

About a little girl and a mysterious book

Srishti Paliwal

The booklet titled *Suraya's Gift: The Story Catcher Children* tells the story about a magical book that falls into a little girl's hands. It is dark purple in colour and is inscribed with gold lettering in a language that nine-year old Suraya doesn't understand. Sounds like a quaint, dusty book from the Hogwarts library which was delivered to her chimney by an owl, no? Except that it isn't.

Referred to as the 'story catcher', the book can make stories come true. All one has to do is write in its yellowed blank pages.

Suraya, who has a habit of scribbling stories behind her school notebooks, is thrilled to receive this special present. She writes to her heart's content and watches reality take interesting turns in tandem with her stories. Her hair turns red and her best friend finds a new baby sister. Suraya feels on top of the world because she can now make good things happen to people and herself. But something terrible happens and Suraya's world turns topsy-turvy.

Author Malavika Nataraj ensures that her readers never get bored. Her narra-



TITLE: *Suraya's Gift: The Story Catcher Children*

AUTHOR: Malavika Nataraj

PRICE: ₹199

PUBLISHER: Puffin Books

tive is simple yet thrilling. At the turn of every page, one wants to know what little Suraya would write next and if it would come true. Full-page illustrations run beside the story that make you picture Suraya with her mystery book, her imagination running wild!

Besides an interesting plot, Nataraj offers readers a zany theory about how stories are made and where books come from. Each story that is written in the *Story Catcher* becomes a part of an ancient invisible spider web of stories, and this web keeps spreading with every story written by a child. The web covers the smallest villages to the largest countries and whenever anyone comes in contact with it, the ancient stories flow into their heads, from their heads to their fingertips and from their fingertips on to paper — and that is how books are made! The book's basic premise then

is that all the stories that you read today or any other day were written by a child in some corner of the world!

Wonder where the Nobel laureates and the winners of the Man Booker prize get their stories from!