

TWELVE-YEAR-OLD SIMI SINGH'S LIFE IN NORTHERN INDIA IS FILLED WITH LOVE,

family traditions, and ordinary worries about hockey competitions, school exams, and avoiding the snide remarks of her class nemesis. But when a single rock carrying a note crashes through her family's window during their Eid celebration, Simi's life will shatter.

Her Sikh father and Muslim mother's interfaith marriage is becoming a target of violent vigilantes. Faced with rising threats, they must make an impossible choice: stay and risk their lives, or flee their homeland. Simi's father is the first of them to make the journey to the United States, but when their petition to be reunited in America is denied, Simi and her mother are left with no choice but to attempt a perilous crossing through the Arizona desert with the help of a smuggler.

Throughout their nail-biting journey toward safety and belonging, they will face unthinkable danger—and when Simi and her mother are separated during the crossing, each led to believe the other is dead, Simi refuses to accept this fate. Alone in an unfamiliar and unforgiving land, she must summon all her courage and resourcefulness to survive, find her mother, and reunite her family.

In one girl's relentless search for home and safety, *The Freedom Seeker* takes readers on a daring journey of displacement and immigration. Illuminated by the kindness of strangers across continents and the strength of the human spirit, Ruchira Gupta has written a powerful tale of resilience, hope, and the enduring strength of familial love.

Ruchira Gupta is the founder-president of Apne Aap Women Worldwide. She is a social justice activist, feminist campaigner, journalist, Emmy Award-winning documentarian, and professor at New York University who has dedicated her life to creating a world where no child is bought or sold. Her debut novel *I Kick and I Fly* was a 2024 YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults selection, an ALA Rise: Feminist Book Project selection, and a South Asia Book Award winner.

Read by Swaya Bhatia

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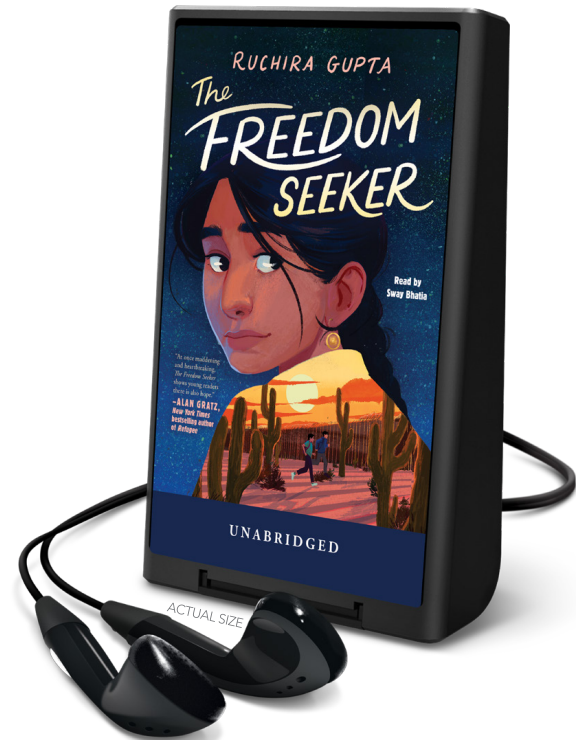
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