 19 September 2020.

That evening, a sudden dust storm followed by a rain blew out the cremation pyres, which spilled over from the crematoria to parking lots and parks and playgrounds in residential areas in towns and cities across the country. For fear of infection, most of the dead made their way to pyres accompanied only by ambulance attendants or privately run hearse services, some of whom charged obscenely large sums of money to do the job. Herein lies the seed of this novel. What does a disaster do to people?

The infected died lonely—excommunicated from their loved ones in intensive care units—stripped of dignity. And now, with the rain having extinguished their burning pyres, they had been denied their final rites too. The smoke from the snuffed-out pyres rose and clouded the colonies, causing its residents to cough uncontrollably. The stench that rose from half-burnt flesh made people nauseous, and lingered in their noses for days.

Grief Burns Like Fever follows the trail of an ambulance driver who ferries bodies from a hospital morgue to these crematoria. Through him, we meet other characters who are bearing the brunt of the virus's wrath. The ambulance driver, while witnessing the city fall apart around him, sews together the lives of a sex worker, an orphaned boy, a eunuch, a nurse, a woman suffering from acute bipolar disorder and her family, among others. Their lives interconnect in a literary novel about modern India against the backdrop of the greatest contagion our world has seen thus far in the 21st century.

The leading news magazine *India Today* described the Delta wave as 'the worst human tragedy in India since Partition'. This is a novel very much for our times and the people who are living in it. A novel about today's India but also the world. It could also be read purely as a searing exploration of a global crisis, in the same way that a lot of plague literature, or novels on India's Partition (like *Tamas* by Bhisham Sahni), or the Holocaust, even books from Japan that describe the unspeakable horrors of the dastardly Hiroshima-Nagasaki bombings (for instance, Masuji Ibuse's *Black Rain*), or literature on Chernobyl (like the Norwegian poet Ingrid Storholmen's novel *Voices from Chernobyl*) are read. These were acts and events that shook the world, their impact rippled across borders and



continents, leaving permanent scars on human memory and the collective consciousness of our race. Daniel Defoe's novel *A Journal of the Plague Year* comes to mind. First published in 1722, it is an account of one man's experiences of the year 1665, when London was struck by bubonic plague. Another novel whose mood and tone this book could compare with is Mexican writer Mario Bellatin's *Beauty Salon*, which *The New York Times* describes as '... pithy, allegorical and profoundly disturbing'. It delves into one of the most revolting diseases of our times: AIDS; I say 'revolting' because the widespread ignorance on the subject made it a malaise people were repulsed by—those infected were shunned and cruelly marginalised. The similarities between some of these memorable works lie in their tone of urgency, and perhaps also in the cinematic portrayal of the panic a crisis of great magnitude triggers and what it brings out in people—the goodwill and the ugliness. There's a suddenness that marks these books. In José Saramago's *Blindness*, for instance, people in a city, living under an authoritarian regime, begin losing their eyesight. Even though this blindness is not a disease per se, it is a large-scale crisis in which nothing remains personal and everything becomes political, as it happened in the case of the SARS-coV-2 pandemic. And there's a rapidness in the movement of these texts, which conveys the frantic responses of the characters in them.

The strength of any literature born of conflict or disaster lies in its power to take you straight to the heart of darkness, to the epicentre. It lies in its ability to move or unsettle the reader through measured and unsentimental prose. I attempted to write about the pandemic in prose that would sit lightly on the page and take the reader through the grief of individuals as well as a society using a few key characters, mostly ordinary people of modest means. Therefore, *Grief Burns Like Fever* uses a language that is sparse, stark, yet frenetic, and cautiously lyrical. It has the pulse of a society in peril. It does employ diverse voices, but it avoids overshadowing the characters or events with word play. It says only as much needs to be said to recreate the delirium and feverishness of those days. Against the backdrop of the second wave when the Delta variant swept across the world, we find an ambulance driver, working for a state-run hospital fast running out of resources, carrying the sick or the dead through a city that is under lockdown. It is through him that we witness the destruction wrought upon the city. It is through a viral fever that we become conscious of the modern anxieties and the existential insecurities of the various layers that form the populace of a city like Delhi, which is a melting pot of myriad cultures and economic classes. I've consciously referred to Delhi as 'the capital' in various instances in the novel; simply because this city can be situated anywhere in the world.

A crisis such as this causes a violent churn, throwing up all sorts of virtues and vices. While the ambulance driver forms the spine of the novel, one can say that the young orphan boy has our heart. We see the city through the eyes of an adult, but we also see it through the eyes of child—the world appears very different to this slum child. There's also Ruma the sex worker, who grapples with memory—the loss of a family and childhood—and emerges as a loyal friend and protector through small acts of kindness. Ruma has lost her home and childhood; the ambulance driver has lost his young wife; and the boy has lost his mother, who raised him alone, working in a toy factory. Like a bomb explosion or an earthquake that splits asunder everything in its wake and fractures the idea of life itself, Covid turns the world upside down in my novel. It breaks the back of a city and splinters the lives of large swathes of the population, scarring them beyond recognition, emptying them in unexpected ways. This fracturing, this wreckage is reflected in the structure of this novel too—



people are scattered, torn and pulled in many directions, physically and mentally, as also morally, for the morality of many is put to the test. We see that in the misuse and black marketeering of medical supplies in hospitals. But somehow, as is in the nature of our universe, to seek some kind of order and equilibrium in chaos, the voids in the lives of the ambulance driver, the sex worker and the orphan pull them together, and they form an unlikely family in the end.

Another character who is key to this story is a young neurodivergent woman. She spirals after a series of miscarriages and quits her job as a statistician. She searches for ways to cope, also buying a lifelike baby doll (they're known as 'reborn dolls') at some stage, and eventually opts for IVF. Her paranoia peaks as the world goes under lockdown and her due date gets closer. She is the fourth voice in this story, and her perceptions as a representative of a relatively privileged economic class provides a different angle. She is watching on television what the others are experiencing first-hand on the ground. She remains locked up in her house for months on end, fretting over an unborn child, and yet, her story is tightly interwoven with those of the ambulance driver, the sex worker and the orphan.

Apart from these four characters, the staff at the hospital are portrayed in a way that they not only represent the frontline workforce as medical professionals but also come across as individuals who have diverse backstories that make up the social fabric of modern India. In other words, when you piece together the lives of the characters that make up the cast of this novel, you find yourself looking at modern India itself.

Word Count

50,000 words

Note from the Author

Grief Burns Like Fever describes the deadly second wave of Covid-19, which swept through India in April 2021, and left over 400,000 dead in eight weeks. Hospitals ran out of beds, medical oxygen, ventilators, and healthcare workers. The government, meanwhile, washed its hands of the crisis and busied itself with election campaigns in the two states of Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. A searing exploration of the course of a pandemic, this novel investigates the roles human societies and the state play when faced with one.

I began writing it at the time the Delta variant washed over India. In fact, there were so many deaths daily, between the second week of April and end of June, that there wasn't enough space left in crematoria to burn the dead or in cemeteries to bury them. Every day, disturbing visuals and data arrived of bodies being dumped in hospital corridors, morgues and riverbanks.

Hundreds of bodies washed up on the shores of the river Ganga in a town called Buxar in Bihar, contaminating the only source of drinking water available to the villages nearby. A hospital in Raipur ran out of morgue space and kept the bodies in the wards and passageways along with the patients struggling for life. The one word that can describe the scenes and those times best is 'macabre'. What transpired, if reported in the form of fiction, could be called Kafkaesque in the sense that what



we lived and witnessed, its horrors were surreal, almost absurdist, for who would have thought such a thing could crush the entire world in its deadly, merciless grip, who would have thought sitting or standing next to another person would cost them their life. In their desperate attempts to fight against a rapidly mutating virus, whole cities and nations came to a grinding halt, the global economy collapsed, businesses shut down, employees were let go—each day became less believable and more absurd than the previous one. And yet this novel is as real as the fact of the sun rising in the east every morning. A set of very human, very easily identifiable characters anchor it. Many of the incidents described are based on true events that I witnessed at close quarters, coming from a family with three generations of doctors, and on news reports. The dean of the government hospital in the novel is modelled on Dr K. K. Agarwal, who worked until his last breath, speaking to the nation every day on air and on his Youtube channel to curb misinformation. I have five doctor cousins, who were pursuing their post-graduation in general medicine and in other departments at the time, who were not granted leave to return to our hometown for two years. They worked 48-hour shifts in government hospitals, trapped in hazmat suits at the peak of Indian summer. They were infected in both waves, and yet kept working because all hands were on the deck. Two of them were not allowed to isolate themselves during the Delta wave while they were sick and continued to be on duty because their hospitals were woefully short on staff. As their family, these were extremely trying times for us. We lost doctors who were family friends, known to us for many decades. However, in new reports or medical council reports, they appeared just as numbers, adding to statistical data.

There are so many families in India that lost several members within a matter of days; there are children who lost both parents to Covid. Orphaned children living in slums on the far fringes of secure gated societies in cities fell prey to sex traffickers. As India gasped for breath, the ruling party campaigned in two of the most densely populated states, Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, for elections, organising mammoth rallies. These states became super-spreader hubs; every second person in the state of West Bengal was infected in June as per reports from the Indian Council for Medical Research.

Tales of human tragedy became the new normal. Hospitals ran out of beds, ventilators and medical staff. Ironically, some government-run hospitals had no dearth of ventilators. But they remained unpacked for lack of anesthesiologists who were trained to use them. Some of these, when unpacked in hospitals in Punjab, turned out to be defective. As treatment protocols in India evolved with each passing day—many of them contested by scientists in the US and the UK—in panic, many private individuals began to hoard oxygen cylinders, Remdesivir injections and even basic drugs like Fabiflu, which led to black marketeering and circulation of spurious substitutes. Oxygen cylinders that would normally cost 15,000 rupees were sold for four times the price. Desperate attendants lined up at hospitals with travel bags full of cash to secure beds for their patients.

As state governments continued to waste time indulging in petty politics, squabbling over the rationing of oxygen supply, a renowned hospital in Delhi received oxygen tankers eight minutes too late, as a result of which, twelve people, including a doctor, died. This happened in a few other state-of-the-art Delhi hospitals that same week.

The nightmarish horrors of the Delta wave seemed unending in those months. An aftereffect of prolonged oxygen support in co-morbid patients led to an outbreak of the highly corrosive black



fungus infection, which ate into organs such as the eyes and the brain. The injections that could treat this condition, Amphotericine B, were woefully short in supply at the time.

However, this wasn't a crisis centred on India alone. The first cases were reported from Wuhan in China and then spread like wildfire in Italy and Spain. The healthcare systems in no country had foreseen a pandemic such as this, as a result of which, even America lost many people, including a large number of frontline workers such as medical staff and policemen.

My novel was born as a way of coping with the crisis as the contagion raced closer to home each day, claiming the lives of friends and relatives. I also felt a compelling need to record the events as they unfolded, lest we forget. Because forgetting those times would mean forgiving the role—or lack thereof, so to speak—of the powers that be, and looking the other way; it would mean learning no lessons for the future.

However, I would like to add that showing India or the Indian government in a bad light is not the objective of this novel. Yes, it does assume a satirical or allegorical tone in some places. But truth be told, the entire world fell short of the ammunition and preparedness required to combat the deadly virus. In fact, India needs to be applauded for being the largest producer of vaccines in the world and for kickstarting the vaccination drive within a year.

I'd like to add that this is not a tale of misery and helplessness alone; this is a story that describes the world we live in, in which there is darkness but there is kindness and redemption too, there are cowards, but there are the unusual bravehearts too. This is more about the cycle of time—there is suffering, but then there is some hope of retrieval. There are cruel losses, and yet there will be some sort of healing too. A lot will be remembered with grief, but there will be some sort of forgetting too.

About the Author

Minakshi Thakur was born in England in 1981 and grew up in India. As a publisher and editor with sixteen years of experience in trade publishing, she has contributed to the discourse on translation and to the diversity in the market of literature by building a pan-Indian imprint dedicated to books by leading writers in India's many languages including English.

She worked for a decade with HarperCollins Publishers, where she set up the Hindi language publishing programme (Harper Hindi) and Harper Perennial, India's only imprint dedicated to English translation from Indian languages at the time, where she published iconic writers like Intizar Husain (Urdu), Gulzar (Urdu), Javed Akhtar (Urdu), Perumal Murugan (Tamil), N.S. Inamdar (Marathi), Ranjit Desai (Marathi), Jayant Kaikini (Kannada), Rabindranath Tagore (Bengali), the International Booker Prize winner Geetanjali Shree (Hindi), Volga (Telugu), P. Subhashchandra (Malayalam) and Arupa Pantangia Kalita (Assamese), among others. She published close to a hundred English translations from Kashmiri, Urdu, Konkani, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Bengali, Assamese, Punjabi, Odia, Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati.



In 2017, she joined Westland Publications, Amazon's Indian publishing arm at the time, in order to set up an imprint called Eka, a 360-degree language and translation programme, commissioning and publishing original writing in nine Indian languages, translations between them, and into and from English. In her role as publisher at Eka, she published over 250 books in the original and in translation by writers like Amish, Ashwin Sanghi, Chetan Bhagat, Perumal Murugan, Amitav Ghosh, Manu S. Pillai, Vishwas Patil, Unni R., Manoranjan Byapari, Javed Akhtar, Shaheen Akhtar, Shabnam Nadiya, Arunava Sinha, among others. In five years' time, she identified translators working with thirty-two language pairs, sometimes publishing a writer in six or seven languages.

A number of books published by her have won or been on longlists and shortlists of prestigious literary prizes, including the Crossword Book Award, the JCB Prize for Literature, the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature, the Atta Galata Bangalore Literature Festival Prize and the Sahitya Akademi Prize. In the capacity of a commissioning editor and later publisher, she has spoken at all the leading literature festivals in India, including the Jaipur Literature Festival, Hyderabad Literature Festival, Gateway Lit Fest, Bangalore Literature Festival, Publishing Next conference, Kalinga Literature Festival, Oxford Books Literature Festival, the Indian Academy of Letters' festival, the World Book Fair, Citiscapes (Indian Institute for Human Settlement), among others. She has also spoken at Story Drive Asia (Singapore; 2017) organised by the Singapore National Council and the Frankfurter Buchmesse, at the Lillehammer Literature Festival in Norway, as a delegate at Institut Ramon Llull's conference for translation of Catalan literature (Barcelona) and at the Commonwealth Foundation meet for translation and language publishing in UNESCO World Book Capital for the Year (Malaysia; 2019). She has designed and ran several workshops centred around translation, including one hosted by the Commonwealth Foundation in 2020 in collaboration with Bill Swainson (Editor at Large - Fiction at Maclehorse Press & Non-fiction, One World News) for publishers, editor, translators and literary agents from seven Southeast Asian countries. She is on the advisor board of the Kalinga Literature Festival, Odisha.

