



# **Maya Running**

*Anjali Banerjee*

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Maya Mukherjee doesn't fit in. She was born in India and her parents moved to Canada when she was a baby. Now it's the 1970s, and she's a middle schooler in Manitoba, land of moose and snow. She wants to run on the tundra beneath the Northern Lights, make igloos or snow-angels, see John Travolta, and ride elephants through the Bengal jungle the way her great-grandfather did. Then her gorgeous cousin Pinky comes from India for a visit, bringing a statue of the god Ganesh, the Remover of Obstacles. Maya asks Ganesh to remove all obstacles to her dreams. Like most wishes, it backfires in hilarious and painful ways. Maya must journey across continents to restore the truth and find out who she is.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

## **Maya Running Details**

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Author : Anjali Banerjee

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## From Reader Review Maya Running for online ebook

### **Alicia says**

This is the sort of YA book I don't like much. Of course you all know I'm interested in themes of outsider-ness, so you'd think I'd like a book about a teen Indian girl in Canada in the 1970s, who's the only non-white kid in her class and is trying hard to fit in, balance her two worlds, etc. Unfortunately, this book had absolutely no subtlety, and when things suddenly take a turn for the mystical, I was rolling my eyes on just about every page. Way to throw anvils on heads, Ms. Bannerjee! It was like a badly written moralistic fairy tale. C.

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### **Coquille Fleur says**

Cute and fun, this book is especially poignant if you lived in the 1970's, especially. Benerjee does a great job of bringing the reader back to late '70s Canada, and the middle school years. Wow. Ganesh, the remover of obstacles, comes in to mix the whole book up with a fantasy wish scenario that takes Maya back to her family's roots in India. Sweet book.

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### **Anupama Sarkar says**

Maya Running was a surprise for me. With a teenage protagonist, struggling to find a foothold in a foreign country along with the usual traumas brought about by her age, I seriously expected nothing more than a continuous sob story, concentrating on plights of immigrants.

However, with a little magic by Lord Ganesha, the story actually turned out to be a fanciful entertaining read. For more info click here <http://scribblesofsoul.com/maya-runni...>

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### **Sara says**

Read this book aloud to my class as we studied Ancient India....enhanced by the fact that I've gotten 3 new students from India within the past two months! This is the story of Maya, a preteen Indian girl living in Canada who wants nothing more than to NOT be Indian. Quirky sense of humor. I love kids books!

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### **Wendi Lau says**

Maya explores her Bengali heritage and hates being the only Indian, possibly only non-white, in her Canadian town. Preteen angst about identity and family. I like Anjali Banerjee's other books better. This one was slow going at first.

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### **Donna says**

Maya Running is a sweet book of a teenage girl living Canada, having relocated from India before it truly imprints culturally on her. She looks different than other Manitoba teens and cringes when her mother packs samosas in her lunch. However, cold, icy Canada feels like home. Author Banerjee brings in a dazzling Indian cousin for contrast and that could have been enough story to explore. Then comes the plot line with the statue of Ganesh and her efforts to take Maya on a magical journey fall a little flat for me. She just did not need it to keep the book interesting. What is hardest for me with that plot diversion is there are still not enough books, particularly for teens, that reflect the multicultural world real teens live in. This book does that and even with its magical journey stumble, it is a lovely, funny book to experience.

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### **Donna says**

Maya Running is the story of 13 year old Maya. She is an Indian immigrant raised in Canada. Maya experiences the normal life difficulties that a maturing young girl does. She is concerned about her looks, she is falling in love and worries about her Mother's visual presence but yet invisible voice in the family. When Maya's cousin Pinky comes to visit from India she brings along her beauty, her talent for dancing the Kathak. Pinky instantly wins the admiration of Maya's friends, family and neighbors. She also wins the admiration of Maya's heartthrob Jamie. When Pinky arrived from Calcutta, India she also brought along Ganesh a gold statue which in Indian culture represents luck. Ganesh reveals himself to Maya and Maya finds herself feeding Ganesh the sweets that he so loves and convinces him to grant her a few wishes. Maya wishes for beauty, the love of Jamie, for her Mother to be 'normal' and for all obstacles be removed from her life. Ganesh warns her of the consequences of her wishes but upon further conversation grants Maya her wishes. For a while, all is going smoothly. Maya's world is perfect (at least it seems so), but then she tires of this perfect world and wants things back the way they were. The problem is that Pinky, after having her status reduced, has returned to India with Ganesh in tow. Thus Maya spends her summer on a journey to Calcutta, running all over the countryside in search of Pinky and Ganesh. The ending was very predictable.....Maya finds Pinky and Ganesh. Ganesh makes everything like it was and everyone lives happily ever after.

I would rate this book 2 stars. To me it was boring and full of so much disbelief. I find it hard to think that students would be interested in this story. First because of the setting. Second because of the time period....1970 versus today. So much has changed in India and in Canada. So much has changed in the way tweens grow-up and what interests them. I was also bothered by the text. Any book that uses the N word to refer to people of color is disturbing to me. The book was written in 2005....not 1905. Not a good read.

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### **Alisa says**

this is a nice story of a teenage Indian-Canadian living in Manitoba. She wishes for things to be different and when they are, she realizes she doesn't really want them that way.

i liked that it was set in canada and there are interesting things about india, hindu religion and about growing up, but it's not great.

