

Sheetal Sheth

By: Hannah Stephenson and Vittoria Vena

Open Education Resource created for CU Boulder's Children's Book Festival, 2023.

Available:

<https://www.colorado.edu/event/bookfest/>

About the Author

Sheetal was born in Phillipsburg, New Jersey on June 24th, 1976.

Before starting her writing career...

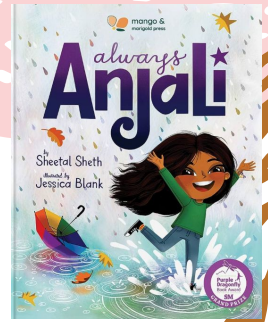
- Attended Tisch School of the Arts at New York University
 - Became an actress and starred in over 20 featured films.
- Outspoken advocate and has delivered talks as well as keynotes at charity galas.

Her extensive background in working with kids led her into the world of children's literature and her first children's book: *Always Anjali*.



Featured Book: *Always Anjali*

Anjali is a 7 year old girl who is excited to receive her new bike for her birthday and take it to the school carnival with her friends. At the carnival, they decide to get name license plates for their bikes, but Anjali can't find hers. There is Alex, Andrea, even Angela, but no Anjali. Other kids make fun of her name and call her "Peanut Butter An-jelly" which makes her very upset. Anjali demands her parents change her name to something everyone will recognize when she arrives home. Does Anjali change her name? What does her name mean? How does she deal with this situation?



Fun Facts about Sheetal Sheth



Sheetal was the first Indian American to appear in Maxim Magazine. Sheetal utilizes her platform as a proud activist within politics and is currently on the advisory board of Equality Now while serving as an ambassador for *The Representation Project*.

Fun Facts about Sheetal Sheth



Sheetal is one of the founders of the non-profit 1001 Diverse Books and is an ambassador for the global literacy non profit, Room to Read.



Sheetal won 5 best actress awards on the festival circuit.

Awards and Accomplishments



Literature



- *Always Anjali* is the first book in the *Anjali* series.
- *Anjali* is the first picture book series that follows a South Asian protagonist.
- The series became the #1 release on Amazon in two categories.

Acting



- 5-time Best Actress Award Winner (on the Festival Circuit)
- Starred in over 20 feature films

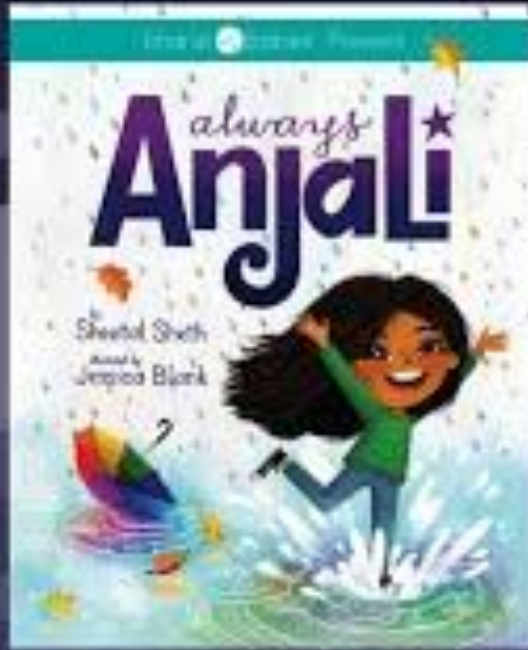


Why Was *Always Anjali* Written?

- As a person of color, Sheetal Sheth was “dismayed at the lack of representation in kids literature.”
- She faced similar experiences to Anjali as a child and even into her acting career. Sheetal Sheth lost jobs because of her name.
- Sheth noticed that most children’s books written about people of color were books about holidays and religion: “I wanted to create a character that was just a girl. It’s not just about her race.”



Interview with Sheetal Sheth!



SHEETAL SHETH
ALWAYS ANJALI

[Video link](#)



Quotes from Sheetal Sheth

“We need to hear our stories, we need to see ourselves in books.”

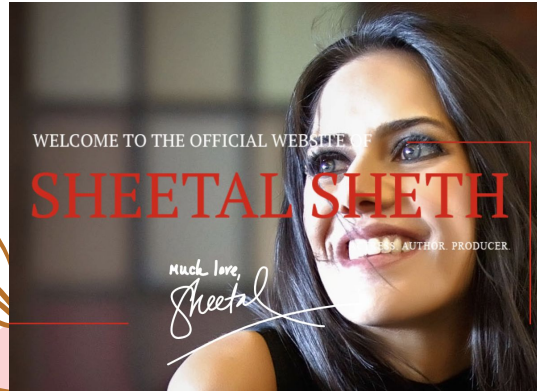
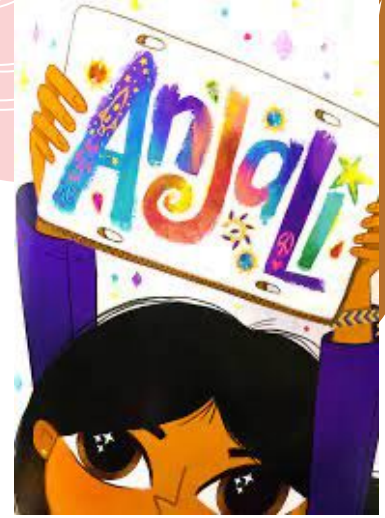
“It’s really about a girl who has to embrace that being an individual is her superpower.”

Q: What is your ideal book for a growing Indian Girl?

A: “... It’s all about the narrative and the images. And presenting a broad array of characters and experience from different backgrounds and experiences. Normalizing the inclusive.” (Interview from May 13, 2018)

Learn More!

To learn more about Sheetal Sheth and *Always Anjali*, check out these links.



[*Always Anjali* Website](#)

[Sheetal Sheth's Website](#)

Sources

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<https://bookriot.com/sheetal-sheth-interview/#:~:text=%E2%80%99s%20very%20important%20to%20me,not%20just%20about%20her%20race>.

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<https://youtu.be/oPDgvK9-z5U?si=VSCwwFyThDSovSBs>

<https://socialjusticebooks.org/always-anjali-review/>

