



## **COOKING THE BOOKS : SEPTEMBER 2024**

**TODAY I AM...**

### **Lemon Orzo Pasta with Shrimp**





Hello

Feel as if summer whooshed by like an important deadline?

I feel that way *every* year. Every. Year.

The countdown to winter holidays is fun, exciting! Time to relax with family and friends, carols and jingles heralding the holidays fill the cold, crisp air. And then comes winter which draaaaggggsssss on, ad nauseam, until, one day, you suddenly see buds on trees. In a few weeks they've bloomed. From that moment on, time puts on roller blades and whooshes through summer.

I know...some of you probably think winter is the best time of year. Fair enough. I'll stop my rambling now.

Either way, we're into Fall, which brings its own charm; cooler weather, comfort foods, log fires and warm blankets. Here's one from last year when we used our solo stove for the first time and sat outside with cozy blankets and hot chocolate. Looking forward to it again this year.

Talking of comfort foods, you have to try this amazing [Shrimp Orzo](#) which tastes even better the next day!

The only change I made was to use vegetable stock instead of chicken stock. I didn't have asparagus so I used broccoli. Just as delish!

If you have any fave orzo recipe, please share! I love orzo and am constantly on the lookout for more ways to prepare this versatile pasta.

**Book News...**





Everybody loves a  
good ghost story

# Ghost Queen

MAHTAB NARSIMHAN

[Ghost Queen](#)

Coming to your local bookstore on Feb 11, 2025

Who doesn't love a ghost story?

That's what I thought when I was researching ideas for this book. [Bhangarh Fort](#) in Rajasthan, has the dubious distinction of being one of the *most* haunted places in India. Entry to the fort between sunset and sunrise is strictly prohibited. Reading that gave me the chills, and an idea.

A writer is required to torture the protagonists for the sake of plot, character development, and growth. The first thought I had was : What if my main characters decided to spend the night in the fort?

Ghost Queen is an unputdownable story with a fantastic twist at the end! (Just my humble opinion!)

**Synopsis:**

***Hey, Ghosties, this is the Ghost Queen tuning in from the most haunted place in India!***

Teen vlogger Malika's ghost hunter channel is almost popular enough to start earning money to support her family. All she needs is one viral video—and she knows exactly where she's going to get it. Bhangarh Fort is the most haunted place in India, rumoured to be home to the cursed princess Ratnavati and her wicked captor. Malika convinces her boyfriend to sneak into the fort with her after dark and record the experience for her avid fans and followers. That's when things go terribly wrong.

Can the "Ghost Queen" escape, or is she doomed to spend eternity trapped with a mad magician and the princess who rejected him?

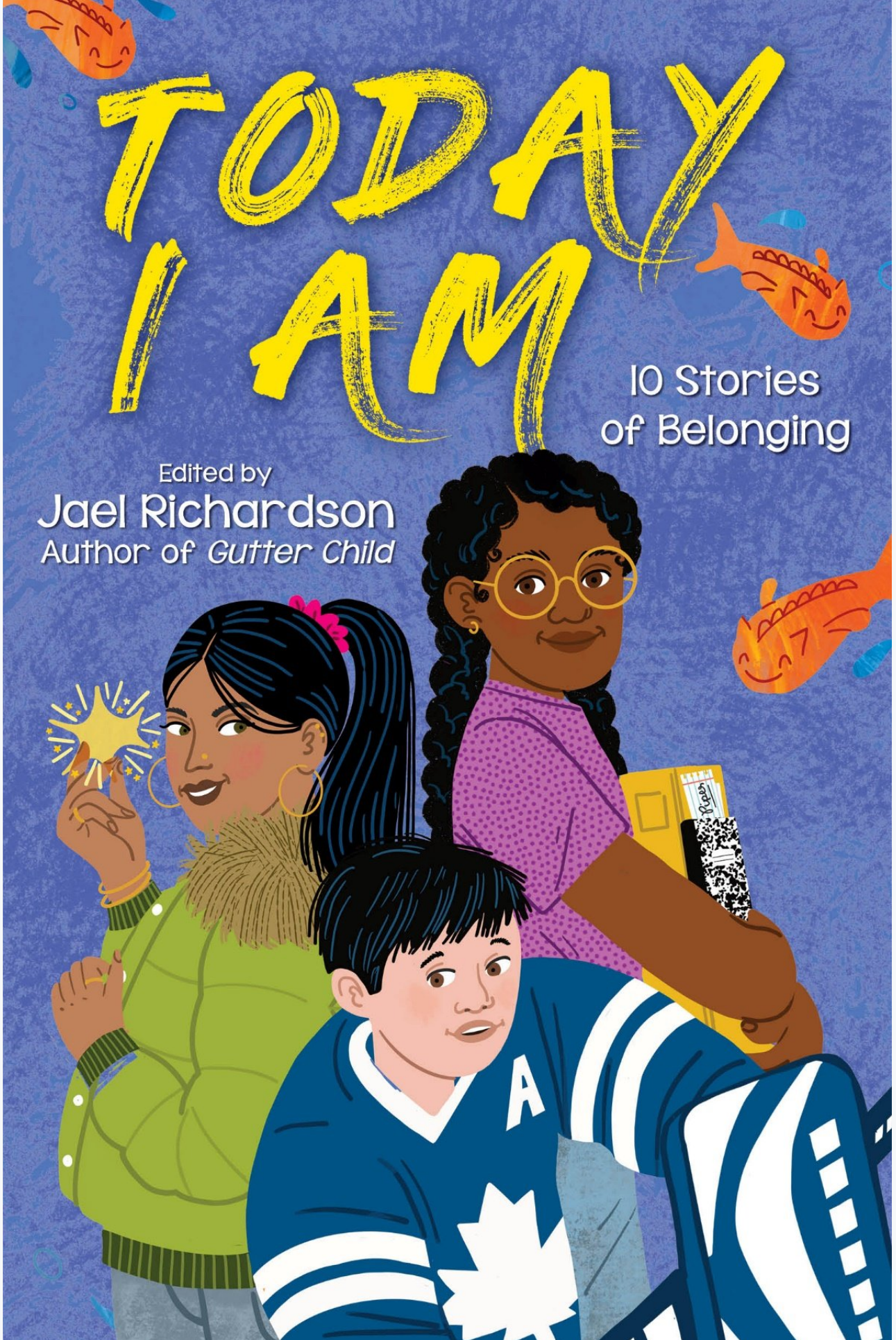
Preorder a copy at your fave bookstore!



