

# Exclusive Q&A with author Alka Joshi



Author Advocate



Alka Joshi

"Through books, I've traveled to distant lands, met people who speak different languages, and celebrated lives different from my own. It's my heart's desire for every child in this world to be able to do that. Through Room to Read, we're working to help millions of people broaden their horizons."

This month, we connected with Room to Read Author Advocate Alka Joshi about her novel "The Henna Artist" - the gripping story of how one woman in India builds the life she wants - and her life as a writer and reader.

Born in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India, Alka has lived in the U.S. since the age of nine. She graduated from Stanford University and worked in the fields of advertising and PR before starting her own marketing consultancy. In 2011, she obtained her MFA in Creative Writing from the California College of Arts in San Francisco, California.

A New York Times bestseller, *The Henna Artist* is her first novel and is in series development with Miramax TV. Alka shares her writing and publishing process on her YouTube channel.

**Q: What would you like readers to take away from your book "The Henna Artist"?**

A: I hope readers note that while each female character has carved a space for herself within the limited existence she is allowed, she deserves—as all women do—to make the major life decisions that determine her destiny: marriage, career, family.

**Q: How have books helped expand your view of the world?**

A: I didn't always know how to put into words what I was thinking or feeling. Books have shown me how to do that in such a way that I can make sense of my life's experiences to help others on their journey.

**Q: In celebrating International Day of the Girl on October 11, we reflected on Room to Read's work to help girls develop crucial life skills. Can you reflect on a life skill that has helped you chart your own path?**

A: When life gives you lemons, pivot. Whenever I've been faced with a roadblock—physical, emotional or mental—I've persisted in pursuit of my goal, never losing sight of it. Often, that didn't involve removing the obstacle, merely finding a creative path around it.

**Q: What is one thing that's essential for your writing practice?**

A: Peace and quiet. I need to empty my environment of distractions in order to hear my characters move in their world, think their thoughts, feel their emotions.

**Q: What are you looking forward to next as an author?**

A: I'm working on final edits to the sequel, which will be released in July, 2021. Then it's off to France to research book #3 in the trilogy. And, because I always look forward to learning something new, I'll be helping adapt *The Henna Artist* into an episodic series for Miramax TV!

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