

Amit Ray Makes a Case for Publishing Stories for Children of Indian Heritage

***The Ghost of Golconda*, Book #2 in *The Sen Kids* series has kids and teens using science and engineering to solve mysteries.**

By Tina Koenig

Two years ago, Author Amit Ray worked as an executive for Uber in Singapore. When the company merged with local competitor, Grab, he found himself with a work gap to fill. Binge-watching television wasn't his style, and a story had been knocking around in his head. It was based on his ancestral home in Kolkata, India and became his first book, *The Mansion Mystery*. The middle-grade children's mystery itself found a home and level of popularity among Indian-Americans and others internationally who wanted to read books that reflected their cultural heritage.

The success of *The Mansion Mystery* inspired Amit to write his second, and newest book, *The Ghost of Golconda* (December 2019), which is now part of his series called *The Sen Kids*.

“The story idea for *The Mansion Mystery* was based on a made-up tale I used to tell my son about our ancestral home in Kolkata, India,” says Amit. “Truth be told, I wanted to write something short like an illustrated book but, as I started writing, the story took on a life of its own and morphed into 150-pages.”

The story begins as the city of Hyderabad, former capital of the Kingdom of Golconda, is preparing for the 500-year celebration of the founding of Golconda. Festivities had been moving right along until a priceless artefact went missing from the city's ancient citadel. To make matters worse, reports of ghosts and eerie music playing at dusk have the public spooked. With the police at a loss to figure out the mystery, celebrations are in danger of being cancelled. Can the Sen Kids, Anna (15), Nick (12) and Neel (7) solve the mystery before the whole city is consumed with fear?

The Sen Kids series is grounded in history and is beautifully illustrated by Portuguese illustrator, Carolina Carmo. The main characters are inspired by Amit's family—his brother and a cousin. The rich historical background is thanks to in-depth research he had done on Indian historical sites as part of a heritage tourism startup his brother and he co-founded a decade ago. The startup is no longer in business, but the content they put together back then received a fresh lease of life in this series.

“I like writing this series because I believe there is a dearth of detective stories with Indian characters. I wanted to create an option for kids to read something entertaining, while also

thought-provoking. The characters are regular kids, but each has a mystery-solving ‘superpower’ and foibles that make them just like the rest of us. Nick is scared to death of bugs, and Neel is headstrong and impulsive. Anna can be a bothersome stickler for the rules,” Amit said.

The Ghost of Golconda is full of gripping plot twists and interesting trivia based on real history and science. There’s a touch of potty humor and enough modern cultural references to keep teens interested. The characters and settings are Indian. Uniquely Indian references are well-explained, so the stories have international appeal.

Parents will appreciate the history and science that underpin many of the clues. In fact, *The Ghost of Golconda* provides access to a ‘Bonus Features’ web page where many of the science and engineering concepts presented in the book are better illustrated or explained through web links and YouTube videos. The passcode to the bonus page is a 9-letter word that is bold and underlined in the book.

For readers who purchased *The Mansion Mystery*, look for four references hidden in the book’s illustrations. If you find them all, send Amit a list via the Google form on his bonus page and you may win a monthly prize.

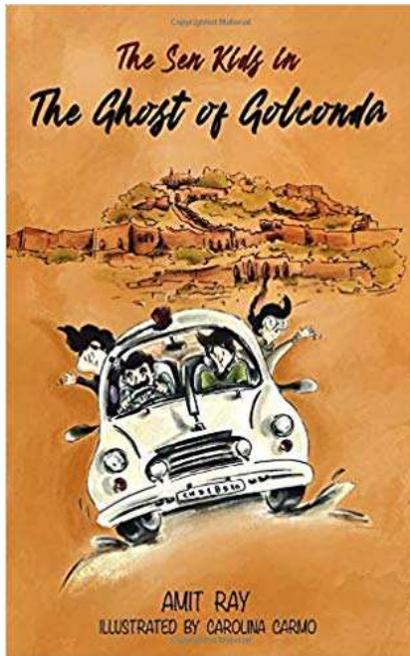


About the Author

Amit Ray was born in Kolkata, India. He has spent 20 years working at multinational companies such as Cambridge Technology Partners, Polaris Software, Citigroup, Uber and Grab. He was a co-founder of Go!Places, a Singapore-based startup that aimed to make travel fun, and supplied the location research for his books. Amit’s Indian heritage and family provide the inspiration for many of his stories. He currently lives and works in Singapore.

<https://www.facebook.com/amitraywriter>

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The Ghost of Golconda (December 2019)

By Amit Ray; Illustrated by Carolina Carmo

Genre: Mystery, Mysteries & Detectives, Historical Fiction, Children's Exploration Fiction

Ages: 9-12

www.theraywriter.com

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<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1710832630>