Thakur writes in English and Hindi. She has published three collections of poems and a novel. Her Hindi poetry collection Neend Ka Akhiri Pul (The Last Bridge of Sleep) was shortlisted for the Sahitya Akademi Young Writer's Prize awarded by the Indian Academy of Letters. Her first novel in English (Lovers Like You and I) was published by HarperCollins in 2014 and was shortlisted for the Tibor Jones South Asia Prize. It was published in Turkish in 2015 by Dedalus Kitap, Istanbul. She was a writer in residence at Chateau de Lavigny (Fondation Heinrich Maria & Jane Ledig-Rowohlt, Switzerland) in 2014, the Toji Cultural Centre writer's residency in Wonju, Korea (2014), and a Sangam House Fellow (Bangalore) in 2012. She is currently working on two novels in English.

She has published English and Hindi poems in literary journals and leading newspapers like The Open Road Review, The Dhauri Review, Purvagrah, Dainik Jagaran, Anusuya, and in bilingual online and print journals like Pratilipi and Janki Pul.



Interviews and Other Writing

- <https://scroll.in/article/1031632/multi-platform-publishing-is-the-future-minakshi-thakur-on-westlands-new-innings-with-pratilipi>
- <https://publishingperspectives.com/2017/12/india-surender-mohan-pathak-harpercollins-hindi-pulp-fiction/>
- Creating a market for South Asian literatures: a panel at the Jaipur Literature Festival 2014
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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FsEtrNa8WCE&list=PLO4JTjY_3Zc_QphfJm-SAENNKSY6zk5PX&index=26
- Anuvad, Translating India: a panel at the Jaipur Literature Festival 2019
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcRPeZQTf8E>
- Book release of crime thriller in Hindi: at the Jaipur Literature Festival in 2020
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtEdbnC1bfM>
- In conversation with Amitav Ghosh: at the Hyderabad Literature Festival in 2021
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfiCRg1B3sU>
- <https://pratilipi.in/2009/03/minakshi-thakur-talks-to-pratilipi>



THE SCENT OF FALLEN STARS

by

Aishwarya Jha

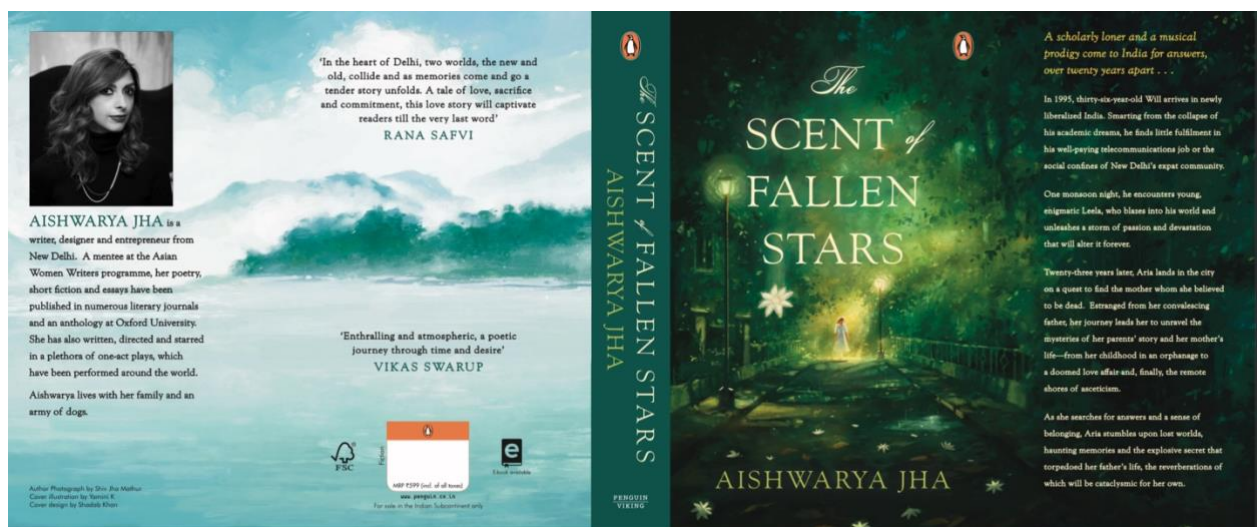
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About the Book

In 1995, thirty-six-year-old loner Will, historical scholar and product of a vanishing upper crust British stoicism, arrives in New Delhi. Smarting from the collapse of his academic dreams, he is drawn there by an inexplicable urgency, but finds little fulfilment in his well-paying telecommunications job, the narrow expat community and his tenuous relationship. One night, propelled by the sensory splendour of the monsoon, he encounters young, enigmatic Leela, whose fateful appearance in his world catalyses a storm of passion and devastation that will alter it forever.

Twenty-three years later, Aria sets foot on the soil of her birth for the first time, on a quest to find the mother whom she believed to be dead. Estranged from her convalescing father, her journey leads her to unravel the mysteries of her parents' story and her mother's life, from her childhood in an orphanage to a consuming but doomed love affair and, finally, to the remote shores of asceticism, severing all ties with the world.

As she searches for answers and a sense of belonging, Aria stumbles upon a new world of ancient tradition—and the explosive secret that torpedoed her father's life, the reverberations of which will be cataclysmic for her own.





Praise

“Enthralling and atmospheric, a poetic journey through time and desire.”

—Vikas Swarup, author of *Q and A* (Slumdog Millionaire)

“In the heart of Delhi, two worlds, the new and old, collide and as memories come and go a tender story unfolds. A tale of love, sacrifice and commitment, this love story will captivate readers till the very last word.”

—Rana Safvi, author of *Where Stones Speak* and *The Forgotten Cities of Delhi*

About the Author

Aishwarya Jha is a writer, designer and entrepreneur from New Delhi, India. Her first novel will be published by Penguin Random House in 2024 and her writing has previously appeared or is forthcoming in multiple literary journals, including Atticus Review and Boats Against the Current, as well as TORCH Oxford’s ‘A Personal History of Home’ digital anthology. She is currently working on her second novel under the aegis of the Asian Women Writers programme.

In another life, she won accolades for her work as an actor and director, and for her one-act plays, which were performed in cities around the world in addition to being taught at workshops. Aishwarya has a degree in Management with Law from the London School of Economics’ International Programme and a diploma in Interior Design. When not writing or dreaming about lost eras, she can be found designing maximalist spaces and helping companies strategise their growth and marketing plans. Aishwarya lives with her family and an army of dogs.





SHAKARA + JOLLOF

by

Efua Oyofa

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About the Book

An 80,000 word adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* set in contemporary Lagos, Nigeria explores themes such as classism, body image, sexuality, racism, colourism, and love.

In high-society Lagos, marriage is considered the time when one's life truly begins. For women especially, certain societal doors can only be opened with a wedding ring.

Therefore, the arrival of any man with money sets the city a-frenzy. Marriage-minded women (and anxious relatives) race to do whatever it takes to land their loved ones a husband - thus shielding themselves from the piteous state of being... unmarried.

Living in Nigeria and blatantly not living her best life - unemployed thirty-seven-year-old spinster Ahmena spends most of her time unsuccessfully job-hunting - and pretending not to care about the fact that she's single, with no decent career or man prospects.

Recently-arrived millionaire bachelor Jaíyé knows that, for a man with his social standing, Lagos works on his timeline. Until then, life is a party.

When the plus-sized beauty meets the handsome playboy, their mutual attraction surprises them both. He has nothing to gain - and she has nothing.

As both find themselves irrevocably drawn to one another, the pair of potential lovers find they must confront misplaced pride and prejudiced arrogance, in order to find the rarest thing of all: true love.

With Nigerian words, culture, and truths woven throughout, this modern-day retelling of *Pride and Prejudice* goes to show - that the best story, is the one which speaks truth to your heart. Fans of the yearning love in *The Kiss Quotient*, the examination of cultural attitudes exemplified in *Queenie*, and the enemies-to-lovers trope in *The Hating Game* will find themselves falling in love with their favourite story, all over again.

Second novel: *North of the South*

Sparks fly when 37-year-old tortured billionaire Lazar meets 42-year-old free-spirited Nadjima. Both find themselves on a sensual exploration rife with memorable pleasures - yet haunted by historical sin. As the pair explore their relationship and uncover the significant demons beneath the surface, the two find themselves running high on love - yet low on time. Will Lazar be able to overcome his



past mistakes and fully claim the woman he wants? Can Nad explore her past in order to embrace her future... and will the dark forces in her past allow her to live long enough?

About the Author

Having grown up between West Africa and the West, Efua understands what it takes to build a book that can stand firmly in both spheres. As a neurodiverse woman of colour, she is driven to understand the world, and knows how better to move around in it. In 2016, she launched *Dating While Nigerian*, a blog chronicling the misadventures of Nigerians trying to find love worldwide. This has since been transformed into *This African Love*, a site documenting how Black, Diaspora, and African people navigate love.

In 2022, she launched the multi-disciplinary storytelling project *udamalore*, which celebrates ancient and contemporary stories of African female agency. Through it, she deconstructs the narrative on African womanhood, fusing it with the art of war, and the inherent symbolism in the construction of women's lives. She uses written word, audio stories, performance pieces, and interweaves this in an audio-visual installation featuring photography, textile storytelling, and African cultural heritage.

She has been interviewed by publications ranging from Quartz to The Economist. My work has appeared in *Bella Naija*, *Genevieve*, *TheWill Downtown*, and has moderated a panel for Africa in Words (for the Edinburgh Literary Festival).





SHOWA

by

Roger Pulvers

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Overview

In November 1928, on the night that the young Emperor Hirohito is transformed in his Empowerment Ceremony in Kyoto from a man to a God, six-year-old Watanabe Saeko is murdered in a field not far away. The murderers are two boys—brothers—whose father is a prominent official in the Imperial Household Ministry. The crime is blamed on the girl's father, a leftist, who despite his solid alibi, is arrested.

Showa follows Police Inspector Kato Mamoru in his quest to identify the real killers. Political intrigue involves powerful entrepreneurs and radical agitators, three romances that proceed amid the heightening tensions in society, and the search for justice, thwarted at every step, at a time when Japan is destroying democracy at home and creating an empire in Asia that will eventually lead to the loss of millions of innocent lives.

Showa creates a compelling narrative that asks the most crucial question of Japan's twentieth century: Who will take responsibility for the crimes committed in the World War that forever marked this era known as 'Showa'... or 'Radiant Peace'?

This is a mystery thriller with great authenticity and passionate intensity that sheds light on an era all too much like our own today.

(Approx. 58,500 words)

Historical note: The Showa Era, Japan

The Showa—or Radiant Peace—spanned from 1926 to 1989 and was the most dramatic and tumultuous period in Japan's modern history. It corresponded with the reign of Emperor Hirohito. Japan had embarked on the establishment of an Empire earlier in the century, occupying Taiwan and Korea. But in the 1930s the Japanese military, with the full cooperation of the country's largest corporations reached into China.

At home, the repression of all progressive forces was in full swing. The first years of Showa are thrown into stark light in Roger Pulvers' *SHOWA*. It is then that the rule of law was eroded, and the freedoms enjoyed during the previous eras were curtailed. It was during these few years that the stage was set for Japanese aggression and the war in the Pacific.



Showa Books 2 & 3

The author is currently writing Book 2 of what will eventually be a trilogy, although Book 1 stands alone as a novel. Book 3 will be completed mid-2023. Book 2 takes up the story of this tumultuous era in 1931 and courses through the war to 1955, the year that the Japanese government issued a White Paper proclaiming that ‘the postwar era is over.’ (see synopses for Books 2 & 3 at the end of this info sheet).

About the Author

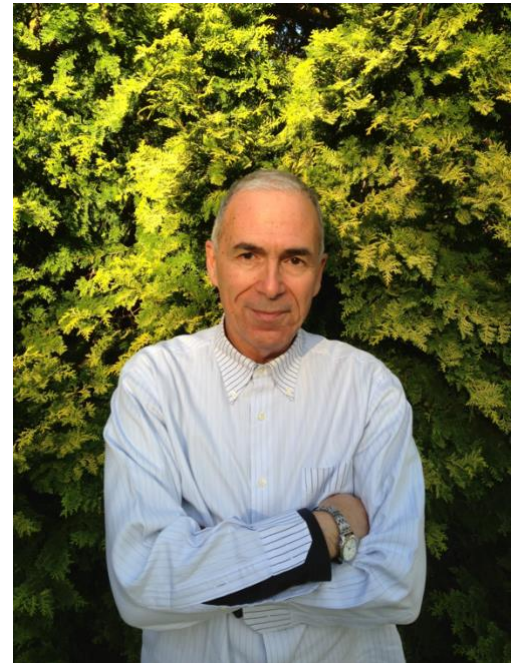
[Roger Pulvers](#) is an acclaimed author, playwright, theatre and film director, translator, and journalist. He has published more than fifty books in Japanese and English, including novels such as *The Death of Urashima Taro* (Angus & Robertson, 1981), *General Yamashita’s Treasure* (Harper Collins, 1993), *Star Sand* (Amazon Crossing, 2016), *Lin* (Balestier Press, 2018) and *The Dream of Lafcadio Hearn* (Kurodahan Press, 2010, Balestier Press, 2019).

In 2017 the feature film of *Star Sand*, written and directed by him, had wide release throughout Japan. His two memoirs—*My Japan: a cultural memoir* (Balestier Press, 2020) and *The Unmaking of an American* (Balestier Press, 2019)—have been praised as forming a unique record of cultural life in Japan in the past fifty years.

Roger has worked extensively in film, television, and theatre. He was assistant to director Nagisa Oshima on the film *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*, starring David Bowie, Tom Conti and Ryuichi Sakamoto. He also co-wrote the script for the Japanese film *Ashita e no Yuigon* (Best Wishes for Tomorrow), for which he won the Crystal Simorgh Prize for Best Script at the 27th Fajr International Film Festival in Tehran.

Roger received the prestigious Miyazawa Kenji Prize in 2008 and the Noma Award for the Translation of Japanese Literature in 2013; in 2018, Japan’s highest honor, the Order of the Rising Sun; and in 2019, the Order of Australia. Over the past fifty years he has translated prose, drama, and poetry from Japanese, Russian and Polish.

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Press/Reviews

Praise for the Japanese edition of *Star Sand*:

“The beautiful image of star sand in this novel rises up from the depths of history and deeply touches the hearts of readers.”
—The Toyko Shimbun

“This novel is a masterpiece of the highest order with its radiant messages sent from the tragic past of Okinawa and beautiful star sand by a ‘genius who overcomes borders’ who has lived his life between Japan and the United States.”

—Mitsuyoshi Numano, University Tokyo professor and author

“This work is extremely dramatic, and what underlies the drama is a worldview based on multicultural tolerance. At the end, that dramatic stage is brilliantly turned topsy turvy. This is just the sort of stylistic tour de force that can be achieved in the genre of the novel.”

