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I am more of a storyteller than a writer: Ashwin Sanghi

Meghna Mukherjee, TNN | Oct 8, 2012, 02.08PM IST

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Author *Ashwin Sanghi* tells us why he took to writing...



I view myself as a storyteller more than a writer: Ashwin Sanghi

A businessman by profession, why did you take to writing novels?

In the slightly modified words of Descartes: I write, therefore I am. I work in a business environment forty hours a week and writing is what I do to unwind. It allows me to transport myself to a happy place where I can indulge my hopes, beliefs, aspirations and fantasies. It also allows me to live and breathe a topic for eighteen months while I'm researching and writing. A visit to Srinagar brought me to a tomb

called Rozabal in 2004. I was fascinated with the idea that the person buried there could be Jesus Christ himself. I spent the next year researching everything that I could lay hands on. At the end of that year I had multiple theories. I put them together and a further two years later I had a novel.

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Please describe yourself as a writer.

I am not really a writer. Writing is incidental to my primary objective, which is spinning a good yarn. I view myself as a storyteller more than a writer. The story—and hence the extensive research that goes into each one of my books—is much more important than the words that I use to narrate it.

Why do you choose to write a suspense/thriller?

I was brought up on a diet of commercial fiction and thrillers for most of my growing years: [Jeffrey Archer](#), [Sidney Sheldon](#), [Robert Ludlum](#), [Frederick Forsyth](#), [Irving Wallace](#), [Jack Higgins](#), [Tom Clancy](#), [Ken Follett](#), and [Arthur Hailey](#). In the past couple of decades, [Dan Brown](#), [John Grisham](#), [Stieg Larsson](#), [Ian Rankin](#) and countless others were added to my list. What I love about most of these authors is that their books have an intrinsic page-turning capability—the reader is gripped by the narrative and is almost compelled to turn the page. That's the sort of fiction that I want to write.

Why does history play an integral part in your brand of fiction?

It is not history, theology or mythology that interest me. It is the fact that history, theology or mythology could have alternative interpretations or explanations. I try to connect the dots between the past and the present.

Tell us in a nutshell, what led you to write the Krishna Key?

After writing [Chanakya's Chant](#), I was looking for a story that I could sink my teeth into. At a friend's house, someone mentioned to me the fact that the prophesized appearance of the tenth avatar of Vishnu—[Kalki](#)—was very similar to the apocalyptic prophecies of the [Book of Revelation](#) in the Bible. That got my brain into overdrive. I spent a week reading the [Kalki](#)

Purana and there was no looking back. I have always been fascinated by the Mahabharata period. What excites me is not the mythology but the possibility that the epic may be based on historical truths. The Krishna Key is my quest to provide an entertaining read while attempting to nudge the Mahabharata and the character of Krishna from the mythology section of the library into the history section.

Among Indian writers, who inspires you the most?

My favourite Indian author is Vikram Chandra. Like me, he likes narrating stories rather than simply writing. My favourite Indian writers in the historical and mythological space are Amitav Ghosh, Devdutt Pattanaik, Amish Tripathi, Ramachandra Guha, Ashok Banker and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

What will you describe your writing style to be like?

I would imagine that anyone picking up a book written by me would expect a fast-paced story that requires minimal effort to turn the pages. The reader would also be looking for some out-of-the-ordinary revelations along the way. At the end of the day, I'm a writer who simply loves revealing stuff that is out-of-the-ordinary.



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