

COVER STORY

# LUCKY FOR ASHWIN SANGHI

To know the answer, you must read his 13 Steps series. Out with the latest book in the series, *13 Steps to Bloody Good Marks*, he is set to make life easier for students. Catch 13 exclusive excerpts from the book inside

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The Coach tells you why breastfeeding should no longer be a taboo while he busts a few myths about it here

More on Page 11



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The Coach will answer queries on life, education and career. (You can also send in your selfies and contest replies)



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**BOOK PLEASE**

When was the last time you sought the assistance of a self-help book?

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WHERE IS THE TIME?

Ashwin loves to read books on history, mythology, science and spirituality. He loves paranormal stuff too. He would love to read more genres, but time doesn't let him explore much

THE NUMBER

13

Is generally considered unlucky because of Friday the 13th and the 13 disciples

66

Ten years ago, I was a businessman who was a writer. Now I'm a writer who is a businessman. Most of my time is spent on research these days. The other time is spent with friends and family. Where is the time beyond that?

Ashwin Sanghi



THIRST FOR SCIENCE

Even though he has written thrillers, investigative stories and life hacks, there are a couple of genres that Ashwin would love to try his hand at. One would be science fiction



REACH OUT  
www.sanghi.in/

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ow often and to what extent have we observed versatility in authors? If there was a scale from 0 to 10 to measure versatility, I'd give Ashwin Sanghi, the author of the 2016-released *Sialkot Saga*, an 11. If you've read the book then you'd know why. A decade ago, we read *The Rozabal Line*, the fiction-thriller that had us imagine Jesus Christ settling down in India after surviving his crucifixion. He then went on to write *Chanakya's Chant* and *The Krishna Key* that have a narrative style similar to Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code* and *The Lost Symbol*, hailing him 'India's Dan Brown'. He even co-authored a couple of books in James Patterson's *Private* series. The fiction-thriller genre has been Sanghi's preferred choice for the past eleven years. But then last year, we saw a different side of Ashwin Sanghi — a life hack guru.

Now how does someone go from writing fiction to writing self-help books? I mean, they aren't even remotely similar! I had a lot of questions for Ashwin Sanghi and lucky for me, he was patient enough to sit down and answer all of them prior to the release of the third book in his *13 Steps* series, *13 Steps to Bloody Good Marks*. Excerpts:

life's good

Do you travel to the places that you write about for research?

A lot depends on whether or not I need to. *The Krishna Key* takes you to places like Dwaraka, Mathura and Vrindavan. I visited these places because despite having all the material, I needed to have a feel of the place. Sometimes, the places that I mention in the story do not exist today. For example, in *Chanakya's Chant*, I talk about ancient Pataliputra. There is no way I can go back and see what it looks like. It is a suburb of modern day Patna. In such cases, the only option is to depend on the notes and documents available as archaeological pieces of evidence. I think right now too much importance is given to visiting places. Take for example *Sialkot Saga* that is placed in Sialkot; I never went there for research.

How was it to co-author a book with an international author like James Patterson?

I co-authored with James Patterson twice in his *Private* Series. It is always a great experience working with James, because he is a master of suspense. He knows how to hold the suspense, amplify the thrill and create an atmosphere around a particular crime. To that extent, the partnership is yielding better and better results.

Speaking of mythological writing, the three names that usually come up are yours, Amish Tripathi's and Devdutt Pattanaik's. What makes your audience different?

There is bound to be an overlap between all the authors. Devdutt simplifies mythology. You can read it as a story. Amish on the hand retells the story. He gives you his take on it. As far as I'm concerned, I figure out if it's possible to write something linking history and mythology to a contemporary story. The mythological narrative is always a part of it. Let me tell you, I'm a huge fan of the works of both Amish and Devdutt. *Immortals of Meluha* was very fresh. Devdutt's retelling of *Ramayana* was very interesting, especially the illustrations.

Have your books ever posed threats to you?

I have always said that my work is fictional. Controversies arise only if you write mythology and history as non-fiction. As long as you approach a subject with respect, there will be no controversy.