—Bungakukai Magazine

“*Star Sand* is a very fine work of fiction that I recommend to middle and high school students. It brilliantly links the story of the American and Japanese deserters with that of a female university student today.”

—Minako Saito, Asahi Shimbun

“Roger has found an air pocket that we Japanese never noticed.”

—Hisashi Inoue, author of *Tokyo Seven
Roses*

Praise for ‘*My Japan*’:

“Roger Pulvers’ life reads like an adventure story. His recollections of life in Japan in the 1960s are bound to become part of Japan’s national heritage.”

—Composer/musician Ryuichi Sakamoto

“This book is a delight. Few Japanese intellectuals have absorbed Japanese culture to the extent that Pulvers has. If there were no Pulvers, Japan would be a much less interesting country!”

—Author/editor Seigo Matusoka

Praise for ‘*The Honey and the Fires*’:

“Every story is witty, beautifully written and encourages deep thought. Race out and buy this truly beautiful book.”

—INSIGHTS, magazine of the Uniting Church of Australia

“Open-hearted parables that reflect today’s world.”



“Extraordinarily fascinating tales that transcend time.”

—Tokyo Shinbun

—BRIO magazine

“Brimming with a gentle gaze on the individual yet having a wide vision. . . resoundingly powerful.”

—SHUKAN ASAHI, (mass circulation weekly magazine)

SHOWA Book 2:

Book 2 takes up the story of this tumultuous era in 1931 and courses through the war to 1955, the year that the Japanese government issued a White Paper proclaiming that ‘the Post War era is over.’

WADA has expanded his business empire and is working closely with the Japanese military. He has moved his headquarters to the capital, Tokyo. It is there that he enlists the services as head of his security unit, of ARAKI, who has left his job at the police in Kyoto and is now himself in Tokyo. The death by foul play of a Korean girl becomes the trigger for a coverup. The Japanese are in the process of setting up a network of brothels in districts where Japanese soldiers are stationed at home and abroad. Many of the women forced (or tricked) to work there are Korean, whose parents were brought to Japan to work in coal mines and other essential areas of enterprise. The Korean girl was about to tell a journalist at the Asahi Shinbun about the illegal enterprise and was murdered to silence her.

The sweep of Showa 2, with many newly introduced characters, takes us through the assassination of prominent Japanese politicians in 1936, the battlefield of war and the postwar chaos after the carpet bombing of Tokyo during the war. But the major focus is on the stories of the characters who fight against repression or commit crimes as part of what they consider their ‘patriotic duty.’ It is here that we re-encounter KATO (and his young daughter), who, after the death of his wife has moved to Tokyo. How Japan buried responsibility for wartime crimes and started on the road to becoming an economic superpower forms the backdrop for the narrative of SHOWA 2.

SHOWA Book 3:

SHOWA 3 will cover the era 1956-1989. The very same elites who controlled Japan before the war are back in power. Who is behind the phrase: Make Japan Great Again?



SNOOP: A TEXAS MYSTERY SERIES

by

Jen Waldo

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About the Book

Taking sly advantage of her tiny size and harmless demeanor, Fran Furlow often gets away with intrusive and controlling behaviour. Dedicated to truth in all matters, she is relentless in her efforts to see that light finds every secret, and that every questionable situation is met with closure. Having been brutally raped several years before, Fran guards her privacy as she routinely invades the privacy of others. She avoids dealing with her ongoing personal trauma by immersing herself in other people's business.

She attends various ineffectual support groups, passionately encouraging her friends to improve themselves. She also works as a receptionist in a dermatologist's office. In her efforts to know all there is to know about what's going on in Caprock, she has, over the years, slipped far outside the bounds of appropriate behaviour. She spies on her friends, bullies her fellow support group members, and intimidates the town's leaders. When her efforts are greeted with resistance or criticism she takes to her bed for days, eating soup from the can and streaming movies.

Running alongside the plot is Fran's humorous narrative concerning her friends and enemies. The people surrounding her form a charming community of characters with continuing stories. Their lives move forward as Fran evolves at a glacial pace.

Socially awkward and unwaveringly dedicated to following the rules, the character, Fran Furlow, is insensitive, meddlesome, and surprisingly endearing. Her ability to rationalize her behaviour is both entertaining and captivating.

Hers is an appealing and unique voice in the mystery genre.

SNOOP – Book 1, Advancing Women

Genre: Mystery series (71,500 words)

When a dead body turns up in the wolf enclosure of Caprock Zoo, amateur sleuth Fran Furlow is on the case. Taking sly advantage of her tiny size and harmless demeanour, Fran often manages to get away with her intrusive and controlling behaviour. Dedicated in her pursuit of the truth, Fran is relentless in her efforts to shine a light into every nook and cranny and unearth every secret.



In her efforts to know all there is to know about what's going on in Caprock, Fran has, over the years, slipped far outside the bounds of appropriate behaviour. She spies on her friends, bullies her fellow support group members, and intimidates the town's leaders.

When Fran discovers a link between the dead body and Caprock's Vehicle Maintenance Facility she is one step ahead of the hapless detective Joe Epps. But when she starts peering into the office's windows and tailing the women who work there, she finds herself a target. Her house is broken into, her tires are slashed, and her car is egged and the vandalism soon escalates into violence.

Whilst tireless in her determination to hunt down the truth, the dermatologist's receptionist has her own secrets. Having been brutally raped several years before, Fran guards her own privacy as she routinely invades the privacy of others. She avoids dealing with her own personal trauma by immersing herself in other people's business. She attends ineffectual support groups, passionately encouraging her friends to improve themselves. When her efforts are greeted with resistance or criticism she takes to her bed for days, eating soup from the can and streaming movies.

Running alongside the plot is Fran's humorous narrative concerning her friends and enemies. The people surrounding her form a charming community of characters. All with their own unfolding stories, their lives move forward as Fran evolves at a glacial pace. As the investigation nears its conclusion Fran finds her own life in danger. It is at this point that help arrives in a very unlikely guise...

Socially awkward and unwaveringly dedicated to following the rules, Fran Furlow, is insensitive, meddlesome, and surprisingly endearing. Her ability to rationalize her behaviour is both entertaining and captivating.

Like Jen's Waldo's first two books (*Old Buildings in North Texas* and *Why Stuff Matters, Arcadia*) the 'Snoop' series is set firmly in the Texas panhandle – the place she knows best. Hers is an authentic and unique new voice in the mystery genre.

SNOOP - Book 2, Elderlies

Genre: Mystery Series (82,300 words)

During an icy Winter the frozen bodies of some of Caprock's elderly residents turn up in odd places—the back seat of someone's car, the gazebo in Dumas Park, the women's locker room at the Caprock sports facility. Not thinking highly of the Caprock police, Fran inveigles herself into the investigation.

Fran's 'snooping' leads her to two groups who routinely go into the homes of the elderly population of Caprock – caregivers and an organisation that delivers meals. Soon she's following suspects and peering through windows, which ends up with her getting a backside full of buckshot and, later, carjacked at gunpoint. Once again the police department she routinely criticizes comes to the rescue.



In her efforts to know all there is to know about what's going on in Caprock, Fran has, over the years, slipped far outside the bounds of appropriate behaviour. She spies on her friends, bullies her fellow support group members, and intimidates the town's leaders.

Whilst tireless in her determination to hunt down the truth, the dermatologist's receptionist has her own secrets. Having been brutally raped several years before, Fran guards her own privacy as she routinely invades the privacy of others. She avoids dealing with her own personal trauma by immersing herself in other people's business. She attends ineffectual support groups, passionately encouraging her friends to improve themselves. When her efforts are greeted with resistance or criticism she takes to her bed for days, eating soup from the can and streaming movies.

Running alongside the plot is Fran's humorous narrative concerning her friends and enemies. The people surrounding her form a charming community of characters. All with their own unfolding stories, whilst their lives move forward Fran evolves at a glacial pace.

Socially awkward and unwaveringly dedicated to following the rules, Fran Furlow, is insensitive, meddlesome, and surprisingly endearing. Her ability to rationalize her behaviour at once both entertaining and captivating.

In this second book in the 'Snoop' series, Fran continues to endear as she battles her personal demons. As in Jen's Waldo's first two books, (*Old Buildings in North Texas* and *Why Stuff Matters*, Arcadia Books) the 'Snoop' series is set firmly in the Texas panhandle—the place she knows best. Hers is an authentic and unique new voice in the mystery genre.

About the Author

Jen Waldo first started writing over 25 years ago when, living in Cairo, she had difficulty finding books she wanted to read. She figured if she wanted something interesting to read, she was going to have to write it herself. Finding pleasure and power in the process of creating, she's been hooked ever since. She has earned an MFA, has had two novels published, and has established a blog on her website, jenwaldo.com

Jen's debut novel *Old Buildings in North Texas* (Arcadia Books) was published in 2016 and her second book *Why Stuff Matters* (Arcadia Books) has just been published. Both books are set firmly in the Texas Panhandle, the place Jen knows best.

Having lived in seven countries over a thirty-year period, Jen is often asked why, with her knowledge of international cultures and locations, she places her novels in a stark dry town in North Texas. It's because it's the place she knows best—the dusty gusts, the flat earth, the square squat houses, the late-summer thunderstorms. The people are stocky, stubborn, religious, big-hearted, abhorrent toward change, and suspicious of success. She's grateful to Amarillo for providing colorful characters and a background of relentless whistling wind.





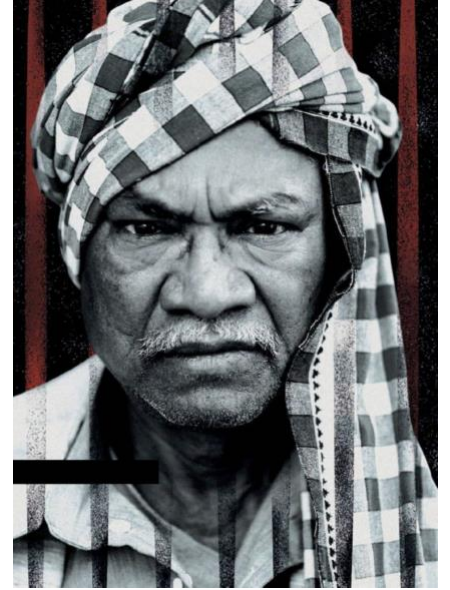
TRANSLATED FICTION



MANORANJAN BYAPARI

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Manoranjan Byapari was born in the mid-fifties in Barishal, former East Pakistan. His family migrated to West Bengal in India when he was three. They were resettled in Bankura at the Shiromanipur Refugee Camp. Later, they were forced to shift to the Gholadoltala Refugee Camp, 24-Parganas, and lived there till 1969. However, Byapari had to leave home at the age of fourteen to do odd jobs. In his early twenties, he came into contact with the Naxals and with the famous labour activist Shankar Guha Niyogi. Byapari was sent to jail during this time, where he taught himself to read and write. Later, while working as a rickshaw-puller in Kolkata, Byapari had a chance meeting with the renowned Bengali writer Mahasweta Devi, who urged him to write for her journal *Bartika*. He has written twenty-six books since. Some of his important works include *Chhera Chhera Jibon*, *Ittibrite Chandal Jibon* (memoir), the *Chandal Jibon* trilogy (novels) and *Motua Ek Mukti Senar Naam*. Until 2018, he was working as a cook at the Hellen Keller Institute for the Deaf and Blind in West Bengal.



In 2018, the English translation of Byapari's memoir, *Ittibrite Chandal Jibon* (*Interrogating My Chandal Life*), received the Hindu Prize for non-fiction. In 2019, he was awarded the Gateway Lit Fest Writer of the Year Prize. Also, the English translation of his novel *Batashe Baruder Gandha* (*There's Gunpowder in the Air*) was shortlisted for the JCB Prize for Literature 2019, the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2019, the Crossword Book Award for Best Translation 2019 and the Mathrubhumi Book of the Year Prize 2020. He was appointed chairman of the newly instituted Dalit Sahitya Akademi in Bengal in 2020. The English translation of his novel *Imaan* was shortlisted for the JCB Prize for Literature in 2022. In 2021, Byapari was elected a member to the Bengal Legislative Assembly as a Trinamool Congress candidate.

About the Book

There's Gunpowder in the Air (Batashe Baruder Gandha)

It's the early seventies. The Naxalbari Movement is gathering strength in Bengal. Young men and women have left their homes, picked up arms to free land from the clutches of feudal landlords and the state, and return them to oppressed landless farmers. They are being arrested en masse and thrown into high-security jails. In one such jail, five Naxals are meticulously planning a jailbreak. They must free themselves if the revolution is to continue. But petty thief Bhagoban, much too happy to serve frequent terms for free food and shelter, has been planted by Jailor Bireshwar Mukherjee among them as a mole. Only, Bhagoban seems to be warming up to them.

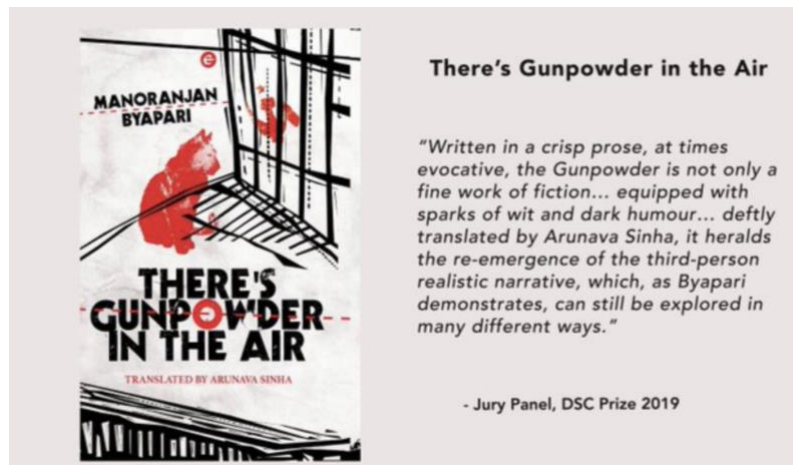


There's Gunpowder in the Air is a searing investigation into what deprivation and isolation can do to human idealism. And Manoranjan Byapari is perhaps the most refreshing voice to emerge from India in recent times.

Praise

“Telling the story of a jailbreak during the Naxal days in Bengal, this novel reminds us of the power of writer-as-witness. Beginning as a series of vignettes in a prison, it builds up, through a narrative of controlled anger and humour, into a devastating critique of what it means to be free. It leaves us with no answers, but just a sense of dread.”

