



Kimberly M. Wang

In conversation with **Sarvenaz Tash,**

author of

THE QUEEN OF OCEAN PARKWAY

You live in Brooklyn with your family. How is your neighborhood like Roya's?

My neighborhood is exactly like Roya's. I think the pandemic forced me to look around and realize that there were a million stories right under my nose, even if I couldn't travel anywhere. It also made me incredibly aware of the luxury of all the little neighborhood trips and excursions I took with my kids, particularly the F train ride to Coney Island, which has always been really special to us.

Roya and Amin become fast friends when they team up to find their missing neighbor. Is their friendship inspired by any relationships from your real life?

Their friendship is absolutely inspired by my own very deep and long-lasting childhood friendships. As a shy, immigrant kid who started school without speaking English and then moved around for the first three years, I initially learned about close friendships only through books like *Henry and Beezus* and the *Baby-Sitters Club*. Finding my people happened slowly and felt like uncovering treasures—lasting ones, because most of my close childhood friends are still my best friends today.

Roya hosts a podcast chronicling the lives of the tenants in her building. Have you ever had a memorable neighbor who would have made a good addition to Roya's podcast?

Having lived in New York City for over twenty years . . . of course! I had one particularly eccentric landlord who would have made a great addition to Roya's podcast. Among his many quirks, he would disappear for hours at a time into our building's forbidden basement of mysteries, and I know Roya's imagination would've run wild with what he was doing there. (Or, knowing her, she would have found a way to investigate for real!)

***The Queen of Ocean Parkway* pays homage to classic New York City mysteries such as *When You Reach Me* and *Harriet the Spy*. Were you inspired by those stories when you were writing?**

Definitely. *Harriet the Spy*, in particular, was one of my childhood favorites and I've never forgotten the way that book made me feel as a kid: so inspired by the power and independence that Harriet wielded because of both her situation living in an NYC apartment building and her own innate curiosity and tenacity—which, as a shy suburban kid, could not have been more appealing to me. *The Queen of Ocean Parkway* was my attempt to evoke those same feelings in readers.



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