

## MAYURA MISRA HAS A LIST OF BOOKS TO CURL UP WITH AS WE TRANSITION FROM SUMMER TO RAINY DAYS

**T**he Indian summer is keeping us indoors. Why not beat the heat from the comfort of your couch? Whether you are at the beach or taking a break in the comfort of your hotel, these stories of compassion, resilience, and friendship are sure to regale you till the last page this summer.

### THE WHISPERING MOUNTAINS: MARVELLOUS FOLKTALES FROM THE HIMALAYAS BY NAMITA GOKHALE AND MALASHRI LAL, ILLUSTRATED BY DENNIS LAISHRAM

Once upon a time... The stories in this collection have travelled down from misty peaks and verdant valleys of the Himalayas, whispered from generation to generation in different forms and voices.

Folktales belong to the folk who carry them in memory, rediscovering them with each memory.

The 30 folktales in this collection carry a child's imagination yet hold the wisdom of the crone, the cunning of the trickster, the fluidity of the shapeshifter, and the natural instincts of animals.

Whether you are a young reader who loves folktales or an older one who loves reading bedtime stories to the younger generation, this hardback with gilded edges is a must-have on your shelf.

A journey to the Himalayas awaits!

**Recommended reading:** 10 years and above.

### HISTORY UNPACKED — THE WHY, WHEN AND WHAT OF ANCIENT INDIA BY SAISUDHA ACHARYA, ILLUSTRATED BY ROHIT BHASI

As the title suggests, the book truly unpacks ancient Indian history and tells you what we know about the names, places, events and motives (as far as we can figure out).

This book is about Indian

history, especially prehistoric and ancient India, from around 10,000 BCE to 650 CE.

Often, textbooks make it sound as if we know for certain, but as we read this book, we know that it may be wise to doubt anyone who claims that there is only one definite story of our past.

In ancient history, most of the evidence comes from those in power.

Therefore, the stories of ordinary people such as farmers, women, and other groups often get left out.

From the Stone Age to the Golden Age, India's past is full of interesting people, mad antics, and unbelievable connections.

From Central Asia to Kanyakumari and Ancient Rome to Southeast Asia,

ancient India was linked with the world in ways you wouldn't expect!

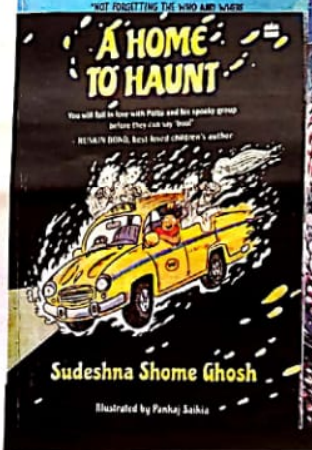
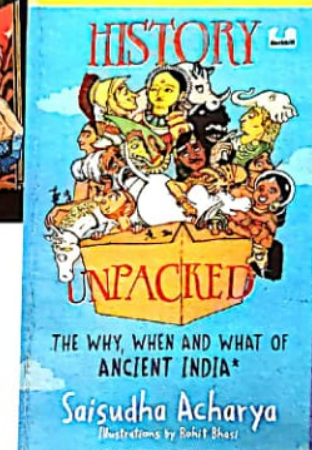
The author has tried rather ambitiously to squeeze thousands of years and the stories of millions of lives from the Indian subcontinent into 10 neat little chapters.

With whimsical illustrations, this book is a must-read for history buffs and also for those who yawn when forced to memorise the endless dates and parades of kings and battles.

**Recommended reading:** 10 years and above

### A HOME TO HAUNT BY SUDESHNA SHOME GHOSH, ILLUSTRATED BY PANKAJ SAIKIA

This spooky book is the story of Palash Ranjan Sen aka Poltu, who is eight and a half years old, and his *mama*, who set off for Jalpaiguri by Darjeeling mail for a month's vacation during Durga Puja, without his mother to meet his cousins Bulti and Pencha. This was Poltu's first trip without



his Ma, and he was ready to lead the life of an adventurer!

Poltu loves reading comics, *Percy Jackson* and *Feluda: Gorosthane Sabdhan* was his favourite, and is carrying a Ludo set and chocolate gems with him. When the train enters the station, he realises that the train is full of ghosts! Poltu becomes the Junior Ghost Traffic Warden to the Gems-eating *bhoots*.

His job was to find a home for the homeless *bhoots*, whose homes had been destroyed by the cutting of trees and the construction of new buildings. The story is filled with rollicking adventure till the last page.

Poltu meets talking taxis, has a feast in a graveyard, learns new rules of cricket, and discovers the hidden sights of his familiar city with his spooky group.

The story is very relatable and realistic to children who grew up in Calcutta. "*Cholun cholun, aste aste egiye jaan,*"



says the electronic voice in the taxi! And places mentioned in the story are Gariahat, BBD Bag, Belgharia, Esplanade, Moulali, and Chowringhee. **Recommended reading:** Eight years and above

### IF ELEPHANTS COULD TALK: A NOVEL IN VERSE BY RANJEETA RAAM, ILLUSTRATED BY DAMINI GUPTA

Twelve-year-old Meenakshi hasn't spoken a word since her Amma passed away about six months ago.

Teased and troubled at school, she finds her safe place in dance, where she can escape from her reality for a few hours.

One day, she meets the temple elephant, Ganeshan, and an unusual friendship forms between them.

But when the gentle Ganeshan is ill-treated, Meenakshi decides to speak up to save other elephants from a similar fate.

Heartfelt and at times heartbreaking, this is the tale of a girl who finds the strength to speak out against one cruel tradition by drawing strength from the most vital teaching of her tradition: Non-violence.

This tender story will surely be loved for years to come by everyone. **Recommended reading:** 12 years and above

### SONG OF THE ASUNAM BY C.G. SALAMANDER, ILLUSTRATED BY RAJIV EIPE

This is a story of a boy named Vetri who lived in a sleepy South Indian village where man and monster stayed side-by-side. He was stranger than the strangest creatures of the wilderness.

When Vetri was eight, he found his grandmother's journal hidden away in her hut. It was filled with mythical monstrosities and notes on how to hunt them. Vetri was determined to be a better hunter than his grandmother.

Everyone in the village found Vetri weird, but he didn't care and practised his skills every day.

One day, a ferocious beast enters the village, with large wings, shimmering scales, and sharp talons. The beast destroys the houses, scaring cattle and sending everyone into a fear-fueled frenzy.

Vetri jogged towards the beast and pulled out his lyre and played the most beautiful melody that completely left the beast entranced.

The Asunam swayed and danced, and Vetri did as his grandmother's book instructed. And just like that, the beast fell to the ground.

Vetri now realises that the Asunam is defeated, and he decides to take the creature home.

Filled with adventure on every page, this graphic novel with entrancing art is sure to keep you rooting for Vetri the hunter as he guides the beast to his habitat across wild rivers and dangerous woods.

**Recommended reading:** 12 years and above

The writer is founder-owner, Storyteller Bookstore, Picnic Garden and Ballygunge



Mayura Misra