



Tales from the past

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Your favourite author:
Salman Rushdie.

Five words to describe your life:
I will give you four Ws to describe my life. They are work, wife, writing and whisky!

The book you read last:
The Emperor of all Maladies: A Biography of Cancer by Siddharth Mukherjee. It's an incredible story.

One mythological character that you would like to meet:
I would like to meet Krishna hands down. There are so many characters from mythology who arouse our curiosity but none like Krishna. He has kept all of us confused with his various avatars: the playful child, the cunning minister, the frivolous lover, the romantic interest in Radha and the friend in need, among others. That's why I decided to focus my book *The Krishna Key* around his character.

The best compliment you ever got from a fan:
Someone wrote to me saying that he was not able to sleep because my book kept him awake till the wee hours of the morning. He had to skip one day of office to finish *Chanakya's Chant*!

An average day in your life:
I wake up at 5am and write till 9am. Then from 11am to 7pm, I spend time looking after my business. I have a rather pathetic social life, thanks to my books. I come home, listen to some good classical music, drink some whisky and write some more. On Sundays, I devote my time to my family. Every year, however, I take four weeks off from everything and concentrate only on my book. This happens when the novel is nearing its end and I have to add the last touches and finish the book.

How the writer's persona has changed:
Writers were a luxury to be put on a pedestal and worshipped. Whatever a well-known author wrote, was considered sacred. Some books talked at you rather than to you. Today's generation of

writers is more democratic. We live in an atmosphere that fosters a connection with readers. We talk to our readers and understand what they want to read.

Writing to you is:
Meditation. It's my way of escaping into a fantasy world. It's very relaxing and helps me to unwind. Many people ask me why I don't take up writing full-time. But then, it will become a chore, a daily job and won't remain my passion anymore.

Turning *Chanakya's Chant* into a film:
The biggest challenge we are facing right now with the film is with the script. In fact, as we talk, the third version of the script is being finalised. See, the book is divided into two time zones — those of the historical character of Chanakya and the contemporary one. So, artistically, we have to show both to establish the connection. And a film is only three hours long. To put everything into that short span of time is the real difficulty. We are yet to finalise the lead character who can effortlessly fit into both the roles. He has to look earthy and intelligent. I am keeping my fingers crossed.

A quick chat with author Aswin Sanghi about his life, love and new book, *The Krishna Key*