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## **Book Concierge says**

Mayasri Mukherjee is the only “brown” kid in her Manitoba school. She’s skinny, wears braces, has to wear her hair in childish ponytails, and has two pimples. Her parents insist that she take ballet and piano lessons, and forbid any sleepovers on school nights. Although born in India, she was an infant when her parents immigrated to Canada, and she doesn’t even speak Bengali. She hates being different: *I am Nowhere Girl in my Nowhere Land, between Canada and India*. When her cousin Pinky arrives from India for a visit, Maya is first awed by her confidence and poise, and then jealous of the attention paid to Pinky for her exotic differences. Then, just when Jamie Klassen has started to pay attention to her, she learns that her parents are contemplating a move to California. Maya borrows Pinky’s statue of Ganesh, a family heirloom, to pray that her troubles will be over.

Be careful what you wish for.

I read children’s and YA books because I have nieces and a nephew for whom I buy books. I had high hopes for this children’s book (ages 10+). I expected some valuable lessons on being true to yourself, the meaning of true friendship, the importance of family, and the stumbles we all suffer on our road from childhood to adolescence and adulthood. Banerjee does include such lessons, but they are delivered in a rather heavy-handed way. Midway through the book, the very realistic story takes on a fantasy element that seemed forced. A skilled writer can incorporate magical realism or fantasy in such a way that it is totally believable and furthers the story. Not the case in this book. The second half of the book just stretches credulity too far and left me completely dissatisfied. I can’t imagine that any of the children I know would buy into it either.

I feel that people reading this review might want more detail on what I felt was wrong with the book ...  
(view spoiler)

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## **Bookfanatic says**

A wonderful story of a young Canadian girl of Indian descent growing up in a small town in Manitoba during the 1970s. It's a classic fish out of water story but with humor and realism. When the heroine's beautiful Indian cousin comes to visit the story really becomes interesting. It's a quick easy read and a fresh take on what it's like to be a middleschooler

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## **Michele Torrey says**

Indian-born Maya Mukherjee attends middle school in a small town in Manitoba. Besides struggling with the usual issues of adolescence (including pimples and braces), Maya straddles the line between the two cultures, with neither foot firmly planted in either one. Maya yearns to belong. Maya wants to be beautiful and hip, and have the coolest boy in the school go gaga after her. One day, when Maya prays to Ganesh, the all-knowing Granter of Wishes, her wishes come true! But Maya soon learns the hard way (and funny way) that sometimes what she wishes for isn't always what she wants. *MAYA RUNNING* is a sweetly written, heart-warming coming-of-age story in which a young girl learns what is truly important, and where it is that she

belongs. (Ages 10+)

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### **Julie Weston says**

Maya Running is a charming tale about a young East Indian girl who lives in Canada. Because she is somewhat different from her classmates, she is subject to name-calling and bullying. However, when she learns her parents may be moving to California, she is desperate to stay. Her visiting cousin brings a small Ganesh statuette, upon which Maya wishes for a change in her circumstances. The rest of the story is proof positive of the old saying, "Be careful what you wish for!" This is a delightful story. I learned quite a bit about Indian culture, and now I am holding it for my two granddaughters. They will love it as well.

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### **carrietracy says**

Maya's middle school existence is all mixed up. She can't quite figure out how to fit in. She doesn't feel Indian enough when she's with around other Indians, but at her school in a small Canadian town, she certainly doesn't feel Canadian enough. While one boy at school is hurling racist slurs at her (warning: the n-word is in this book repeatedly), another boy (Maya's crush) seems to like her in part because she is exotic. When Maya's cousin Pinky arrives from India, Maya feels even more threatened. Pinky is gorgeous and self-possessed, she stands up to the bully and tantalizes Maya's crush. Lost and desperate, Maya begs help from the Hindu elephant god, Ganesh.

And that is when the story gets fun. The middle school angst was all right, but when Maya wakes up in the middle of the night to find the small golden statue of Ganesh munching away at jelly bellies, we are taken on a flight of fantasy. Ganesh cheerfully grants Maya's wishes, and she'll soon find out whether having your dreams come true is something you actually want.

The book is nearly half regular middle school and half fantasy. While the first part is fine, the candy gobbling elephant is a delight and I tore through the rest of the book. There is a great deal of Indian vocabulary which may slow down readers unfamiliar with the culture. My recommendation of teen can be taken with grain of salt, many middle schoolers will enjoy this provided you're okay with the content. Also, the book is set in the 1970s which may make it more difficult for some readers who are unfamiliar with pop culture references from the time period.

Full review including all potentially concerning content is available at my blog: <http://bit.ly/1LDC65R>

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### **Carissa says**

i read this book, looking for a multicultural title to add to favoreads. i dunno.... it was ok, i guess. first of all, it takes place in canada in the late 70's or early 80's (everyone is obsessed with feathering their hair and bonne bell lip gloss and the music is all from that era) which means that i can relate to it sort of ok, but i don't know if today's teens would really get into it. (are the 70's long ago enough that this could be considered a "period piece"?) plus, it's all going along fine and dandy when about 3/4 of the way through the book, bam! it takes a turn for fantasy. maya prays to a statue of ganesh and in the middle of the night the statue begins to talk to her (and eat the candy sacrifice she's left for him) and begins to grant all of her

wishes— sorta. of course, maya learns that you have to be careful what you wish for and ends up flying with her father to india to set things straight. the ending was really way out there and since i was feeling kind of iffy about the book already, i'll give it a solid 'eh.'

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### **Sarah says**

Read this for a Children's Literature class and absolutely loved it! So sad that it's out of print because it is incredibly relevant to today's school demographics. There are so many children who would love this and relate to it. If you ever get your hands on a copy, read it, love it and pass it on to a young person!

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