13

SECRETS to scoring big

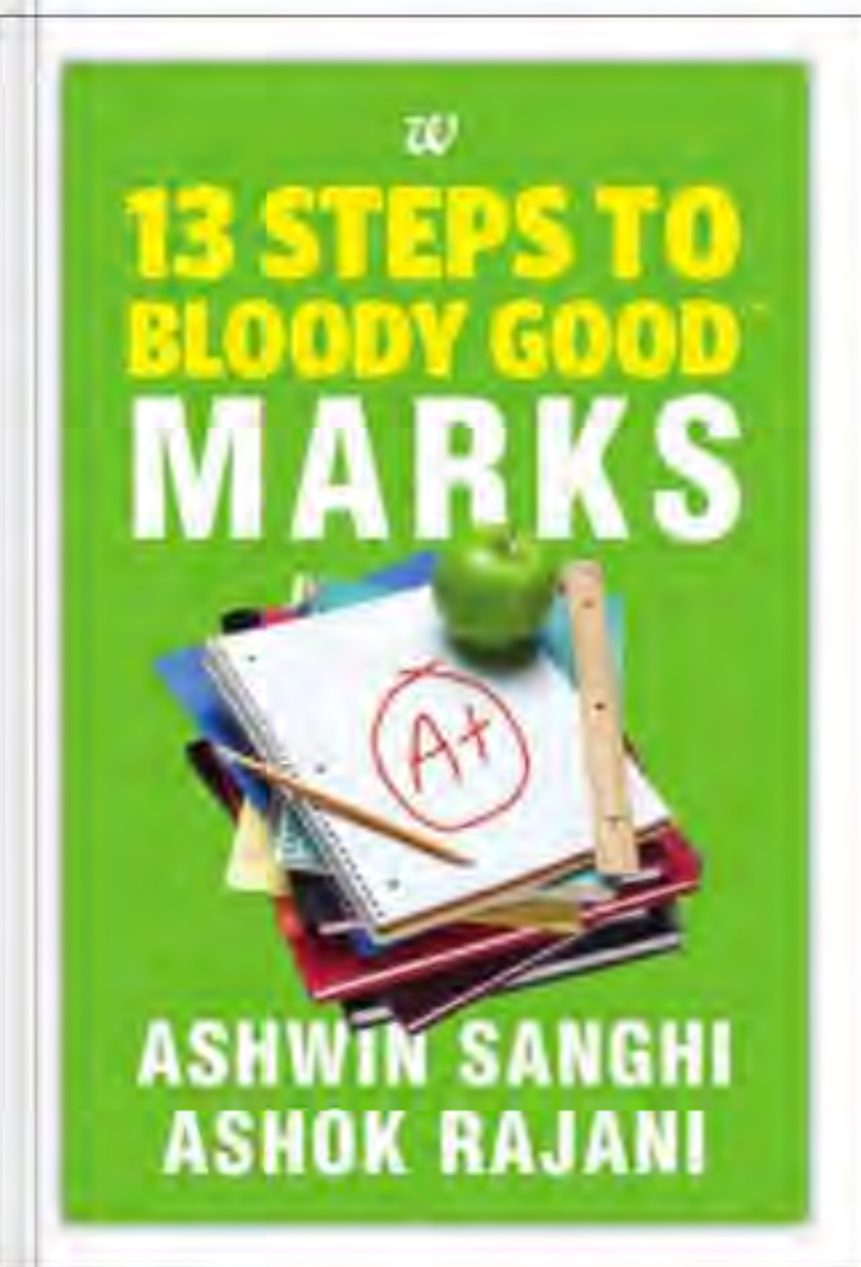
You know Ashwin Sanghi as the author of a few fiction-thrillers. Now, he is telling India's students how to get great marks in their exams. Parvathi Benu finds out more

HELPING YOU WITH LUCK, WEALTH AND OF COURSE, MARKS

Ashwin's third book in the *13 Steps* series is *13 Steps to Bloody Good Marks* that he co-authored with Ashok Rajani. The book is aimed at students and tells them the right way to study, ignoring all the pressures. It also indicates that there are many things to look at and marks are not the end of life

Even though number 13 is considered unlucky in many cultures, Ashwin wanted to change that perception through his series, making people realise that luck and all the other good things in life are dependent on many other factors

Ashok Rajani who co-authored the book with Ashwin has decades of experience in training bankers. After retiring from Andhra Bank, he taught himself the APA guidelines and edited engineering-related technical papers and PhD theses. He also taught classes on communication skills and management for BBA and MBA, freelance, while editing books for Indian, British and American authors



A FEW EXCERPTS

- 01 Most people think that working smart means a 'short cut'. That's not quite true. Working smart means working in a manner that is organized, efficient and effective. Period.
- 02 Some people are more alert in the early hours of the morning whereas others perform better in the late hours of the night. Only you know what works for you.
- 03 It's a good idea to be in the front row (or the first few rows) simply to prevent distractions by curtailing your field of vision to the blackboard and teacher.
- 04 When you make notes by hand, you are engaging your brain. This does not happen to the same extent with a keyboard or tablet.

