

Usborne Acquire Exciting New British Indian Voice in Children's Comic Fiction

Shortlisted for the Asian Writer Short Story Prize in 2017 and a finalist in the Undiscovered Voices Anthology in 2018, Serena Patel is already stirring up the publishing world with her vibrant characters. Usborne are therefore thrilled to announce the acquisition of Serena's middle-grade fiction series, *Anisha Mistry*, won in a four-way auction for three books. The UK and Commonwealth (excl. Canada) rights were acquired by Editorial Fiction Director Rebecca Hill from Kate Shaw at the Viney Shaw Agency. The books will be edited by Commissioning Fiction Editor Stephanie King, who is also a volunteer for Megaphone – a writer development scheme giving support to BAME (Black, Asian or other Minority Ethnic) writers as they write their first novel for children or teenagers. The first two books in the *Anisha Mistry* series, *Bridesmaid Detective* will publish in 2019, followed by a third in 2020.

Anisha Mistry is having a bad day. All she wants is some peace and quiet to read her book about the universe, but the universe has other ideas. Tomorrow is her Aunty Bindi's wedding, Anisha is a bridesmaid, and Aunty is on the verge of a mega meltdown. Just when Anisha thinks things can't get any worse, a ransom note is pushed through the letterbox. Uncle Tony – Bindi's husband-to-be – has been kidnapped and will only be released IF THE WEDDING IS CALLED OFF! Now it's up to Anisha and her best friend Milo to rescue Uncle Tony...but solving a mystery of this magnitude is not easy when all the suspects are your family. With the help of an iPad, a kitten-loving chauffeur and her brilliant powers of deduction, can Anisha Mistry, bridesmaid detective, find Uncle Tony in time to save the Indian Wedding of the year?

Fresh, fun and utterly fabulous, *Anisha Mistry* is a brilliant new best friend for 8+ readers. She'll surprise and delight with her super-scientific brain, her top-secret sleuthing skills, her huge, hilarious family, and her determination to save the day.

Rebecca Hill, Editorial Fiction Director

"With a true gift for well-observed situational comedy, we all knew immediately that we had to publish this brilliant, laugh-out-loud series by Serena Patel. It is particularly timely that we are able to announce this in the week that the CLPE Reflecting Realities survey concluded that only 1% of children's books have BAME main characters, and that only one children's book published in 2017 featuring a BAME character was defined as comedy. It is, of course, hugely important for every child to see themselves reflected in the books they read, and we hope Serena Patel's irrepressible and irresistible heroine, Anisha Mistry, is just part of the change which is so desperately needed within the publishing industry."

Serena Patel, Author

"I wanted to write a story that I would have loved to have read as a child: a story about a girl who feels like she doesn't fit in with her family or at school. I wanted to have her realise that, actually, her family really does need her: she doesn't have to hide in the background; she can be the heroine and save the day. I feel very lucky that Anisha Mistry is being published by Usborne and hugely excited to see this, my very first novel, making its way out into the world and into the hands of children."

Usborne is the UK's leading specialist children's book publisher: an independent, family business which creates engaging, innovative, accessible books for children of all ages. Usborne books are written to appeal directly to children, and are there for every age and stage from newborn baby to young adult. Children can grow with Usborne books.

Stephanie King, Commissioning Fiction Editor

“Anisha Mistry has everything I look for in a story, a character, and in a voice. Neesh leaps off the page, a bright, quirky, vivacious narrator, whose lovable, laugh-out-loud British Indian family will leave readers longing to join the fun. Serena’s writing bursts with sparky playfulness, warmth radiates from every page; she is a total breath of fresh air. As a mixed race British Asian, who grew up longing to see myself in the books I loved reading, I am thrilled to be part of the necessary and urgent shake-up needed in publishing to ensure the stories we tell reflect our wonderfully multicultural society – and I can’t wait to introduce young readers everywhere to the irrepressible Mistry family, and the phenomenally talented Serena Patel.”

Kate Shaw, Agent

“Anisha Mistry: Bridesmaid Detective is a funny, feel-good, madcap family-based children’s adventure - introducing calm, chemist-in-waiting Anisha and her best friend, animal-loving Milo. This first book in a delicious new series opens on the eve of Anisha’s aunty’s wedding: the groom has been kidnapped and Anisha and Milo decide to solve the mystery themselves. Their adventures take in lobsters, evil twins, kittens and a theme park as they race against the clock. Young readers are going to love the humour, warmth and thrills of this gorgeous story; but most of all, I can’t wait for them to take Neesh’s large, loud, embarrassing and lovable British Asian family into their hearts.”

Serena Patel is a part-time law firm training co-ordinator, part-time fixer and finder of all things in the house and mum of two. She was shortlisted for the Asian Writer Short Story Prize in 2017 and was a finalist in the Undiscovered Voices Anthology in 2018. She is also a member of the Golden Egg Academy and SCWBI.

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