—The Jury



About the Translator

Arunava Sinha translates classic, modern and contemporary Bengali fiction, non-fiction and poetry from India and Bangladesh into English. Sixty of his translations have been published so far in India, eight in the UK (by Tilted Axis, John Murray, Hesperus, Seagull Books), and five in the USA (by Archipelago Press, Amazon Crossing, Seagull Books). Eleven of his translations have won, or been longlisted/shortlisted for literary translation prizes in India, the UK and the US. He is an associate professor of practice in the Creative Writing department at Ashoka University, India, and the Books Editor of the online politics and culture magazine Scroll.in.



Website: <https://arunavasinha.in/>



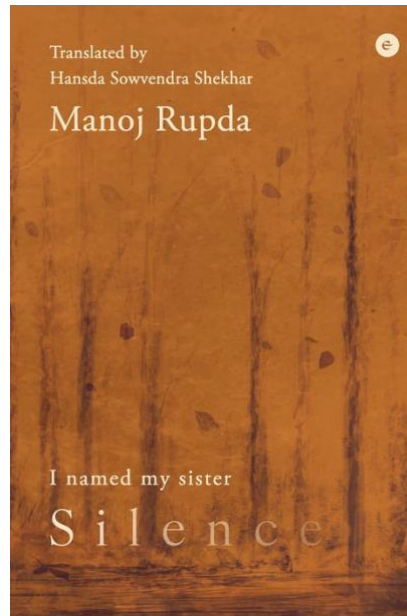
I NAMED MY SISTER SILENCE

by

Manoj Rupda

Translated by
Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar

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About the Book

**Translated from the Hindi original *Kaale Adhyaay*
Shortlisted for the 2023 JCB Prize for Literature**

Irma Madavi is a young, Gond woman who lives in a village in Bastar region of Chhattisgarh. The Gond are one of the largest Adivasi communities in India. The land where Irma Madavi has her roots is in a crossfire. On one side, there are atrocities upon Adivasis by the corporate-government nexus; on the other side, there is armed rebellion by Adivasis to protect their land and lives from the said corporate-government nexus.

Irma Madavi is a silent, unassuming girl who does household work and collects fruits, leaves, and other produce from the forest. She works hard and saves enough fund to send her half-brother, who is seven years younger than her, to study at an engineering college in Raipur, the capital city of Chhattisgarh state.



When the brother has completed his education and is capable of standing on his own two feet, he learns that his sister has left the house and gone into the forest. When the brother rushes to the village, he hears rumours about his sister and sees their community broken and divided between two factions: one faction siding with the corporate-government nexus, the other with the rebels.

Determined, the brother goes looking for his sister; and, in doing so, witnesses sordid incidents of injustice and deception, and learns about the various types of violence.

About the Author

Manoj Rupda is based in Nagpur (Maharashtra) and writes in Hindi. He is the author of the novels, *Kaale Adhyaay* (of which *I Named My Sister Silence* is a translation) and *Pratisansaar*; the collections of stories, *Dafan tatha Anya Kahaniyan*, *Saaṅ-Naasaṅ*, *Aamaazgaah*, *Tower of Silence*, and *Dus Kahaniyan*; and a book of essays, *Kalaa Ka Aaswaad*. He is a recipient of the Indu Sharma Katha Puraskar and the Vanmali Katha Samman.

About the Translator

Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar has written fiction and non-fiction in English — including the novels, *My Father's Garden* (shortlisted for the JCB Prize for Literature and a Sahitya Akademi Award) and *The Mysterious Ailment of Rupi Baskey* (longlisted for the International Dublin Literary Award, shortlisted for a Crossword Book Award and The Hindu Prize, and winner of a Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar); the collection of short stories, *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* (#1 bestseller on Amazon India and shortlisted for The Hindu Prize); and pieces published in *The New York Times*, *The Indian Express*, *The Hindu*, *The Times of India*, *The Asian Age*, *The Caravan*, *Mint Lounge*, *OPEN*, *Outlook*, *Reader's Digest*, *The Indian Quarterly*, *Fifty Two*, *Scroll*, and other places — and translated fiction, non-fiction, and poetry from Santali, Hindi, and Bengali to English, the translations having been published in *Asymptote*, *Usava Literary Review*, *Indian Literature*, *Poetry at Sangam*, and other places. “Tower of Silence”, a story by Manoj Rupda, translated from Hindi by Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar, has been accepted for publication in *The Dalhousie Review*.



KITA PERGI HARI INI

by

Ziggy ZezsyaZeoviennazabrizkie

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About the Book

Nobody likes children. Yet, people keep making them. In a desperate attempt to find childcare, Mr & Mrs Mo employed Nonna Gigi, who's a nanny and also a Cat. Mi, Ma, and Mo find themselves in a magical childhood filled with dancing shadows, visits to the moon, buttery baguettes, train rides and popcorns, and secret island of the Cats.

But, as it's been said, nobody likes children.

Based on the living superstition that progeny means prosperity, this novel telescopes into the social, economic, and psychological effects of natalism in Indonesia. Belying its light-hearted tone and playful treatment of the subject, KPHI expands the scope of the novel beyond a single household, or a single story, especially in an urban setting. Examining the societal pressures of reproduction and parenthood and the consequent victimisation of children as an effect, this story, in the vein of Reda Gaudiamo, Dee Lestari, and Lee Pamuntjak, offers a sobering reality turned on its head.

Synopsis

Mr and Mrs Mo of Boisterous Borough are at their wit's end. They have three young children, jobs, and no childcare. Their parental leaves are ending, and no solution is in the horizon—until it presents itself at the very last second in form of an Out-of-Ordinary Cat who calls herself Nonna Gigi.

From then on, the three children of Mo family—Mi, Ma, and Mo—grow under the care of their strange and magical cat nanny. One day, she invites the three children and their new friends, Fifi and Fufu, to visit her hometown in the Out-of-Ordinary Floating Island of the Out-of-Ordinary Cats. They take a trip in the Train of Thoughts and visits the Sad Circus where they witness gruesome and gory acts and acrobats, and nearly drown themselves in the tent. The children survive and take one final trip before arriving at the capital of the Floating Land.

In the Floating Land is a civilisation built by Out-of-Ordinary Cats, where they live as humans do. Amused by the magical land, the children spend a night at Nona Gigi's tavern and set to venture the city the following morning.



Mi and Fufu discover an abandoned train that's littered with children's bones. Ma and Fifi find taxidermy of humans. Mo finds himself in a trading dock that sells fried human ears as a snack. The children realise the horror of the Floating Land and attempt to return to their homes in Boisterous Borough. During the escape, Fifi is captured, but the other four children successfully return home, only to have their story dismissed as a dream, and to discover that their parents have plotted to leave them in the Floating Land all along.

About the Author

Ziggy Zezsyzzeoviennazabrizkie is an Indonesian writer. She won Jakarta Arts Council Novel Writing Competition in 2014 and 2016, was longlisted for Khatulistiwa Literary Awards 2015, won Prose of the Year 2017 from Ministry of Education and Culture, received Rolling Stone Indonesia Editor's Choice Award in 2017, and was nominated for Tempo Magazine Book of the Year 2022 and 2023. Her short stories have been translated into English and Japanese. In 2023, she won PEN Presents from English PEN for her work *Kita Pergi Hari Ini*.





THE MEAT MARKET

Ten stories and a novella

by

Mashiul Alam

Translated by
Shabnam Nadiya

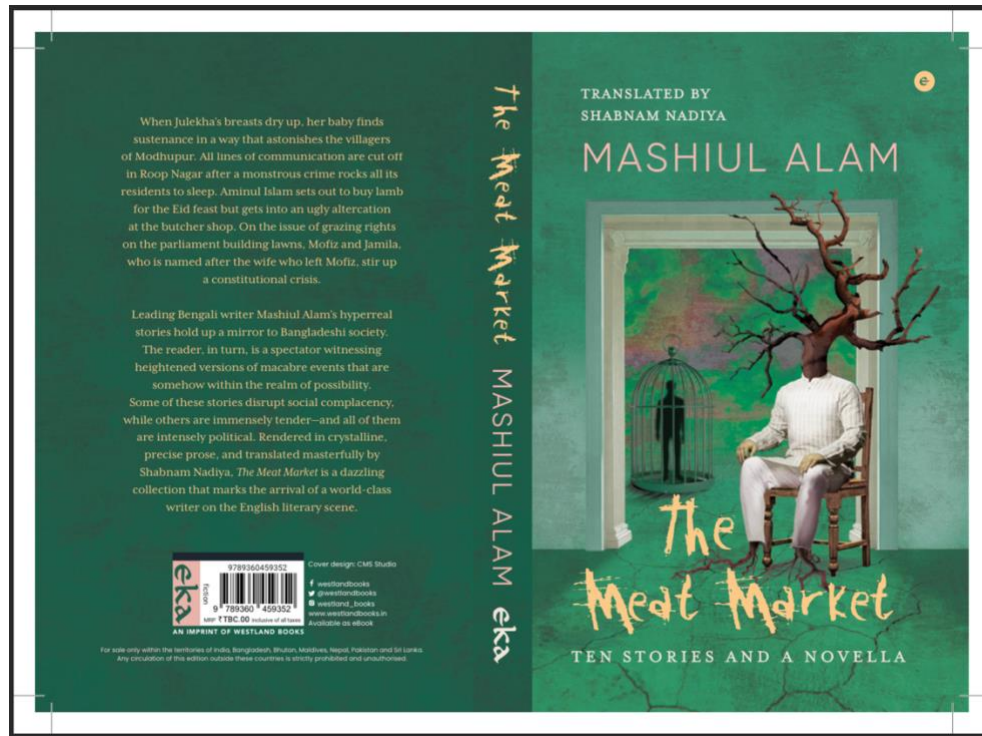
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About the Book

The Meat Market exemplifies the brutal, base nature of contemporary consumerist society: people only know how to slaughter, how to eat, how to belch. Yet alongside that, he has a story like *Milk*, which, despite the abject lives described, propels the reader towards a sense of wonder. The approach his non-realist fiction takes, by creating a sense of unease, of disruption, is unique in Bangladeshi literature. Alam's writing wanders varied genre territory, straddling the literary and genre divide, which is not very common in Bangladesh. Alam moves with ease between the real, the unreal, the magic real, and the surreal. All of it in service to the visceral and brutal reality of the contemporary world. His is a unique voice, one which deserves to gain a much wider readership. His work is quite unique in how they move with ease among the real, the unreal, the magical real, and the surreal.

All of these stories are set in our everyday world yet are shot through with magical and/or surreal elements. This volume includes: *Jamila*, who braves the jeers and the ogling of people as she runs desperately searching for food for her child, until the reader realizes that Jamila is a cow, and her murder precipitates a political crisis; in *Akalu's Journey*, a farm laborer from the famine-ridden northern region of Bangladesh, travels to a district which has jobs and an abundance of rice; in *Field Report from Roop Nagar*, an oddity of widespread somnolence is a result of brutal crime; in *Underpass*, a young man leaves his house to go somewhere and three men begin walking with him; it's never clear whether he's being abducted, where he is headed, whether he intends to return or who the men are, but his journey continues. The fable-like novella, originally published as *Ghora Masud* (Horse Masud) documents the rise of a small-town thug through the corrupt practices of power hungry local elites including the local officials, politicians and others; but the apathy and helpless anger voiced by the regular townspeople resonate to his interview-based pieces with shopkeepers, farmers, and everyday folks from the rural reaches.

Leading Bengali writer Mashiul Alam's hyperreal stories hold up a mirror to Bangladeshi society. The reader, in turn, is a spectator witnessing heightened versions of macabre events that are somehow within the realm of possibility. Some of these stories disrupt social complacency, while others are immensely tender-and all of them are intensely political. Rendered in crystalline, precise prose, and translated masterfully by Shabnam Nadiya, *The Meat Market* is a dazzling collection that marks the arrival of a world-class writer on the English literary scene.



The Meat Market and Other Stories was awarded a PEN/Heim Grant in 2020 and one of the translated stories from the collection (title: Milk) won the 2019 Himal Short Story Competition. The PEN/Heim jury said in their statement, “The encounters between ordinary people in these stories careen into the unexpected and surreal in ways that leave the reader speechless, while also strangely comforted by the possibility of alternate realities in everyday life.”

Published stories from this collection:
Milk, Himal Best Short Story contest
The Underpass, Aleph Review
The Cuckoo Keeps Calling, SAAG Anthology
An Indian Citizen Came to Our Town, Words Without Borders
The Meat Market, Asymptote

About the Author

Mashiul Alam is a writer and translator who was born in northern Bangladesh in 1968. He studied journalism at the Peoples’ Friendship University in Moscow during the late eighties and early nineties. A journalist by profession, he worked at Prothom Alo, the leading Bengali daily in Bangladesh, for many years. He is the author of over a dozen books including *The Second Night with Tanushree* (novel), *Ghora Masud* (novella), *Mangsher Karbar (The Meat Market)* (short stories), and *Pakistan* (short stories). He has also translated Dostoevsky (from Russian to Bengali) and Bertrand Russell. Alam was awarded the debut Sylhet Mirror Prize for Literature (2019), the IFIC Bank



Literature Prize (2020) for his fiction, and the Panjeri-BTF Literary Translation Award (2024) for his translation of Dostoevsky's *Notes From Underground*. His short story *Doodh*, translated as *Milk* by Shabnam Nadiya, was awarded the 2019 Himal Southasian Short Story Prize and Shabnam Nadiya's translation of his work entitled *The Meat Market and Other Stories* was awarded a 2020 PEN/Heim Translation Grant. He was also a Resident Fellow at the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa. He is currently working on *Laal Akash (Red Sky)*, a novel set in the Soviet Union during Perestroika. His short story "An Indian Citizen in Our Town" (translated by Shabnam Nadiya) was published in Words Without Borders' 2013 Bangladesh feature.

He has written short stories, novels, journalistic pieces, and YA books. His work has a broad range—from science fiction to surreal fantasies to political satire. His characters exist with the same ease in a dystopian futuristic Bangladesh with strictly controlled reproductive practices, to a Bangladeshi small town beset with corrupt local politics, to the claustrophobic days during an army coup and assassination (i.e. the killing of President Ziaur Rahman in 1981), to South Asian student communities in the Soviet Union during Perestroika.

About the Translator

Shabnam Nadiya is a Bangladeshi writer and translator, settled in Philadelphia. A graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, she is the recipient of the Steinbeck Fellowship (2019) for her novel-in-progress *Unwanted*; a PEN/Heim Translation Grant (2020) for her translation of Mashiul Alam's short fiction entitled *The Meat Market and Other Stories*; and the 2019 Himal South Asian Short Story Prize for her translation of Mashiul Alam's short story *Milk*. Nadiya's translations include Shaheen Akhtar's novel *Beloved Rongomala* (Eka/Westland, January 2022), Leesa Gazi's debut novel *Hellfire* (Eka/Westland, September, 2020), and Moinul Ahsan Saber's novel *The Mercenary* (Seagull Books, 2018).



