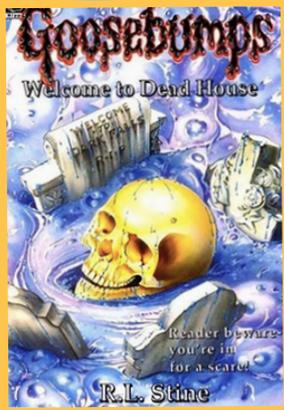
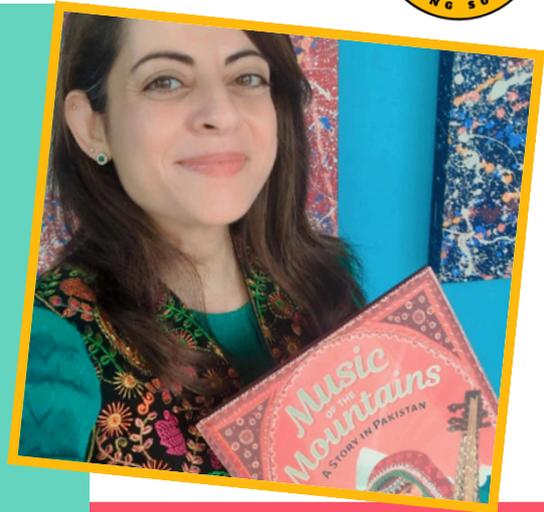




Sabrina Shah

When did you decide that you wanted to become an author?

I think as soon as I could string sentences together, I fell into the world of writing stories. I loved going to the library with my mum and getting lost in all the imaginary worlds books could conjure. I think by the time I was ten, I was making my own little books and then by the time I was a teenager I was writing fiction. Maybe not with the goal to get anything published because I simply didn't know it was possible. But more for my own enjoyment and thinking one day, maybe, something could come from this. It was in my twenties where I gave the reality of becoming an author some real thought and effort.



Did you read lots as a child - if you did, where did you mainly read? If you didn't, what was the reason?

It may be a bit of a boring answer but I did most of my reading in bed. That and the sofa because as a child I was mostly outdoors playing so didn't really carry my books around with me. I was just taking in the world (as inspiration I guess) and then relaxing with my books. I tried reading on school trips or in the car and would literally feel like I wanted to vomit within three minutes so that's a big no-no to this very day.

What was your favourite book as a child and why?

Oh my goodness this is hard. Not only to choose one but my to delve through my memory!

I think I didn't have a favourite book but a favourite series. I was obsessed on reading every single Goosebumps story by R. L. Stine. I would write all the lists from the different series and tick them off one by one. Maybe that's why I love reading and now writing the spooky stuff.

How does it feel to see your books in shops and being sold?

Seeing my book in the shops for the first time was like a flurry of butterflies in my stomach. It was surreal to know that kids and adults may pick it up and read-aloud my words, see what I have envisioned and meet the characters I had created. I love it, and I always go on the hunt in bookshops to see if its there - it's like hunting for treasure!



What is the best part about being an author?

I think when the idea just clicks. I love getting that inspiration and it starts to roll, the world building and when characters come to life. It's like a creative adrenaline rush. But also the feedback you get from readers, teachers and children who love the story, find their own meaning in it and can resonate with the theme or characters.

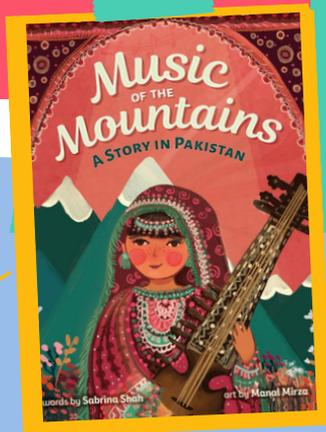
What are the 'not so fun bits' in being an author?

I think when you hit a writing wall. When the creativity sort of dries up and you feel a little blocked. Sometimes it's best to ride out the wave but sometimes I try and push through which sometimes doesn't result in your best writing. It's also hard not to compare yourself to other amazing authors and stories out there. We are each unique with our own voices and so it's a challenge to just believe in that sometimes.



Why do you think it is important for children to read?

I truly believe its food for the brain. It keeps it ticking and keeps it healthy like a muscle. It's important for kids to learn and understand the world around them, the people, the culture, the science, the wonder. It opens up the world for them and keeps that curiosity going.



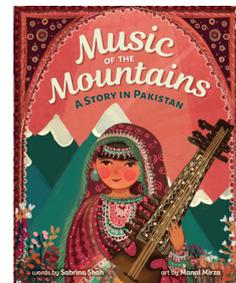
What is the inspiration for your books and writing?

It differs really. I'm always true to my culture, heritage and who I am. That comes through in my characters and some of the topics that are explored. But also I'm inspired by my childhood and hobbies, my love for everything a little weird and wonderful and that's why I'm drawn to writing things a little weird and wonderful!

Who gives you feedback on your drafts and how do you act on the feedback?

I have a wonderful set of critique partners who are my go-to. Not only do they know me and my writing but they know the craft so I trust their judgement and suggestions. We need thick skin in this author-business and I'm glad they have my back.

I take that feedback and revise, revise and revise until I can't tinker with the story anymore.



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Finally, if you could read for an hour, on your own, anywhere in the world - where would it be?

Oh that's a tough one for my outdoorsy soul. It would either be on the deck of a beach-side house overlooking the ocean listening to the waves, or deep in the forest in a cabin, sitting out on the deck overlooking a lake. There's something about water which is very grounding and the silence of the world around you which calms me and gets me into the reading zone.