

Dear Reader,

I hope you enjoy *The Grand Plan to Fix Everything*, my story of true friends and fans, Bollywood dancing, letters flying back and forth, monkeys—and chocolate.

Kids are always asking me what's true in the book and what isn't. So here are the true things:

- The house that Dini and her family live in, in that small hill town in India. When I was just a baby we lived in that house in a real town in the very same Blue Mountains that are in the book. The house had a name: Sunny Villa. It had funny-looking shutters shaped like eyelashes.
- The best friends part. When I was a kid we moved a lot, so I was always leaving best friends behind. Some of them I managed to find again, years later. Others went their own ways. It was hard.
- The monkeys. They never got into a water tank anywhere I lived, but I did have a monkey snatch a snack out of my hand once. It was fast! I didn't stand a chance.
- The fan letter part. I wrote a fan letter to someone when I was a bit older than Dini. That someone was a famous British writer named P.G. Wodehouse. He wrote back to me. I have that letter still. In some ways, this book may be my reply to that letter.



And that's it. Everything else is made up. Dini couldn't find the town of Swapnagiri (Dream Mountain) on a map, for very good reason. I made up the whole town.

Priya, the girl who chirps like a bird? I made her up. The goatherd? The mailman? The baker who's afraid of the monkeys? Yup. Made them up too.

That's what you can do when you write fiction—carry whole towns around in your mind until they come spilling out onto the page. In fact, you can carry whole worlds.

Welcome to the wild and crazy world of Dini and Maddie and their friends and families. I hope you have fun racing through that world. I hope it makes you smile.

Love,

Uma