Her original work as well as her translations have been published in: the W.W. Norton collection Flash Fiction International, The Best Asian Poetry 2021-22, the New York Public Library's Pocket Poems series, SAAG Anthology, Harpur Palate, The Offing, Joyland, Amazon's Day One, Gulf Coast, Copper Nickel, Wasafiri, Words Without Borders, Asymptote, Al Jazeera Online, Flash Fiction International (WW Norton). Nadiya also served as juror for the PEN/Heim Translation Grant (2017), the National Endowment for the Arts Translation Grant (2018), and the Nevada Arts Council Literary Arts Fellowship (2022). For more: www.shabnamnadiya.com



PEOPLE FROM BLOOMINGTON

by

Budi Darma

Translated by
Tiffany Tsao

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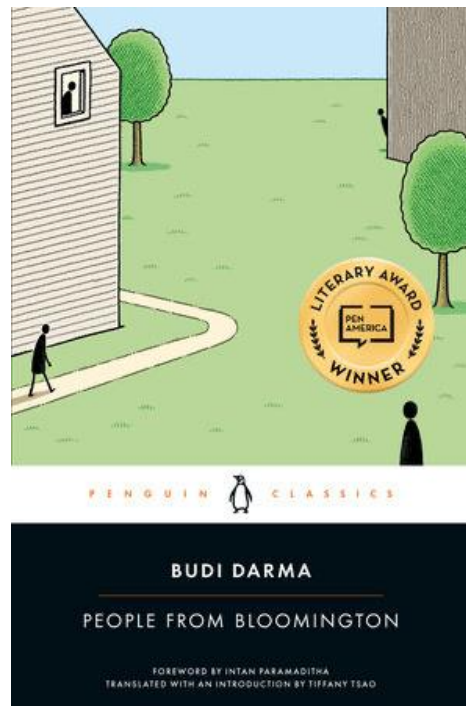
About the Book

Winner of the 2023 PEN Translation Award

An eerie, alienating, yet comic and profoundly sympathetic short story collection about Americans in America by one of Indonesia's most prominent writers, now in an English translation for its fortieth anniversary, with a foreword by Intan Paramaditha.

In these seven stories of *People from Bloomington*, our peculiar narrators find themselves in the most peculiar of circumstances and encounter the most peculiar of people. Set in Bloomington, Indiana, where the author lived as a graduate student in the 1970s, this is far from the idyllic portrait of small-town America. Rather, sectioned into apartment units and rented rooms, and gridded by long empty streets and distances traversable only by car, it's a place where the solitary can all too easily remain solitary; where people can at once be obsessively curious about others, yet fail to form genuine connections with anyone. The characters feel their loneliness acutely and yet deliberately estrange others. Budi Darma paints a realist world portrayed through an absurdist frame, morbid and funny at the same time.

For decades, Budi Darma has influenced and inspired many writers, artists, filmmakers, and readers in Indonesia, yet his stories transcend time and place. With *People from Bloomington*, Budi Darma draws us to a universality recognized by readers around the world—the cruelty of life and the difficulties that people face in relating to one another while negotiating their own identities. The stories are not about “strangeness” in the sense of culture, race, and nationality. Instead, they are a statement about how everyone, regardless of nationality or race, is strange, and subject to the same tortures, suspicions, yearnings, and peculiarities of the mind.





Praise

“First published in Indonesia 40 years ago, this story collection from celebrated author Darma gets a second life—and an English translation—as a Penguin Classic. Across seven stories set in the gridded streets and rented rooms of Bloomington, Ind., Darma’s characters navigate their morbidly funny lives in this meditation on alienation, failed connection, and the universal strangeness of the human mind.” —*The Millions*

About the Author

Budi Darma was a novelist, short-story-writer, and literary critic. Budi Darma received several national literary awards and his international honors include the Southeast Asian Writers Award (or S.E.A. Write Award) and the Mastera Literary Award. He held a PhD in English literature from the University of Bloomington, Indiana, and was a professor at the State University of Surabaya.

About the Translator

Tiffany Tsao has authored three novels: *The Oddfits* (Amazon Crossing 2016), *The More Known World* (Amazon Crossing 2017), and most recently, the standalone book *The Majesties*. *The Majesties* has been published in Australia (Viking 2018), the US (Atria Books 2020), the UK (Pushkin Vertigo 2020), and translated into Italian (Astoria Edizioni 2020). Her writing has been published in outlets such as *Electric Literature*, *The Margins*, *CrimeReads*, *Korean Literature Now*, and *Sydney Review of Books*. She was longlisted for the 2019 Ned Kelly Award—Australia’s leading prize for crime fiction.



In addition to being a writer, she is an acclaimed translator of Indonesian fiction and poetry. She has translated three published books to date, was awarded the PEN Presents Prize and PEN Translates grant in the UK, and was shortlisted for the biennial NSW Premier’s Translation Prize—Australia’s foremost prize for literary translation, and was longlisted for the 2022 International Booker Prize for Norman Erikson Pasaribu’s *Happy Stories, Mostly*.

She spent her formative years in Singapore and Indonesia before moving to the United States, where she completed her B.A. in English from Wellesley College and her Ph.D. in English from UC-Berkeley. In 2011, she moved to Sydney, Australia, where she now lives with her husband, two small children who claim they are dinosaurs, and the family’s faithful sourdough starter, Mr. Fizz.

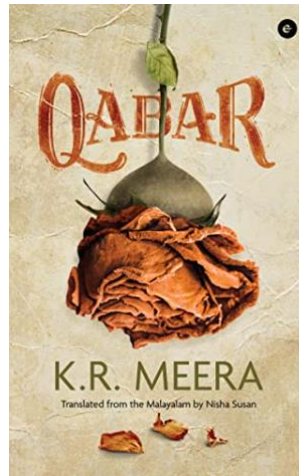


QABAR

by

KR Meera

Translated by
Nisha Susan



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About the Book

As a temple is slated to rise in the site of Babri Masjid, voices rise from a qabar in a small town in Kerala. A judge presiding over the property dispute is 36raumatize. Is the petitioner the jinn-summoning sorcerer he is reputed to be? Or is she having a mental breakdown from loneliness? Why else would the spectre of a long-forgotten ancestor and his handmaidens appear before her? How is she supposed to make a ruling when her self is profoundly divided? A hypnotic novella from KR Meera full of the dizzying knowledge that verdicts are not solutions.

Praise

“Qabar is an unabashedly political narrative and finds excellent synergy in the politics of its translation. There are no glossaries, no attempts at removing all traces of the source language in the pursuit of a mythic perfect equivalence, and yet, nothing in the narrative is inaccessible to the reader. There is a playfulness to the novel’s structure that counterbalances the seriousness of its content.”

—Scroll.in



“The surefootedness of the plot and the brilliant translation from Malayalam by Nisha Susan weave together something altogether magical... Meera gives us a hero who can read minds, and what we know soon enough is that it is she as a writer who can read our minds. Telling us a story we needed to hear right now.”

—[The New Indian Express](#)

“This book is a journey unbound by the usual markers and the usual answers — it’s where the real and the illusory come together and take us along in their everlasting tide.”

—[The Hindu](#)

About the Author

Author of more than a dozen books in Malayalam including novels, novellas, short story collections, essays and children’s literature. Her novel *Aaraachaar* which won the Kendra and the Kerala Sahitya Akademy Awards was translated by J Devika as *The Hangwoman* and was shortlisted for the DSC literary prize. Her translated works include *Yellow Is The Colour Of Longing*, *The Gospel Of Yudas*, *The Poison Of Love*, *The Unseeing Idol of Light* and *The Angel’s Beauty Spots*.



About the Translator

Nisha Susan is the author of *The Women Who Forgot to Invent Facebook and Other Stories* (Context, 2020). Her fiction often explores the intimacy and strangeness that the internet brought to India. Her translation of Meera KR’s novel *Qabar* from the Malayalam is forthcoming (2022, Westland). Her non-fiction is focused on culture, gender, digital media and politics. She is also the co-founder of two award-winning media companies, The Ladies Finger and Grist Media.





NONFICTION



PAROMITA VOHRA

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About Agents of Ishq

Who are we? As with anything beautiful, vital and human, there are several answers to that question.

Agents of Ishq is the Shahrukh Khan of sexuality conversations in India.

Agents of Ishq is the feminist space you dream of, and a feminist style of such dash, panache and humour, you just want to be it. Forever.

Agents of Ishq is a blooming garden of Indian intimacy. Every kind of content on sex-education in a common sense and fun form - safe-sex, consent, queerness, contraception, sexting, masturbation myths, what to know on your first time, puberty and menopause; stories of self-exploration and self-discovery, desire, longing, love, amorous adventures and unexpected heartbreaks; little-known Indian histories of sexuality, romance, literature and even exciting court cases about sex; mischievous music and sensual poetry, naughty rhymes about all things sex and love in multiple languages.

All of this is rendered in a language that's quirky, affectionate, entirely unique and rooted in popular culture.

AOI was founded by the filmmaker and writer Paromita Vohra. It began as an online sexuality education project in a time when the conversation around sex revolved around violence, stigma, pornography and cultural prohibition. Using a warm, friendly – and most importantly, thoroughly Indian style – we operated at the sweet intersection of emotional and popular culture, creating media, artworks, installations, graphics, information and videos about sex, love and desire, with the aim to create a warm and inclusive space for sex-ed. People told us it wouldn't work, but our gut told us it was something people needed.

We launched in December 2015.

And then.

A remarkable thing happened.

The week we launched our inbox looked like this:

People had been looking for a place like this to belong, where to be Indian and be sexual were not judged, nor conflicted.

They began sending us stories of their love and sex lives, unsolicited. The stories revealed an India never depicted anywhere – not in movies, OTT shows, writing, mainstream media. This was an



India sensual, emotional and exploring the meaning of life, by exploring the meaning of their love and sex lives. There were women, transmen, queer people, straight people. Stories of first orgasms and first kisses, between women, between men and women, faking orgasms, a summer of hook-ups, getting past assault, a purely Whats App relationships, young gay men who love ‘daddies’, being bisexual, writing for Savita bhabhi—the famous Indian porn comic, posing naked for someone, learning to accept your own fat body can be loved, mental health and love, love across caste and love long-distance, talking to your child about sex, living with a partner who denies you sex, asexuality, lost love, friendship as a romance, leaked nudes and grooming, bullying and triumphing over discrimination, getting your parents to accept your sex life and accepting your parents’ sex life. The stories ran the gamut bold, delicate, reflective, humorous, wise, confused, painful, exhilarating – always a discovery.

We edited each of these stories with love and care, retaining the many voices, the many kinds of English they brought depending on the writer’s location, translated them into Hindi and illustrated each one with beautiful, very desi bodies. Most radically, we centred the experiences of women and queer people and allowed their experiences to reframe the conversation on sexuality on their terms – rather than just fitting into a masculine narrative of ‘free sex’ or ‘modernity’.

Today AOI is a repository of over 200 such narratives and growing that tell us a rarely told tale of how Indians are expressing their sexual-ness beyond binaries and stereotypes.

These stories have also become a source of insight for us, and our sex-education material then, is rooted in the everyday joys and hurts of our contributors, and allow us to initiate engaging and honest conversations about intimacy and the politics of pleasure in ways no one else can. Our sex-education material then is not theoretical or clinical or simply politically correct – it is helpful, useful, rooted in an Indian context, and answers the questions of the audience rather than tick the boxes of some curriculum.

In its 7 years of existence, Agents of Ishq has:

Reached over XXX million people online

Received contributions from about 400 people

Carried out 100 collaborations with people as diverse as Bumble, Oxfam, CREA, Khabar Lahariya and Gaurav Gera

Won 5 Laadli awards

Featured in every major national newspaper, magazine and online platform and some international ones too.

Been nominated for a Cosmopolitan Blogger Award

Been showcased as one of 10 global sexuality projects of excellence by UNESCO

Made the most cutting-edge material on consent, queerness, and desire which is part of syllabi in schools, workshops, universities.

Been part of over a dozen PhD studies

Admired so much, we’re regularly plagiarised

Organised the first ever conference on love, sex and pleasure, in 2021.



Changed the language of how we speak about sex in India and instilled the confidence to speak up as they are, unfiltered in thousands of people.

We celebrate and claim space for Indian narratives, vocabularies, personal traditions, coping mechanisms, and “jugaads” around exploring intimacy and pleasure in India. For the longest time, these have been overlooked as not being serious or academic or ‘cool’ enough, and have often been pitted against their Western counterparts. What they are is real, straight from the heart, and direct from the heart of India. Among our fans we count people as diverse as young girls and boys in small towns, quiet queers in cities, writers like Mona Eltahawy, sex-tech leaders like Cindy Gallop, movie stars, venture capitalists, journalists, queer icons, feminists of every hue, parents, teachers, dancers, artists – everyone.

About the Author

In her three-decade career, Paromita has worked as a director, writer, actor, installation artist, curator, and teacher, consistently breaking new ground. She has always believed that one can chart their own creative and intellectual path in the world, defying categories with a flower in their hair and a twinkle in their eye, which makes her one of India’s best-loved feminists and pleasure activists. Apart from being the creative force behind award-winning documentaries and a screenwriter for *Khamosh Paani*, Paromita has been listed by *Time Out* as one of the 10 people who have changed how Indians watch films. Her films as a director include the landmark *Unlimited Girls* (2002, on feminism in India), *Q2P* (2006, on toilets and gender), *Morality TV* and the *Loving Jihad* (2007, on moral policing), and *Where’s Sandra?* (about stereotypes of Christian women), among many others (listed below). In 2013, she directed the cutting-edge documentary-style prime time TV series *Connected Hum Tum*, where women shot their own lives for a year.

Paromita has been a widely read columnist in *Monday Mirror* (*How To Find Indian Love*) for four years and has been writing the opinion column *ParoNormal Activity* in *Sunday Mid-day* for over 12 years. Her work has been shown at film festivals and universities around the world and also been exhibited at the Tate Modern, The Wellcome Gallery and the National Gallery of Modern Art, India.





BECOMING GANDHI

My Year Long Attempt to Follow the Mahatma's Moral Principles in These Immoral Times

by

Perry Garfinkel

US rights to *Sounds True*, German rights to *Hayne*, Indian subcontinent rights to *Simon & Schuster India*.
UK rights available.

"If Perry Garfinkel is going to try to 'be' Gandhi, you can bet it will be insightful, soul-searching and a great and entertaining read. If it's anything like 'Buddha or Bust,' I can't wait to read the finished manuscript."

Daniel Goleman, Ph.D., author of the international bestselling *Emotional Intelligence.*

Overview

Is it possible to live a moral life in these immoral times?

Perry Garfinkel author of the bestselling *Buddha or Bust* sets out on a quest to discover the answer to this question. At a time when many feel that society has lost its moral compass, he feels people are increasingly searching for role models to inspire them and give them hope for the future. That people are looking for a return to the values of simplicity and integrity.

