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Author bio:

Zahirra Dayal was born in Zimbabwe and now lives in London, where she works as a university lecturer. Her writing explores belonging, racial dynamics, and the unspoken tensions of family life.

The Whispering Jacarandas grew from a short story inspired by her grandmother, who migrated from Gujarat to Southern Africa, and was developed into a novel through a Jericho Writers Self-Edit bursary. Zahirra's work has appeared in The Mechanics' Institute Review and Teeserae, with a poem forthcoming in Third Space. She has been longlisted for the Deborah Rogers Prize and the SI Leeds Literary Prize and shortlisted for the Owned Voices Award, receiving mentorship from acclaimed writers including Yvonne Singh.

The Whispering Jacarandas

Zahirra Dayal

The perfect summer read for fans of 'A History of Burning' by Janika Oza and 'We Need New Names' by NoViolet Bulawayo

- Lyrical and devastating, The Whispering Jacarandas has been compared to Brit Bennett's The Vanishing Half for its nuanced exploration of family, identity, and the ways silence shapes our lives.
- Zahirra Dayal's The Whispering Jacarandas Explores Identity, Trauma, and Sisterhood in Southern Africa's Indian Diaspora

About the book

The Whispering Jacarandas is a haunting debut that unfolds in the charged aftermath of Zimbabwe's independence. In the leafy suburb of Belvedere, sisters Zaynah and Amira grow up within the shelter of a close-knit Indian community, until one night of violence shatters their childhood and leaves an unspoken rift between them.

As the sisters navigate adolescence under the shadow of silence, their paths diverge: one drawn inward into secrecy, the other seeking escape in rebellion. Against a backdrop of political upheaval and simmering racial tensions, they must confront the weight of trauma and the fragility of identity, as they struggle to repair the fractured threads of sisterhood.

Lyrical and devastating, The Whispering Jacarandas evokes the beauty and resilience of its namesake blooms while exploring how love, loyalty, and the search for belonging endure in even the harshest of landscapes.

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