



Mitali Perkins

Mitali Perkins is serving on the USBBY Board of Directors for the 2011-2013 term.

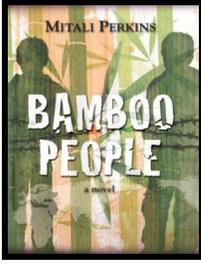
Have you ever wished for a “safe place between cultures to chat about books”? If your answer is yes, but you still haven’t found that space, then perhaps Mitali’s Fire Escape is a place to visit. The inviting and informative forum of this website is reflective of its creator and hostess, Mitali Perkins. A highly respected award-winning author of chapter books for young readers, Mitali Perkins is known for her books that invite engaged reading and response as they focus on strong female characters, teens seeking identity, social and political issues affecting culture, and family life. With a keen sense of her own Bengali culture evident in her writing, Mitali weaves the theme of being true to one’s own culture throughout each of her books—whether they are set in the past or present.

Born in Calcutta, India, Mitali had lived in many countries and cultures by the age of 11: India, Ghana, Cameroon, London, New York, Massachusetts and Mexico. Her family settled in California where she states on her website: “Books were my rock, my stability, my safe place as I navigated the border between California suburbia and the Bengali culture of my traditional home.” Mitali studied political science at Stanford and public policy at U.C. Berkeley, and after teaching at various grade levels as well as further travels, she now lives in Massachusetts.

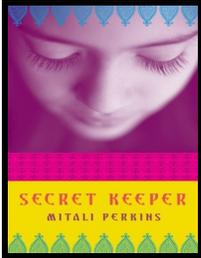
Her global perspective is evident in her writing, as is the struggle of moving between cultures. As evidenced in her ongoing work with schools and literacy organizations, she is a known advocate for helping others to better understand culture and develop a global perspective. Her belief in the power of story for young readers is a vehicle that takes her many places to interact with readers, educators, and literature advocates. Her personal commitment to the role of literature to inform and create understandings of oneself and of others is evident in her work.

As well as discovering more about Mitali through her website (address below), you might also visit with her through her blog. Besides ongoing conversations around her books and insights into her current involvements in schools or other literacy activities, Mitali provides a wealth of topics around book themes, particular people in the literature field, genre, social issue topics, and, of course, discussions of her most recent “finds” among the books of fellow writers. Additionally, she provides other sites to visit for further information. And, you might well come across Mitali on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or Goodreads!

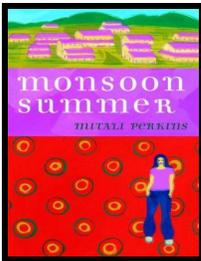
Selected Bibliography



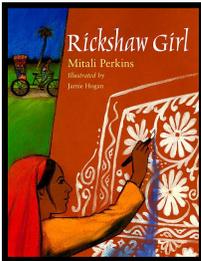
Bamboo People (2010). Violence, power, and prejudice set the tone for this coming of age story in modern Burma where, amidst political turmoil, two fifteen-year-old boys stand for opposing sides.



Secret Keeper (2009). Set in the 1970's, a young girl is caught in the conflict between traditional Indian values and modern feminist ideals when she must move to Calcutta to live with her grandmother while her father goes to America for work.



Monsoon Summer (2004). A fifteen-year-old girl leaves California to spend the summer in an Indian orphanage in her mother's home and discovers more about herself amidst the poverty of the town and the traditional Indian beauty there.



Rickshaw Girl (2007). A strong-willed, intelligent, and talented Bangladeshi girl defies traditional roles to earn money for her family in a time of need.

Links of Interest

- <http://www.mitaliperkins.com/>
Mitali's Fire Escape: Website
- <http://www.mitaliblog.com/>
Mitali's Fire Escape: Blog
- <http://blaine.org/sevenimpossiblethings/?p=671>
Seven Impossible Things Before Breakfast: Interview with Mitali Perkins

Mitali Perkins is a member of USBBY. Why not join her?



This featured author profile was prepared by Janelle Mathis, February 2013.