Garfinkel believes that it is possible to live a moral life in these times, and that we can look to the example of Mahatma Gandhi's life for the hope and direction to achieve this. He believes that now more than ever, Gandhi's guiding principles are relevant in today's fractured world, allowing us all to "be the change" – a phrase adopted by Barack Obama as almost a mantra, but which was said first by Gandhi.

On his quest Garfinkel will examine whether it is possible to truly change? To invoke the rigorous self-discipline needed to alter one's behaviour, and perhaps more profoundly, one's pattern of thought?

Over the course of a year Garfinkel intends to conduct a personal experiment with the truth by following literally Gandhi's six guiding principles: truth, non-violence, simplicity, vegetarianism, and celibacy.



To help him in his quest, he will draw on the body of writing Gandhi left behind, “a virtual how-to instructional on living a virtuous life, one man’s guide to moral integrity followed by many people around the world – but not enough.”

Becoming Gandhi will faithfully document Garfinkel’s attempt to literally live as Gandhi did. Throughout the process he will re-examine his own beliefs and intentions and work on cleaning up his own habits, in both practice and thought. He hopes that this highly personal account of his own journey will inspire others.

Gandhi in the UK

England will form an important part of BECOMING GANDHI. Post-pandemic Perry Garfinkel travelled to England where he conducted dozens of interviews and experienced some eye-opening encounters, which whilst helping him to fill in a significant period in Gandhi’s life, more significantly reinforced his working premise. Namely, that while Gandhi left an indelible stamp on the places he spent time in, there is still much work to be done. Especially, in the area of his doctrine of nonviolence, *“I sensed ethnic turmoil, tension and division. At the same time, I was impressed by, and will report on, strides forward in healing old wounds.”*

In London, Garfinkel retraces Gandhi’s footsteps, starting with where he first lived in West Kensington upon arriving to attend Inner Temple law school. This is where one of the two English Heritage Blue Plaques about Gandhi can be found on a wall outside the building. Garfinkel also meets with the archivist at Inner Temple who invites him into her crowded tiny sanctum sanctorum, stuffed with all kinds of papers and clippings about Gandhi that she shows him.

When Gandhi visited England years later to discuss constitutional reform in India with British politicians, he stayed at the Kingsley Hall Community Centre in Bow, where the other Gandhi Blue Plaque is located. The host at Kingsley Hall shows Garfinkel the room where Gandhi slept. *“To say it was in a shambles is an understatement. It reminded me of ill-kept rooms I’d seen where Gandhi slept throughout Gujarat as he walked along the Salt March.”*

On October 2, the anniversary of Gandhi’s birth, Garfinkel attends an annual memorial service for him at one of the UK’s Gandhi statues, the one within the very appropriately named Peace Garden in Tavistock Square. At the ceremony, where Buddhist priests conduct a chant, Garfinkel meets and interviews Camden Mayor Sabrina Francis, among others. Then the crowd of about 100 other Indians walks to Parliament Square, where another Gandhi statue stands among Churchill, Disraeli, Nelson Mandela, and others.

Garfinkel finds himself fascinated with Gandhi’s statues he has seen in India and South Africa, and now those in England, and this will be woven into a “sub-theme” of the book.

In East London, Garfinkel meets with Munsur Ali, a 43 year old Bangladeshi-born British citizen and filmmaker, and one of the City’s youngest councillors, representing the Portsoken ward. Ali



takes him on a walk around his old neighbourhood, starting from Altab Ali Park, named in memory of a 25-year-old British Bangladeshi murdered there by three teenage boys. This was one of the many racist attacks that came to characterize the East End at that time. Munsur walks Garfinkel along Brick Lane, where he'd lived as a small boy on a moving tour that dramatizes the history of segregation, stratification, and racial discrimination against immigrants to England from Bangladesh. This resonates deeply with the Garfinkel because Gandhi was categorically against such violence.

Garfinkel then travels to Leicester which 15 years ago Manchester University demographers had predicted it would be England's first city where the white population would be in the minority. The majority of those non-whites are from the Indian subcontinent. In the 1970s racial tension was so high here that local newspapers ran advertisements telling immigrants not to come to the City. Because of this, Britain's first-ever race relations council committee was set up here. Now Leicester is proud of its multi-cultural diversity.

Garfinkel visits the centre of Leicester's Indian community on what is known as the Golden Mile on Belgrave Road. At the southern end of the Mile is another Gandhi statue, erected in 2009 and funded by the charitable organization of a guru. It is here that Garfinkel learns of the stories of an impending protest and an online petition signed by 5,000 who accused the Mahatma of being "a fascist, racist and sexual predator." The protest didn't happen, and among the locals who had decried the possible vandalism is controversial Leicester East MP Claudia Webbe, who Garfinkel meets along with the City's deputy mayor Councillor Piara Singh-Claire. A few weeks later Ms. Webbe will be found guilty of harassment.

Finally, Garfinkel visits Bonny's Restaurant, the gathering place for Indians in Leicester. Here he meets the owners, Dharmesh and Enna Lakhani. The Lakhani's are a first generation couple whose parents moved to Leicester from Uganda, following of the expulsion of the Ugandan Asians in the early 1970s during the regime of Idi Amin. Dharmesh takes Garfinkel to the largest Divali festival outside of India.

About the Author

Perry Garfinkel is the author of the bestselling **BUDDHA OR BUST: In Search of Truth, Meaning, Happiness and the Man Who Found Them All** (Crown/Harmony, 2006). The book became a national bestseller in its first week of publication and was later acquired by publishers in Italy and Brazil. To date **BUDDHA OR BUST** has sold 22,220 copies in hardback, paperback, and e-book.

A journalist and editor since the early 1970s for newspapers such as the *Boston Globe* and the *Newark (NJ) Star Ledger*, Garfinkel was the start-up editor of *Eco Traveler*, and ecotravel magazine and *New Age Journal*. He has been a regular contributor to the *New York Times* since 1986 and has written for numerous publications including: *National Geographic*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Time Magazine Asia* and the *Huffington Post*.



Garfinkel is the author of *IN A MAN'S WORLD* (New American Library, 1985; Ten Speed Press, 1992), which was considered a “ground-breaking” by the *Washington Post*, and *TRAVEL WRITING FOR PROFIT AND PLEASURE* (Plume Books, 1989), which travel expert and publisher Arthur Frommer called “*the definitive work in the field.*”

Garfinkel first went to India in 1973 with his then wife, traveling from Delhi to Bombay to Goa to Benares to Sarnath, among other destinations. He ended up in Benares studying table with the chairman of the table department at Benares Hindu University, later selling his first freelance article, a profile of his table guru. He returned to India 30 years later on assignment for National Geographic Magazine and has returned almost every year since.



Praise for ‘Buddha or Bust’

“Narrating his observations of contemporary Buddhist practice and meetings with Buddhists in situations that include traditional Buddhist strongholds and places in the West, where the Dharma has only recently arrived, Perry Garfinkel presents Buddhism as a practical approach to human problems. The buddha’s teaching remains refreshing and relevant today, because, more than two and a half thousand years ago, he invited people to listen, reflect and critically examine what he had to say in the context of their own lives.”

—**His Holiness the Dalai Lama**

“Garfinkel’s global search for the essence of Buddhism today is in turn entertaining, informative and enlightening. As a raconteur of the Dharma, Garfinkel is as lively a guide as anyone could hope for on such a pilgrimage – Woody Allen in the footsteps of the Buddha”.

—**Daniel Goleman, author of EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

“A compelling read, part travelogue, part primer, part spiritual quest. Garfinkel brings a reporter’s sharp eyes to an elusive topic.”

—**Tony Horowitz, author of BLUE LATITUDES and A VOYAGE LONG AND STRANGE.**

“Garfinkel dramatically demonstrates that the socially engaged Buddhism movement is growing globally and touching millions of minds and hearts – including his own.”

—**Thich Nhat Hanh, Nobel-nominated Vietnamese monk**



THE BODY COMES FIRST

by

Abhishek Anicca

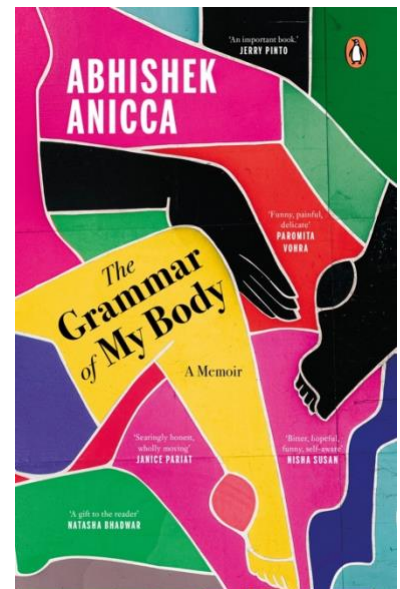
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About the Book

The word that is often associated with stories about disability: inspiring. This is especially true of social media and online media, with posts of people with disabilities being ‘inspiring’ by doing everyday things, and articles that emphasise what they have achieved, *despite* their disability. But do people actually know the reality of being a person with a disability or a chronic illness, sometimes both, and their experiences and struggles?

The Body Comes First attempts to transcend the ‘inspirational’ narrative by telling everyday stories of living with disability and chronic illness. Through essays that focus on first-person narration and authenticity, it provides readers a glimpse into the life of a disabled and chronically ill person. While each disabled and ill body has unique embodied experiences, there are common threads that cut across disabilities, and the first-hand expression of these experiences is front and centre in *The Body Comes First*. In language that is conversational and informal, but also truthful and unflinching, Anicca’s wry and personal writing compels the reader to become at once distant from, and proximate to his experiences.

This book has raw and deeply personal essays about navigating life with disability and illness; everyday struggles of the body and mind; as well as lesser-known questions of care, help, dignity, dating, and love. Anicca addresses intersections that have largely remained unspoken in Indian society, such as masculinity and fatness and on growing up having developed a disability in small-town India. What ties all of these essays together is neither disability nor illness, but the idea of vulnerability. The universal experience of vulnerabilities—may they be of not having control over our bodies or minds, or our everyday lives, dreams, and aspirations—is a powerful way of building a more empathetic world. Although these essays are focused on the author, the mirror often turns away, giving us a reflection of societal behaviour that underlines an individual’s experience of living with disability and illness.





About the Author

Abhishek Anicca is a bilingual (English and Hindi) writer, poet, and spoken word artist. He identifies as a person with locomotor disability and chronic illness which shapes his creative endeavours.

‘Anicca’ is Abhishek’s chosen name, as it denotes the Buddhist doctrine and the Pali word for ‘impermanence’—much like the many lives he has had to live with the onset of his disability and the evolutions of his life.

He has written on living with disability and illness for the Times of India, the Quint, Kitaab, Mad in Asia among others. His poems have been published in English and Hindi, most notably in Nether Quarterly, Gulmohur Quarterly, the Alipore Post, Jankipul, Samalochan, and Posham Pa. He uses spoken word poetry for disability activism and has given more than fifty performances across India and the world. Abhishek has a bachelor’s degree from Delhi University, a master’s degree from TISS, Mumbai, and an Mphil degree in Disability Studies from Ambedkar University, Delhi.



Website and Portfolio

Website: <https://www.abhishekanicca.com/>

Muck Rack Portfolio: <https://muckrack.com/abhishek-anicca-1/portfolio>

Other Writing and Press

Nonfiction: By-lines in Times of India, DNA, Daily O, The Equator Line, The Third Eye, Agents of Ishq, Devex, The Quint, The Quint Fit, TV9news, TV9 Bharatvarsh, Wion, Mad in Asia, [Outlook India](#), India Spend, RhiME, Huffington Post India, Kitaab, Scroll.in, Hard News, Dislang.

Poetry: Nether Quarterly, Gulmohur Quarterly, The Alipore Post, Rhetorica Quarterly (Lucknow), The Sunflower collective, Indian Cultural Forum, RhiME, Posham Pa, Jankipul, Samalochan, Prabhat Khabar, Apni Maati, Antrang (collection), Battling for India (Anthology), Yearbook of English Poetry 2021 (Anthology).



Editor: Dislang : [Dislang – Medium](#)

Video/Performance:

- Outlandish Arts (Australia): Maps: [Maps by Abhishek Anicca – YouTube](#)
- Agents of Ishq: Grammar: [GRAMMAR – A Poem by Abhishek Anicca – YouTube](#)
- Microsoft Nipman Awards: [Disabled | A Poetry Performance by Abhishek Anicca and Divya Dureja – YouTube](#)
- Spiel Art Theatre Festival (Germany): [DISCOMFORT DISCO 2 | SPILLOVER by Abhishek Anicca – YouTube](#)
- Reframe Arts: Dear Aphrodite (Trailer): [Trailer: Dear Aphrodite. A Digital Performance by Abhishek Anicca – YouTube](#)
- Interview, Hindustan Times – [The sarcastic slam poet with locomotor disability – YouTube](#)
- LSD India – Despo – [DESPO: A Poet’s Misadventures – YouTube](#)



FOOLING ME, FOOLING YOU

by

Vivek Nityananda

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About the Book

Overconfidence seems foolhardy but there's a reason it persists. What if it was a superpower that gave us longer lives, more motivation, and above all the ability to influence others? Why, after all, do we trust overconfident leaders and newsmakers with an unshakeable sense of self-importance? From politicians to businessmen, we are repeatedly deceived into believing people confident in their strong opinions. How do we know we are making the right decision when we place our trust in these people? Why do we go on to become unwaveringly certain in our own views?

This book shows how overconfidence is all around us—with diverse examples from boxing, farming, investment banking, academia, elections, mansplaining and war. Drawing on research in psychology, political science and evolutionary biology, this book also explores why we trust in overconfidence, the disastrous consequences this can lead to and how we can combat it in our everyday lives.

Synopsis

This book investigates how widespread overconfidence is and whether it is at the root of disastrous consequences both in our daily lives and in the world. The book sets out to test the idea that the reason overconfidence is widespread is because it gives people advantages, in terms of social status and motivation. But how widespread is overconfidence? How do people become overconfident? Why does overconfidence persist? Do people get more overconfident with age? Are current generations more overconfident than past generations? These are just some of the questions addressed in Nityananda's eye-opening book.

One area of life that is ripe for the study of overconfidence is politics. Did Donald Trump's overconfidence for example help him to land the US presidency despite his record of bankruptcies? Why does Liz Truss still insist she was right after such a short-lived fiasco of a premiership? Does bluffing - something politicians are renowned for - give them an advantage in campaigning effectively? Or do politicians believe their own lies? Or does having a more balanced argument - taking-into-account different viewpoints - detract from its effectiveness?

