

The Petit Proust Questionnaire

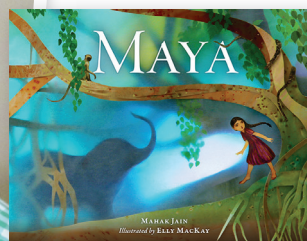
from Owlkids Books

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Meet author Mahak Jain

MAHAK JAIN is a writer and editor based in Toronto, Ontario. She is a graduate of the MFA in Creative Writing program at the University of Guelph. Her work has been published in *Room Magazine* and *The New Quarterly*. She was previously the managing editor at Owlkids and at Lobster Press. *Maya* is Mahak's first picture book. Visit her website at mahakjain.com and find her on Twitter as @kveenly.



Maya is about a girl who—with the help of her mother's telling of the legend of the banyan tree—discovers the power of stories to help overcome fear and grief. Rich art and language provide a palpable sense of place, making *Maya*'s world come alive on the page.

978-1-77147-100-8
\$18.95 CDN / \$16.95 US

When you were a kid, what was your favorite thing to do?

Running around and talking endlessly, so of course my family was delighted when I fell in love with reading books—silently.

What did you most dislike doing when you were a child?

I didn't like waking up in the morning or falling asleep at night. Not a great combination!

As a child, where did you dream of living?

Ireland! It always looked gorgeous in photographs, and I used to be a huge fan of the Irish singer Enya.

What did you think you were good at when you were a kid?

Singing. I thought I would be a singer someday, but now I'm tone deaf, so there you go.

When you were a kid in school, what did you look for in a friend?

Someone who was kind and who I could talk to for hours.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

Once I gave up on a singing career, I wanted to be a guidance counsellor, a teacher, a lawyer... it changed every minute.

What was your favorite book as a child?

The books in the Harry Potter series—they are still my favorite.

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What is your favorite pastime now?

Reading and cooking.

What do you find an absolute chore?

Waking up in the morning! Some things don't change.

If you could live anywhere, where would you go?

If I could live anywhere, I would still live in Toronto, which is where I am now. I love this city!

What is the one talent you wish you had?

Singing!

What makes a good friend?

Being caring, considerate, and kind.

If you weren't an author or illustrator, what job would you have?

Anything to do with books—an editor or a book reviewer.

What children's books have caught your attention lately?

The picture book *Oscar Lives Next Door* by Bonnie Farmer and illustrated by Marie Lafrance is gorgeous, both the text and art. From a few years back, *Seraphina* by Rachel Hartman, a novel about dragons living as humans.

If you had to have a motto, what would it be?

That's hard. I would have so many! For now, "Never give up and remain hopeful always."

