

Dear Bookseller,

I'm so thrilled to be able to share my debut YA fantasy with you. *THE IVORY KEY* is my take on the classic "princess must bring magic back to a world" story, but with a few twists: magic is a physical resource, and in order to get more, four dysfunctional royal siblings must piece together and follow ancient clues left behind by a secret society.

The book is part family drama and part treasure hunt, but the idea really began with how I conceptualized the magic in this world. Growing up, I most often saw magic as something passed down through long lineages, and those families with magical blood rarely ever looked like mine. I wanted to write about magic that anyone could learn to use—magic that was a skill, channeled through hard work and creativity, not inherent privilege. But just because everyone *should* have access to something, it doesn't always mean they actually do, and I wanted to touch on those topics too—like barriers to access and the role leaders play in making sure universal resources truly are universal.

I filled the book with a lot of what I love about India: ancient forts, regional food, traditional art forms, and extravagant celebrations. And while the book doesn't follow the cultural or mythological traditions of any one specific state, there is one exception. The temples are largely inspired by Dravidian architecture which originates in South India where my family is from.

It's my love letter to the complicated family dynamics of shows like *The Originals*, as well as the clever puzzles and ancient mysteries featured in movies like *Indiana Jones* and *National Treasure*. Those were my favorite kinds of stories growing up, and getting to write a similar one with Indian characters and a world inspired by my culture has been the most joyful experience. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I loved writing it.

Yours,  
Akshaya Raman