Nityananda also considers the implications of overconfidence on other aspects of daily life, from health and business to warfare and finance. He points out that overconfident people are more likely to take risks, which can lead to dangerous outcomes. For example, people have been proved to be generally more optimistic about their health. They tend to underestimate the risks to their own



health from diet, and alcohol consumption, to the more general risks posed by pesticide and contamination. Nityananda argues that our innate belief in our own superiority isn't all down to self-love, but in part it stems from the way our brains work and the different kinds of information available to us.

Overconfidence can also lead to us overestimating our ability and knowledge - sometimes with serious consequences. Nityananda cites research that shows that narcissism is growing and that some studies have shown an increasing level of self-esteem among the young, and yet conversely, higher rates of depression and anxiety. Young people are more likely to blame external factors such as luck when things go wrong. Here he references the Dunning-Kruger effect - which shows that we tend to overestimate our abilities or knowledge most when we have the least skill or information. Could this lie behind the anti-vax movement for example? On the other side of the argument, Nityananda cites psychologists who argue that our bias towards optimism and overconfidence can be beneficial in many ways. It can play a vital psychological role in helping us to remain motivated and working towards our goals. Look at children for example, they will inevitably fail at everything they attempt - standing up, walking etc. And yet they keep trying! Studies have shown that children up to the age of ten consistently overestimate their own abilities. Faced with failure they remain undaunted and keep try again and again until they succeed.

In a wide-ranging examination of overconfidence in different walks of life, the book also looks at whether overconfidence lay behind the financial crisis of 2008. Or behind the high death rates from the pandemic in some countries. Or why so many major infrastructure developments such as HS2 tend to run massively over budget and years late.

With humour and novel perspectives on a wide range of issues, this book explains a lot about ourselves and the current state of the world we live in.

About the Author

Vivek Nityananda grew up in Bangalore, India where he trained as a biologist. He is a published author and illustrator as well as an experienced science communicator. He is currently a BBSRC David Phillips Fellow at the Centre for Behaviour and Evolution and the Biosciences Institute at Newcastle University, UK and has published several publications in the fields of evolutionary biology, animal behaviour and psychology.

Find his website here: <https://viveknityananda.com/>





GIVE THIS BOOK A TITLE

And other ways to take control of your life

by

Bella Glanville

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Overview

By the time that Bella Glanville turned twenty, she had already given three TEDx talks, travelled the world as an international model, started up her own magazine, created a youth foundation, and enrolled in the second top university for psychology in the world. However, prior to this, she was a depressed, bullied twelve-year-old with anxiety issues.

Everything changed when she shifted her focus onto personal development and positive psychology. She learned numerous tools and was trained as a coach and speaker by some of the world's top self-help gurus. She knew that her life experiences and the tools that she had personally created were too valuable to keep to herself. Which is why she decided to write this book and use some of the stories from her own life to prove that anything and everything is possible if you make the right decisions!

About the book

Bella believes there are too many self-help authors are **telling** their readers what to do, and how they should be doing it. Instead, she wants to stop 'shoulding' all over people and give them the power to take control of their own lives. She cites the American author and keynote speaker, Steven Covey who believes, people are more inclined to do something if they make the decision to do it for themselves, rather than being told to do it. She has written a book that will empower readers to pick and choose the tools that work for them, and which they can apply them to their own lives.





Give This Book a Title is a self-help book with a difference. It avoids the classic repetitiveness of so many self-help books which keep returning to the same point over and over. For example, ‘*The 10 x rule*’ is about putting ten times more effort into everything and ‘*The life changing magic of not giving a *****’ is about caring less. Often readers will think they have got the point of a book after a couple of chapters and not read to the end. In this book every chapter focuses on a different topic and addresses a different part of your life that you can take control of. For example, there are chapters on The Myth of Perfection, The Science of Online Dating

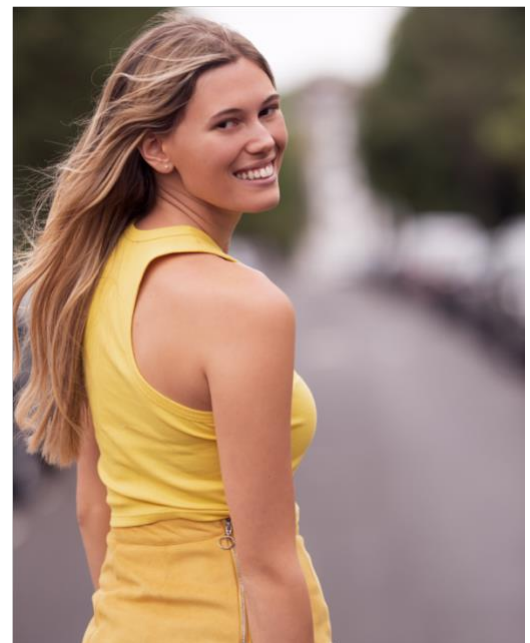
The writers of West End musical, *Six*, decided to keep their musical short and to the point, which kept the audience wanting more. Nowadays, with the rise of technology, young people tend to have shorter attention spans. Bella’s book does the same, keeping each chapter to the point and avoiding unnecessary repetition. Less is more, even when browsing bookstore shelves, short books are often more appealing to those with a busy time schedule.

The age range of most self-help authors is 59-79! Yet as the psychologist Albert Bandura famously asserts in his theory of social learning, individuals identify with and learn more from people of a similar age to themselves. The reason that young people Bella’s workshops identify with me so much is because she is young herself. But there are very few self-help books written by authors as young as Bella. This beauty of this book is that it has been written from the point of view of a young person who knows what young people go through, the problems they face, and how they can deal with them.

About the Author

Bella Glanville is an international model, TEDx speaker, peak performance coach, and founder of *Motivate Magazine* (<https://www.motivatemag.com/>) and the non-profit *Lovekidz Foundation* (<https://www.lovekidzfoundation.com/>). Born and raised in London, Bella has modelled for brands such as Adidas, Stella McCartney, Topshop, Nike and Vogue. She is also a TV personality, film producer and actor. She takes the lead role in the film, *Deadly Perfect*, which premieres in 2021. Bella has given four international TEDx talks, exploring ‘The Myth of Perfection’, ‘Embracing Uncertainty’, ‘Clashing Personalities’, and ‘The Science of Online Dating’.

She also gives motivational talks and workshops to young people, and is a certified NLP practitioner.





Marketing Platform

Instagram influence:

- Followers: 41,100
- Bella's number of followers has grown by 35K since 2018.
- Around 50+ Verified followers
- 25–30 paid promotions
- Average of 1007 likes per post
- Women to men ratio 60/40
- 2.36% engagement rate
- Bella's personal brand is 'Inspired and inspiring', teaching others through her journey and motivating followers to 'do it all.' She teaches NLP techniques through her posts

Other social media:

- Author page (<https://www.bellaglanville.com/new-pag>)
- TED x Talks on YouTube (Four talks – between 1.9K – 14K views)
- Lovekidz Foundation online
- Motivate Magazine: 428 followers
- Twitter @bellaglanville
- TikTok @bellaglanville
- LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/arabella-glanville-274a2a14b/>
- Blog via Motivatemag.com and website bellaglanville.com
- A dedicated list of email contacts: schools, people in the personal development world, people subscribed to Bella's magazine etc.

Testimonials/endorsements

“When she speaks she shines like the sun and makes people want to be like her and mirror her! Her story was needed to help them understand that it is not easy but it is needed to have people that will step out of their comfort zone and be bold with their ideas to make the world better. And they heard from her that it is something they can start small with and let it grow. She is changing the world and is a great motivator.” —Scott Rankin, CEO of Corporate Reimbursement Services

“Her short film, Push, was terrific. I laughed out loud. It was very clever with a point that was beautifully made.” —Harry Bradbeer, director of *Fleabag*

“International model who is changing the perspective of beauty in and out of the industry.” —ONN Network

“She is the sort of person I need in my life. She says what I need to hear.” —Pete Wicks



THIS LAND WE CALL HOME
A Family History Through Caste and Religious Conversions
and the Making of New India

by

Nusrat F. Jafri

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About the Book

Habitual criminals, congenital thieves, the incorrigibles and the born delinquents – these were just some of the names reserved for nomads and itinerant tribes under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. In the aftermath of the Revolt of 1857, the colonial government regarded gypsies, migrants, and vagrants, as insubordinate and perceived them as threats to the existing moral and social order. As a result, over 100 nomadic tribes, including craftsmen, and pastoralists in the Northwestern Province in India were criminalised and profiled by the colonial government through a series of Criminal Tribes Acts, first passed in 1871. These Acts were a tool with which the East India Company put nomadic tribes under strict surveillance, to gentrify them by both Victorian and Brahmanical expectations.

Conversations about the habitual and “born criminals” were happening in India even before Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso drew a connection between genealogy and criminals, way back in the 1870s. He alluded that criminality is inherited and that “born criminals” could be identified by the way they looked.

I am the descendant of one such “criminal” tribe—the Bhantus.

Hardayal Singh, my maternal great grandfather was a Bhantu. They were nomadic pastoralists, who held the same rank in Hindu society as that of the so-called untouchables. They lived at the periphery of villages, with little avenues to sustain a decorous living. Wanderers, dictated by seasons and availability of food and resources, they usually lived in camps. Some grudging members of the Bhantu community also stole from the Government and the business-class Bania community. Within the nomadic populace, Bhantus were never considered thieves, instead they were hailed as Robinhoods.

The proposed book begins in the Rajputana region in the early 1900s. After a particularly testing and gruelling attempt at co-existence, one summer night Bhantu camps, where Hardayal and his fellow Bhantu herdsman lived, were set on fire by Upper caste men. With no relief in sight and all material belongings charred, they turned to the religion of their benefactors – Christianity. It was a mass conversion. Hardayal, his wife Kalyani, and their three daughters along with the rest of



the clan, joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. They migrated to Bareilly, in the United Provinces, where Hardayal attended the School of Theology and trained at the Seminary. He was ordained a Deacon three years later. With this decision, my nomadic ancestors had for the first time begun to grow roots.

Reverend Hardayal Singh had seven daughters and six of them grew up to be Nurses. Kalyani and Hardayal were also the first feminists in my family. They educated their daughters and sent them to mission residential schools at a time when girls' education was a non-issue in Indian society. Through the lives of his younger daughters Kali (the dark one) and Chunno – the book delves into the social discrimination faced by ex-Bhantus, a new generation of (brown-skinned) Christians and their sometimes misplaced allegiance to the Crown.

While Kali (Dorothy) joined the All India Military Nursing Services (AIMNS) and served in Iraq during World War 2, in 1941, back home she was discriminated against for her dark skin and profession by the uptight yet fragile Anglo-Indian community. Nursing was a lucrative profession for my great Aunts, but it remained (then as now) a profession associated with low castes and Dalits. While Kali remained a spinster, Chunno (Prudence), married John Wilson Bunch, a jailer in the Lucknow Central. He spoke of his impressions of the political prisoners in the jails of Lucknow and impressed Chunno with his athleticism. However, marriage to John was perhaps her worst decision.

The birth of their daughter Meera Pamela Bunch, in 1947, and her journey of growing up alongside a Nation, the same age as her, takes the book further. Meera, the eldest of seven children was a precocious child, having been exposed to poverty induced by an alcoholic - abusive father. After finishing school, when Meera met Abid, she was subconsciously seeking stability as a means of escaping the chaos that her father had burdened her with at a young age. At the same time, India was still grappling with its struggles, including partition, war, and internal turmoil, which are typical of an infant nation.

Meera (my mother) married Abid, a Shia Muslim man, belonging to yet another troubled minority of the country. And thus began the story of another conversion amidst the changing socio-political milieu of the Nation. As Meera adapted to her new life, her siblings still endured the horrors inflicted by their alcoholic father. During the Emergency, two of Meera's younger sisters, driven by poverty and mistreatment, decided to join the nunnery to secure themselves against their failing family structure—almost mirroring India's loss of political independence during the State of Emergency.

Events led to the birth of the current ruling political party, the BJP and my birth in 1980. As I grew up, my household had a diverse and cosmopolitan atmosphere, where Islam and Christianity coexisted harmoniously. However, after the Babri Mosque demolition, I observed significant political and social changes in Uttar Pradesh. I became conscious of my identity as a Muslim, belonging to the only Muslim family in a predominantly Hindu neighbourhood. The destruction of the Babri Mosque in 1992 led to widespread violence and riots in many Indian cities. For many of us, children from minority communities, this event marked a sudden and abrupt coming of age.



My own marriage to a Hindu Atheist in 2011, met little to no resistance from either side of our families. This book concludes with an account of our lives in the era of Love Jihad, Land Jihad, and other manufactured concepts of hate in modern-day India., where society is obsessed with second-guessing a person's religion and caste from just their name.

When a name like Meera Pamela Jafri or that of my son, Dylan Jafri Roy surfaces, in many ways, it signals to an India that we all knew while growing up and one that has become increasingly intolerant towards the mixing of cultures, especially between Hindus and Muslims. Many States in India have passed anti-love or anti-love jihad laws to police interfaith couples, to virtually outlaw interfaith marriages under a false and damaging notion that Muslim men are marrying Hindu women to force them to convert.

With these political happenings, the story and history of my family is one to be told. The Government of India passed the Citizen Amendment Act in 2019 and along with the National Register for Citizens, it intends to weed out illegal immigrants from the country. The only caveat is that the system and intentions are flawed; once the NRC is implemented, it is upon the Indian Muslim to prove his/her citizenship. Legitimate paperwork like birth certificates were never recorded for people born before the 1980s, which means, I have no documents to prove that my late father was a citizen of India by birth. Or that my great-grandfather belonged to a tribe that many historians agree was perhaps one of the original inhabitants of India.

This Land We Call Home is my attempt to question the complexities of socio-religious identity, the stigma surrounding conversion, feminism, and what goes into the making of itinerants whose roots run deep within the very land they wander.

About the Author

Nusrat F Jafri, is a Mumbai based award-winning cinematographer. She has over fifteen years of experience in filmmaking. Born and brought up in Lucknow, she moved to New Delhi for graduation and post-graduation in Mass Communication. Her professional journey includes stints as a journalist with *The Pioneer* and *CNBC Awaaz*. Nusrat is a mentee of the first cohort (2021) of *South Asia Speaks*. She was featured in the Second Edition of *Rising Beyond The Ceiling: 100 stereotype-shattering stories of Muslim women of Uttar Pradesh, India*.

She lives in Mumbai with her husband, son and a cat named Jamia.





