

Bringing back the magic of ink

Malavika Nataraj says that her book, *Suraya's Gift* will get back children to read — a lost love in recent times

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In today's time, with the rise of e-readers and social media, creative writing is a dying hobby. With *Suraya's Gift* that releases this week, writer Malavika Nataraj is trying to get children interested in reading, as well as doing their own creative writing. The author has an impressive record spanning two decades of writing feature articles, freelancing and writing for magazines under her belt. She

was also awarded for her short story 'Waiting' at the Wimbledon Book Fest (UK) in 2008. She is currently a full-time writer whose work can be seen on her website www.inkypencil.com, and is also in the process of qualifying to become a Japanese-English translator. With this vast array of achievements, a book seems like the obvious next step.

The book is about a little girl, Suraya, who loves to create little stories, and receives a special notebook as a gift. When she starts writing in it, her adventures begin. Talking about what inspired her to write the book, she said, "As a child, I was extremely imaginative and I loved to write — very much like Suraya. I absorbed a lot from the environment around me and I think that is

where my inspiration comes from. I wanted to write a story I could read to my daughters and that is when the book was born."

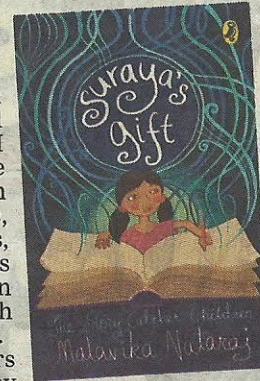


Malavika Nataraj

Writing a children's book is definitely not child's play but it seemed almost effortless for Malavika. "I didn't set out to write a children's book, but as the story kept growing and evolving, it just happened. I had to keep in mind not to colour the book with an adult's perception since the story is told from a child's point of

view," she smiles. Question her on her writing process and she responds, "It took me about a week to write the story excluding the editing time. Once I get an idea for a story, I just sit and keep writing. Since I freelance, I have time to write in between assignments. Kids, adults, boys and girls, everyone can enjoy this book. Some adults even appreciated the depth of the story," she adds.

What can readers expect to take away from the book? "My book — and the way we used to as kids."



the whole series I am planning, called 'The Story Catcher Children' — is about kids who love to write. With this, I want to get kids interested in creative writing again. And not the kind of writing you do on a device, but armed simply with a pencil, a sheet of paper and lots of imagination. Also, there is so much negativity in the world today that I'd love for kids to start believing in magic again.