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Libraries Change Lives



How Reading Changed My Life

by Kamala Nair

“My love of reading transitioned into a desire to write.” [more](#)



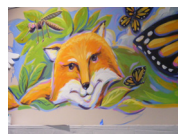
Summer Reading Program

The Summer Reading programs for both children and young adults are in full-swing. [more](#)



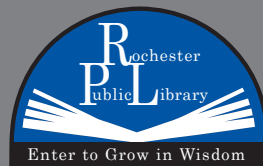
Public Art at the Library

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Nature Mural in Children's area

The far back wall of the Children's Area is no longer blah beige! [more](#)



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The Friends's brought in over \$4,200 with their Rochesterfest Auditorium sale and the Unusual and Special book sales.

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How Reading Changed My Life

by Kamala Nair

When I was a child, my parents made a rule that neither my sister nor I were allowed to watch television during the weekdays. At first we railed against their injustice. The thought of being the only kid at school who didn't know what happened on yesterday's episode of *Saved by the Bell* seemed unbearable. But when the realization that arguing was futile eventually sank in, I began to seek entertainment elsewhere.

I had always loved reading, but now that watching television after homework was no longer an option, books became an obsession, one my parents encouraged. Although I have remained a passionate reader into adulthood, nothing compares to the sense of magic and

wonder of immersing myself in a story as a child. *Anne of Green Gables*, *Little Women*, *The Secret Garden*, *Chronicles of Narnia*. These are only a few of the works that captivated my imagination, books that made it easy to completely lose myself in another world to the point where I'd feel disoriented when I finally surfaced, eager to dive back in.

The television ban was lifted on weekends and during summer vacations, and I happily partook in Saturday morning cartoon time like most other kids. But watching stories unfold on a screen had lost some of its appeal, and I began to spend more time with my nose buried in a book. The pleasure of a cartoon or sitcom was fleeting, I discovered, whereas books stretched out over the course of days or weeks, and resonated in my heart long after the last word had been read. I often returned to my favorite stories, reading them over and over again until the pages were fragile and dog-eared.

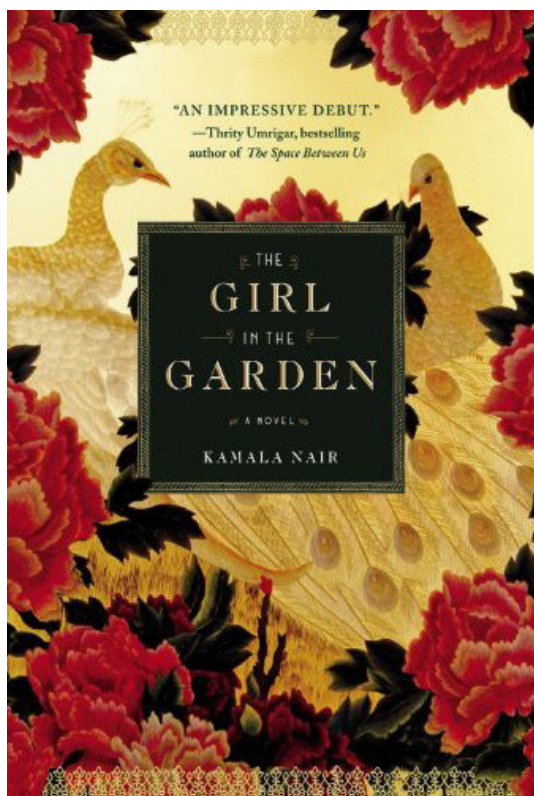
We moved two times over the course of my childhood, first from upstate New York to Vermont, then from Vermont to Minnesota. We also spent three months living in Sweden when I was ten. During those years of shifting landscapes, people, and cultures, books became my one constant. We arrived in Rochester the summer before I started eighth grade, and I didn't have a single friend. I remember checking out *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck from the

library, and falling under its spell. I devoured it in a few short days, and returned for more. I ended up reading every book Buck had ever written over the course of those few months before school started, and even though it was a difficult period, having just said goodbye to the friends and life I had established back in Vermont, the joy of reading made that summer a surprisingly pleasant one.

My love of reading transitioned into a desire to write. From a very early age, I learned that writing was a wonderful source of entertainment. I could create my own world and make my characters do whatever I wanted. It was a heady feeling. As I grew older, I approached writing with a more serious attitude. In sixth grade I had a poem published in a small journal, and in eighth grade I won a statewide short story contest. These achievements encouraged me, and helped me realize that writing was something I might be able to pursue as a career. I wanted to make some kind of difference, and I decided the most valuable contribution I could make would be to add beauty to the world through literature. If I could bring as much joy to even a handful of people as the books I had read throughout my childhood had given to me, it would be enough.