# TODAY I AM

10 Stories  
of Belonging

Edited by  
Jael Richardson  
Author of *Gutter Child*



## Today I Am...

I am so *lucky* to be a part of this wonderful anthology! Pardon the self praise but this *truly* is a must-add novel to any school or home library collection.

THE TOMB (my story in the anthology)



**When siblings Sid and Zoya crash land on a remote island, also called The Tomb, they're desperate to escape.**

**Except, the island won't let them go!**

**A fresh and fearless collection of short fiction, poetry and graphic fiction for today's middle-grade readers.**

In this timely, thought-provoking, funny and heartbreaking collection, ten acclaimed BIPOC authors from across Canada explore the theme and concept of home.

From awkward family dinners, to life on the rez, to moving to a new town, each of these stories provides a unique perspective on the theme of belonging through characters tasked with navigating and finding their place in this world.

Brought together by curator (and story contributor), Jael Richardson, *Today I Am* will make readers laugh and cry while opening their hearts and minds to the world around them, validating how it feels to be young and alive today.

*Today I Am* includes stories by Jael Richardson, Marty Chan, Rosena Fung, Michael Hutchinson, Chad Lucas, Angela Misri, Mahtab Narsimhan, Danny Ramadan, Liselle Sambury and Brandon Wint.

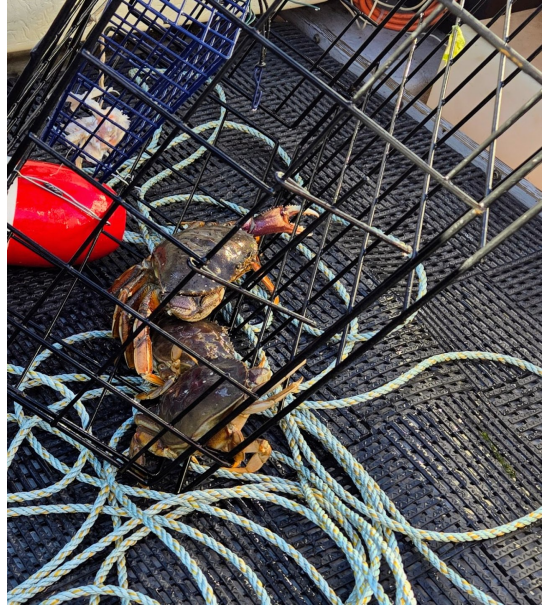
Preorder a copy [here](#)!

[Discussion Guide here.](#)

## What have I been up to?







On my recent trip to Toronto, met my fave peeps, (L to R) [Karen Krossing](#), [Helaine Becker](#), [Frieda Wishinsky](#), and [Deborah Kerbel](#).

We've been together through good times and bad, celebrated wins, and been there for each other when things didn't go as planned. Couldn't have asked for a better fellowship on my writing journey. Check out their critically-acclaimed books and you're sure to become a fan, just like me!

Oh! And I also went crab fishing with friends on Galiano Island, and had some gentle visitors at dusk. I'm happy to say we returned all the crabs back to the ocean. Most were too small and the others were females. Have to admit, I was relieved :)

## Some final words...

Today I am...working on an outline for a middle-grade adventure trilogy. Once again the joy of working on something new and shiny is thrilling!

Today I am...also grateful for good health, family, and friends.

***What are you grateful for...TODAY?***

My current fave quote:

**"It's the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting." ~  
The Alchemist by Paul Coelho**

Please remember to [whitelist my email address](#).

I hope you enjoyed this newsletter, and if you did, please share it with people you think might enjoy it. Or better yet, ask them to subscribe.

Until the next newsletter...[rock on!](#)

xo

Mahtab

## **Stardust Stories**

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