05 Do not be afraid to ask about the nature of an upcoming test or the specific material that you should focus on. You will be surprised as to how many clues you can get from simply talking to your professor.

06 Think of your computer that slows down when multiple web pages and apps are open or running simultaneously. Quite often you may think that you are using your time effectively by texting or messaging while studying, but the truth is that you are guzzling RAM on low priority activities.

07 If you lie down on a couch (that you associate with watching television) or on your bed (that you associate with sleeping), how can you expect not to feel sleepy? Sit upright on a chair while reading.

08 It is important to be selective when highlighting because too much highlighting defeats its very purpose. If you are not allowed to make notes in the margins because the book in question are shared, you can use sticky notes.

09 When getting ready to sleep, review your summarized notes (for not more than five minutes) right before slipping into slumber. It is a well-established scientific fact that the brain strengthens new memories during sleep.

10 Remember the saying that a picture is worth a thousand words? It's literally true. If you think about it, you effortlessly remember scenes of a movie without cramming, right? In fact, using such diagrams in your answer sheet at exam time could get you a few extra marks plus refresh your memory.

11 Almost anything and everything you could want can be found on the net. Searching for an appropriate video that explains the material that you need to study is a good idea.

12 If you wish to excel in your studies and get excellent marks, you should change your orbit and move with studious classmates.

13 If your handwriting is poor, spend a little time in finding the right pen or pencil that really works for you. Then go back to first grade and fill up a few sheets of paper with basic alphabets until you are satisfied that your writing looks clean and legible.



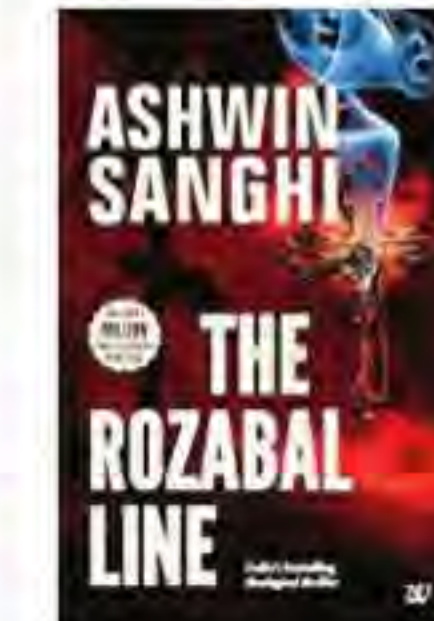
ANCIENT WISDOM  
Based on the principles and story of Chanakya, this thriller links ancient history to present day



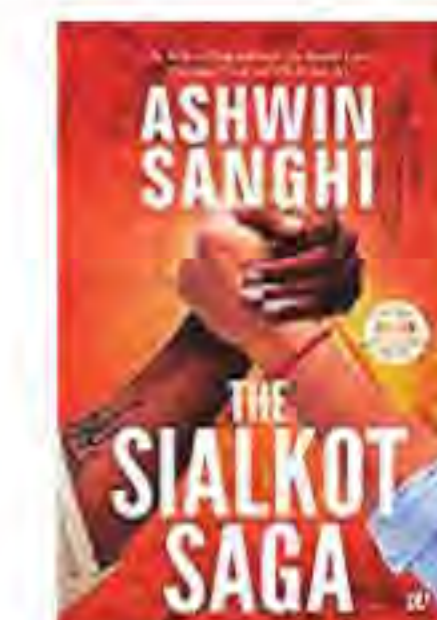
SEEKING TRUTH  
In this book, the investigator Jack Morgan rejoins his agency in New Delhi



UNLEASH THE SHERLOCK  
In this nail biting thriller, as Ashwin says, the page turns itself, solving a mystery



OH JESUS!  
The book suggests that Jesus might have survived crucifixion and might have lived in Kashmir



FROM FIGHTS TO HISTORY  
A fight between two businessmen leads them to uncover a hidden secret



MODERN DAY KRISHNA  
In this book, a poor boy in the modern day believes himself to be the final avatar of Krishna



UNMOVABLE SCHEDULE

Ashwin's day starts at 6 am. He's done with his writing by 10 am. By 12 pm, he goes to his office, where he spends four to five hours. From 7 to 10 pm, he spends his time on research

6

Ashwin has written six fiction-thrillers until now

3

The non-fiction count is just half compared to fiction



Ashwin Sanghi