THE GREAT FLAP

by

Mukund Padmanabhan

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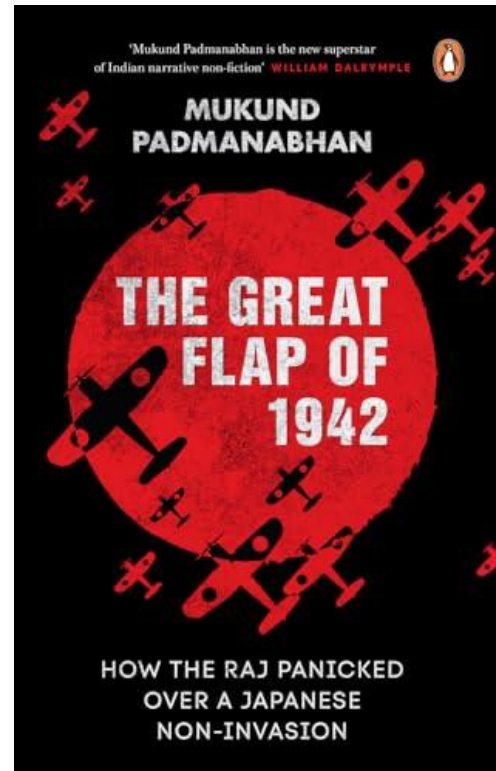
About the Book

The book is a narrative history on a neglected, scarcely known, slice of history—principally, a period between December 1941 and mid-1942—when India was in a frightful panic, believing (mistakenly) that Japan would launch a full-scale invasion. This was a period when the Raj administration unduly panicked, when the tongue of rumour about Japanese prowess and British weakness wagged wildly, and when there was a huge and largely unmapped exodus (of both Indians and Europeans) from both sides of the coastline to ‘safer’ inland regions. It shows how the events during this period shaped both nationalist politics, British policy towards India, and charted the course towards Independence.

Synopsis

The Great Flap, an expression used by some British bureaucrats in India, to describe the panic caused by the Japanese threat to India, traces a broad narrative arc starting with the attack in South-East Asia. The events pertaining to the attack on Malaya, the conquest of Singapore, the bombing and eventual occupation of Burma, and the entry into the Indian Ocean are narrated in a manner to reveal the impact they had on India.

It traces the disruption and panic that prevailed in India, a story of a time when wild rumours (including those about Japanese prowess and British faintheartedness) were rife, when the colonial administration put out confusing messaging about the Japanese threat, thereby contributing to the panic that resulted in people fleeing coastal towns and villages to ‘safer’ places inland. It suggests that the exodus was much larger than ordinarily assumed, not limited to Calcutta and Madras as it is sometimes believed, but something that occurred on both sides of India’s seaboard, affecting towns like Cochin and Cuttack and other villages in Orissa.





The Japanese of course never invaded, limiting their action at this time to occasional air raids in Vizagapatam and Cocanada (Vishakhapatnam and Kakinada) in the south and in Bengal and other parts of the north-east. (The feared invasion, which is outside the purview of this book, happened a couple of years later; by then Japan was weakened, and the operation was a short-lived misadventure.)

The book situates the Japanese threat in a larger political context, in discussing how the war changed the face of both nationalist politics and British attitudes towards India. The British tried to get Indians to support the war effort as the latter, the was led to the strengthening of India's demands for freedom, even as it saw the emergence of differences among Congress leaders (Gandhi, Nehru and Bose for example) about whether to support the war and what form, if any, this support should take. The resignation of Congress ministries, the Cripps Mission, and the hardening of differences between the Muslim League and Congress were all related to the War.

Madras, the oldest city of the British Empire, has a special place in the book, being the only city where a panicked administration asked all 'non-essential' residents to evacuate on the basis of false intelligence that a large Japanese fleet off the coast was readying to launch a full-fledged invasion. About 80 per cent of the city fled and a panicked administration, headed by Governor Arthur Hope, shifted different government departments to a string of inland towns. European residents were particularly in the grip of the 'Flap', fleeing from even from remote Kodaikanal in the Madras Residency in the fantastic belief that they would be trapped after the Japanese took control of the southern railway. In Madras, the fleeing administrators ordered all 'dangerous' zoo animals to be shot dead to prevent them from preying on citizens after being turned loose from their enclosures, damaged by Japanese bombs.

The flap over the invasion may have been much ado about nothing, a slice of history about something that never happened. What the book attempts to show how the flap, caused by misperceptions about a major Japanese threat, changed the course of events. Also, that there is no reason why histories, like fictions, cannot be stories without ends. It is this open-endedness that lends this story a certain intriguing quirkiness, an almost fictional feel that is very suitable for a narrative history.

Apart from secondary sources, the book will use primary material in the form of Assembly debates, Corporation Council meeting records, government communiques, official letters, Gos etc. It will also draw on the papers left behind by British and Indian bureaucrats, memoirs of others, including Tamil writers, and newspaper archives. It will tell this story, as far as possible, through the eyes of people, as opposed to being a dry narration of events.

Personal Note

The reasons are partly objective and subjective. To begin with the former, this is an unusual history of an invasion that never happened, but one that had a great impact on other historical events. At another, it is about a period that has been largely overlooked, falling as it did between two historical stools. One of them being, the great, and arguably excessive, focus of British historians on the War



in Europe. And the other being the preoccupation of Indian historians with the nationalist movement, which took a significant turn at the same time with the arrival of the Cripps Mission and, a little later, with Mahatma Gandhi's "Quit India" call.

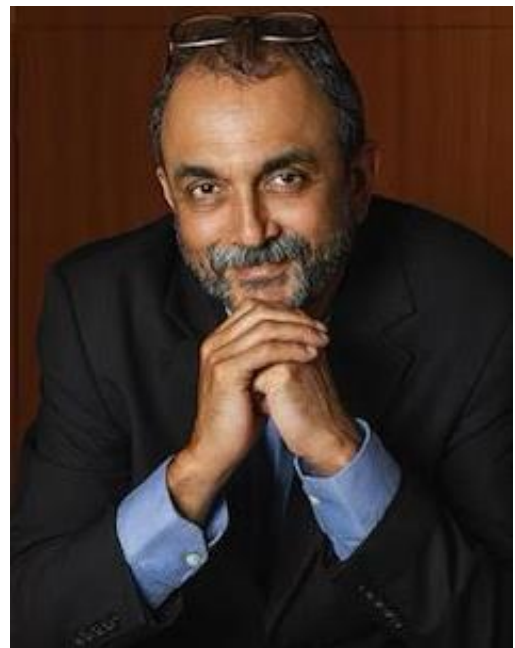
At a personal level, I live in Madras, a city my parents grew up in. Both of them were affected by the threat of a Japanese evacuation, having been asked to evacuate, and I have heard those stories ever since I was a child. A panicky colonial administration had advised all 'non-essential' persons to leave the city, leaving it almost an empty shell. A large part of the administration, including the Secretariat and the High Court, moved inland to other places in the Madras Presidency. And 'dangerous' zoo animals were shot dead on the eve of the expected Japanese attack to prevent them being turned loose from their enclosures by Japanese bombs. As the Commissioner of the Madras Corporation quipped, it was a time when: "Everybody seemed to have lost their head."

About the Author

Mukund Padmanabhan is the former editor of *The Hindu*, one of India's largest and most respected newspapers. He was appointed to the post in 2016 after having been Editor of the business daily, *The Hindu Business Line*, a sister publication from the same group. As a journalist, he has reported widely from a number of countries, writing on legal and political affairs as well as literature and the arts.

He is currently a Visiting Professor of Practice at the newly-established Krea University, where he teaches Philosophy and related disciplines. Mukund is an M-Phil in Philosophy and started his career as a Lecturer in a college in Delhi University, before switching to journalism. Between 2007 and 2013, he was an adjunct faculty in the Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines, where he taught law and advanced writing to post-graduate students.

He is the Chairman of the World Editors Forum (South Asia chapter) of the World Association of Newspapers. And he is on the Board of Trustees of some organisations such as the Independent and Public-Spirited Media Foundation (which funds independent journalism in India), the CPB Foundation (which runs the international photo biennale in the city), and his old school (the Blue Mountain School, Ooty).





THE TRANQUIL STORM

by

Sedona Jamieson

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*Life whispered to me, the warrior, 'you cannot endure the storm.' I turned and said back 'I am the storm.'
The journey of a mentally ill teenager growing from surviving to thriving, muddling her way through this complicated
thing we call life.*



My name is Sedona, and I am 20 from Hampshire. Growing up, I had an idyllic childhood, perfect according to most onlookers. Throughout my teenage years however, I have struggled severely with mental illness. I have been sectioned a countless number of times, struggling with things such as anorexia, trauma, and personality disorders, which have resulted in me being constantly in and out of hospital. From the first time I was sectioned I started writing, thinking and hoping that one day it would be a part of a book recounting my experiences. I have been inspired to write this book from all the suffering I have been through, in order to take others through my journey, let them learn more about what the system is like, and expose a topic which is so frequently stigmatised. I hope this book can help at least one person – I know that if something similar had been around at the beginning of my struggles, my experiences would have been very different.

Overview

My book is a non-fiction recount of my mental health journey, as well as containing information about various illnesses and treatments, and accounts on what it has been like supporting me from friends and family members. I have always enjoyed writing, so essentially this book is a place for me to bring it all together into one place, in a way that is both beneficial for myself and other people.

I have collaborated pieces of creative writing, poetry, and newspaper articles that I have written from around 2017 until now. When I first became unwell with mental illnesses, I was desperate to find books written by those who have suffered with their mental health, what it was like, and how they came through it. There are a few out there, but none that explore comorbid diagnoses, and none—I think—that truly expose the harsh reality of what life being mentally unwell can be like. So,



I set about writing one myself. Ever since my first admission to hospital, I have ensured to record everything in writing in hopes of putting it together as a book someday. I am so thankful that I did that, because it has allowed me to use those pieces as the building blocks for ‘The Tranquil Storm.’ I used these accounts to uncover the underfunded mental health system in the UK, and around that did research on illnesses, treatment, and guidelines.

A book like mine is needed on the shelves of stores as I believe it will both educate, and aid those who are seeking support in times of either their own, or someone else’s struggles. I have read a lot of self-help books, and books about mental health, but they all seem to be quite specific to one diagnosis and, in my opinion, sugar coat what really goes on behind a person’s façade. My book covers multiple aspects of mental illness, from medication to being sectioned, and from diagnoses such as depression all the way through to disorders such as personality ones, as well as providing an honest well-rounded version of my experience with them. I believe the honesty that I provide, as well as the chapters I will include written by others, can help people feel less alone, and increase everyone’s understanding of mental illness.

Synopsis

My book is about mental health. Mainly, it follows my mental health story, and then also includes factual information about various illnesses and treatments. The first four parts are written by myself, and then in the fifth part I will include views of other people who have been a part of my journey. The main chunks of it are chapters about my story and specific mental illnesses, explaining what they are, and then in between these chapters I include creative pieces of writing, poems, and newspaper articles, that I’ve written over the years all about mental health. I then talk about what being sectioned and a psychiatric inpatient is like, with dated diary entries from when I have been in hospital as well as general informative parts. One of the most important things about this book is that it includes views and opinions on what it’s like to live with someone with severe mental health difficulties from friends and family members. I have included this as I think having varying perspectives really helps capture the whole picture of mental illness, which is what I am trying to do with this book.

Target Readership

My book is aimed at anyone and everyone, but specifically young people learning how to manage their feelings and educate themselves on them, professionals in the field that want to understand things from a patient perspective, and anyone struggling with their mental health seeking guidance from someone who has been there themselves.

Media Platform

Instagram: 6k + followers

Tik Tok: 102,000 followers



USP

There are very few books on the market that cover everything that *The Tranquil Storm* explores. I'd say it's a combination of the self-help category and autobiographies about mental health stories. The majority of standard self-help books are primarily factual, and as someone who has trawled every psychological/mental health bookshelf out there, I find them very difficult to engage with. Whilst advice coming from professionals can be beneficial, I believe the best advice will always come from someone who has experienced the issues themselves.

My book follows my own personal journey through life, education, and the mental health system. I think something especially unique about my book is that most people who have been through the trauma and treatments I have been through, do not feel able to voice their opinions and stories. This book is not just about me, it is about many others who have also been dragged through the system and gotten beaten up along the way. Those who are so traumatised and unwell are often so stuck in their illness that it is difficult for them to write about it. The fact that I have been able to compile an entire book full of facts, advice, and personal experiences, I think really plugs the gap in the mental health literary market.

Press

- [Northampton Chronicle: Woman who finds Christmas triggering after childhood trauma speaks out about mental health from Northampton hospital](#)
- [BBC News: Former Southampton children's hospital patient launches fundraiser](#)
- [St. Andrews Healthcare \(Youtube\): Sedona's Story](#)

About the Author

My name is Sedona Jamieson, and I was born in London in 2001. I am from a big and bubbly family of six people and six cats, and we currently live in the middle of the countryside in Hampshire. I was always very academic, going to a grammar school and getting straight A*s at GCSE. I have always been very sporty as well, competing internationally when living in Dubai, and spending my time doing sailing, football, tennis, netball, swimming, hockey, basketball and athletics. I lived what some may seem as a 'perfect' life for a long time. But at the age of around fourteen it all came crashing down and my mental health took a turn for the worst. Since then I have been in and out of hospital, encountering paramedics, police, doctors, nurses, and places I never even knew existed. It made myself and my family realise how little information there is out there about severe mental illness, so we have had to muddle our way through ourselves.

I love studying still, and it helps keep my busy mind on track. I have not been in an education setting for over two years, but I am self-taught my A levels in Biology, which I sat last summer. I'm taking each day as it comes with regard to what I want my future career to look like, but I would love to go to university and study a medical science as I am very interested in understanding the brain, how society's ideals have been created and what we can do as a species in order to adapt our



ways to cope better with the stress of life. I used to want to study medicine in order to help people, but I am now broadening my vision to the bigger picture, and rather than helping just a handful of people with their health, I want to be able to make a difference for everyone and incite change to the treatment and recognition of mental illness.

My ideal career would be being a mental health activist as I continue to stay well, by publishing my book, giving talks, working with animals/research, continuing to post on social media, and possibly even creating my own documentary. My current Instagram following is over 6k, and the reach of my posts usually exceeds that. On there I talk about, life, recovery, feminism and studying. Amazingly many of my followers look up to me massively and I frequently receive messages from people thanking me for doing what I do which is very rewarding.

My TikTok has a similar impact, but with a following of 102k. I have a YouTube channel as well but have not been able to post for a while. My last video was on study tips (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9MfAfKvxVHc>) and it has over 21k views, and the feedback I have had from people is incredible! So many people found it super helpful, and although it was uploaded two years ago now, I still get messages and comments on it. This gives me hope that future videos of mine, particularly mental health ones which I have been asked to do a lot, will be very popular.

Another way I help others is by founding Sedona's Care packages. This fundraiser was created by me in order to create and send care packages to paediatric wards across the country, where mental health patients are admitted. It has gone extremely well and has had lots of publicity from the press, including from the BBC.

I also write articles, some of which are in my book. One of them was published by 'The Mighty' website, on 'Why New Year with Anorexia is so Difficult,' and I have had many smaller magazines ask to use it.





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