My first novel, *The Girl in the Garden*, just hit shelves. I have no doubt that my love of reading is what inspired me to pursue the goal of writing a novel. I'm so grateful to my parents for encouraging us to read instead of spending hours in front of the television. If it hadn't been for that rule, I might be living a very different life today.

~ Kamala Nair



Visit our YouTube Channel:
www.youtube.com/rochpublibrary
for interviews with Kamala.

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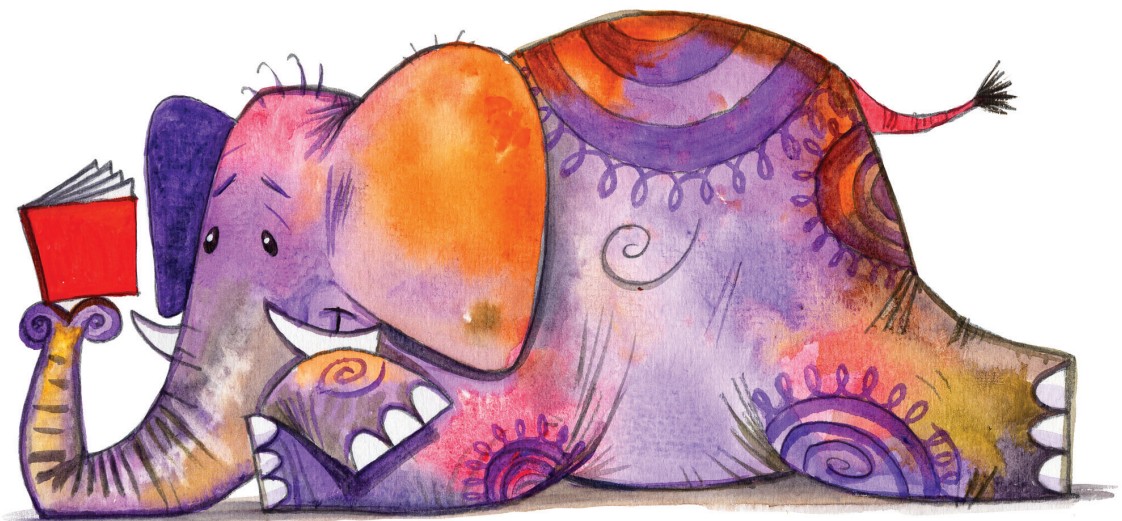
Summer Reading Programs @ the Library!



The Summer Reading programs for both **children** and **young adults** are in full-swing.

This year, after logging in 12 hours of reading, children (pre-readers may participate by having an adult read to them) will receive: various reading rewards from the Friends of the Library, certificates for a free bowl of noodles from Noodles & Company, a free mini-pizza from Papa Murphy's, a free prize from ABC & Toy Zone, and a bookmark from IBM.

Young adults will receive various prizes depending on how much they read throughout the summer: 10 hours - a drawstring backpack, 30 hours - journal notebook with pen, 50 hours - 2G USB flash drive, 100 hours - an IBM book light. The 20 young adults who read for the most time will also receive a \$30 prize from a variety of local bookstores, restaurants and retail stores. Prizes earned by young adults will be distributed at the end of the summer reading program.



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Public Art at the Library

You may have noticed that the library has three new colorful bike racks near the front entrance. These bike racks are a result from a new library legacy program that offered public libraries throughout Southeastern Minnesota an opportunity to install them. Southeastern Libraries Cooperating (SELCO) paid for half the cost of the racks plus sponsored the Bike to Work program that was held at the library in June. The next time you ride your bike to the library, don't be afraid to lock it up on one of these new bike racks; they were made to be both pretty and functional.



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Mural in Children's Area



The far back wall of the Children's Area is no longer blah beige!

Artist, Greg Preslicka was busy for three days painting this unique mural that includes southeastern Minnesota wildlife. He painted during library hours giving people a chance to watch the mural come to life. The animals on the mural were picked via a vote. Photos of the painting progress can be seen on our Flickr account. www.flickr.com/photos/rochpublibrary.

The mural called "My Backyard" was funded in part or in whole with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Sponsorship provided by SELCO.

