

A Q&A with Smriti

What do you like best about being an author? Being able to go to work in my pyjamas.

Where is your favourite place to work? Richmond Library or at home, somewhere cosy.

What three things do you need every day before you pick up a pen / pencil? A comfortable spot. Absolute quiet. Coffee.

What are your five favourite things in the whole world? Try as I might I couldn't pick five, so here are seven, in no particular order: Iced buns with a cherry on the top. Listening to the same song over and over because I love it so much. Deer in the park. London at night. VERY spicy South Indian chicken curry. Staying up all night to finish a book. Adventures with my boys.

What are your hobbies? Cooking, reading, playing a collection of instruments (badly), film, theatre, Guardian crosswords, reading a bit more.

Have you any pets? To my children's perpetual misery, no. We kept five hives of bees when I was a child... but I'm not sure that counts.

Have you ever held an owl? Not yet, but I'd love to.

If you were the owl in this book, where would be your favourite place to roost? I'd roost in the tree right outside the children's bedroom, of course.

What was your favourite thing about the night when you were a child? Night time was – and still is – magical, mysterious and beautiful in a tingly, exciting way.