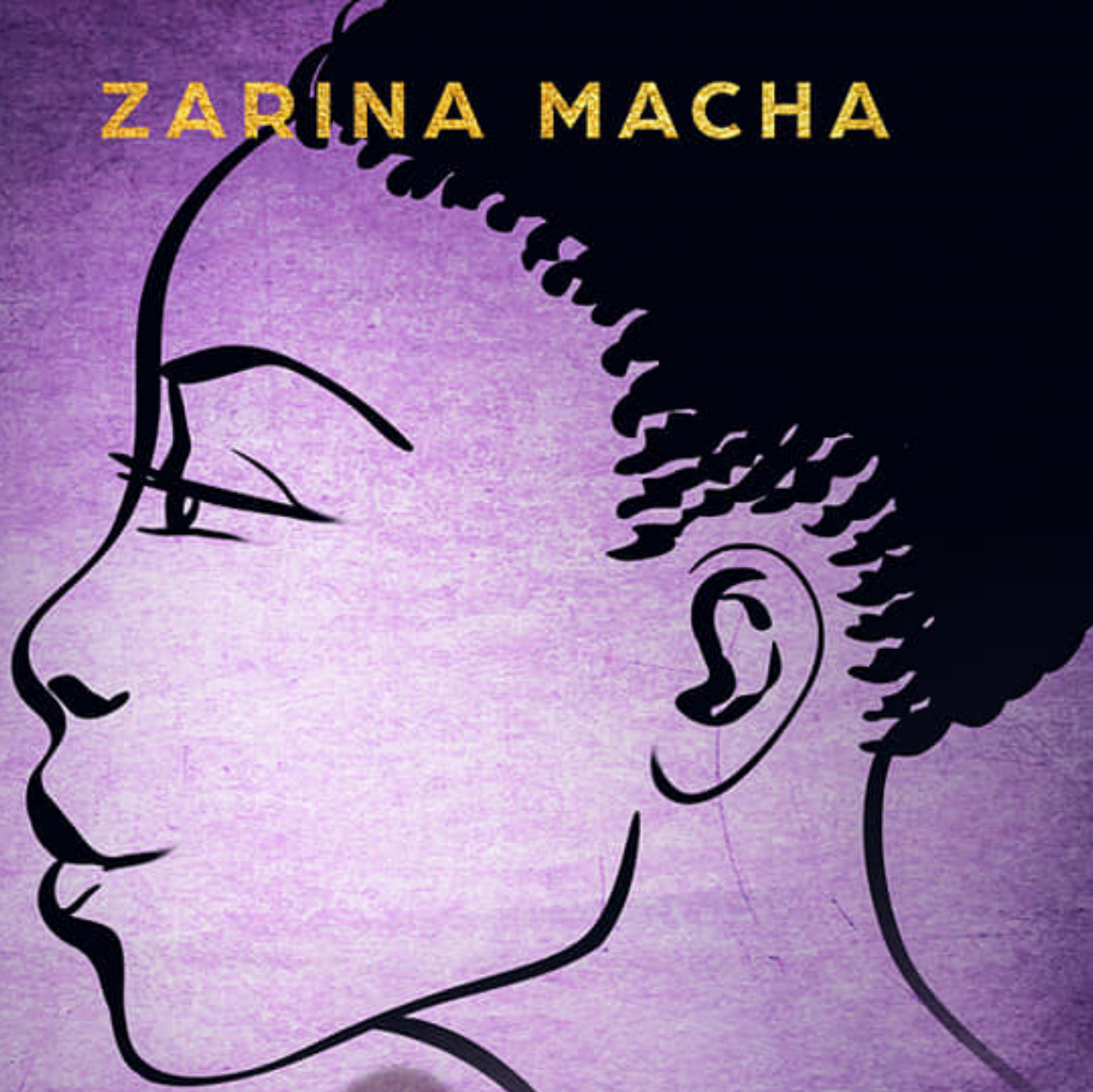


ADVANCE BUYING INFORMATION

ZARINA MACHA

ANNE



BOOK DETAILS

COMING-OF-AGE YOUNG ADULT NOVEL ABOUT A LESBIAN CHRISTIAN GIRL WHO ESCAPES A HOUSEHOLD OF DOMESTIC ABUSE, ONLY TO FIND THAT CONFRONTING THE WORLD CAN BE JUST AS HEARTWRENCHING AS WHAT YOU LEAVE BEHIND.

DEMOGRAPHICS

"Anne" is recommended for young adult audiences aged 13-18, but is also suitable for anyone interested in a coming-of-age theme, and the issues that the story entails.

It would also suit slightly older millennial readers who have enjoyed authors such as Jacqueline Wilson and Judy Blume.

The book features a black, lesbian protagonist which may appeal to those with an LGBT background, and other minority groups.

“

It pulled me in from the first page...Beautifully written and heartbreaking in places, an amazing story.

”

“

Told from the perspective of an intelligent and introspective gay black teenage girl struggling with PTSD, Anne delivers a frank and refreshing take on a range of themes as diverse as the titular character, as she squares up to bullying and discrimination, mental illness and alcoholism, issues more widespread and relevant to this age group than ever before.

”

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

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Perfect Bound

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BLURB

‘Are you okay, Mummy? Did Daddy hurt you again?’

Anne Mason’s childhood in Richmond emulates suburban bliss, with a wealthy father and a loving mother. But behind the polished windows, Anne’s father terrorizes her mother, shattering their utopian home life with beatings and beer. Home-schooled on a diet of books and museums, knowledge becomes Anne’s only saviour.

One night her dad comes home with the news that her mother has left them forever. Unable to care for his daughter, Anne is sent to live with her kindly aunt and uncle. Struggling to settle into day school, Anne enrolls in Lakeland Boarding School. She meets and falls for gentle Karen, whose friends torment Anne and her troubled roommate Simone.

Forced to confront her traumatic upbringing, Anne learns the horrors of the past and present. Will love, hope, and inner strength prevail?

HOW TO ORDER

Available to buy from [Bertram Books](#) on a returnable basis with a discount of 40%. Consignment terms can be negotiated, if preferred.

AUTHOR INFORMATION AND MARKETING STRATEGIES

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zarina Macha is an author, blogger and musician born and raised in London, UK. She studied Songwriting and Creative Artistry at The Academy of Contemporary Music in Guildford. She regularly writes a social comment blog titled 'The Zarina Macha Blog.' In her spare time she loves reading and fan-girling over *Game of Thrones*.

She has independently published four books. *Every Last Psycho* and *Anne* are her young-adult fiction novels that deal with mental illness, drug abuse, domestic violence and coming-of-age. *Art is a Waste of Time* and *Single Broke Female* are her two poetry books.



BLOGGING AND ONLINE PRESCENCE

The [Zarina Macha Blog](#) comments on various issues such as mental health, politics and feminism, as well as general wonderings, and has been going since 2017.

As well as her own blog, the author consistently writes guest blogs on various themes to promote her online presence, brand, and with it, her books.

Blogs of note include [Mrs MummyPenny](#), where Macha has written several posts on the financial struggles of being a twenty-something in London. She has also written for youth magazine *Exposure* and addiction recovery website AA Agnostica. A regularly updated record of guest articles can be accessed [here](#).

The main [Zarina Macha website](#) and social media also contribute by promoting her thoughts, books and material as one cohesive brand.

EMAIL MARKETING

To create a loyal reader fanbase, Zarina has an email marketing funnel on her websites and sends out fortnightly updates to help build and maintain connections with readers of her blog bridging them to her books and the rest of her brand. An example of the newsletter can be read [here](#).

REVIEWS

“Innocent, raw, real and intense.”

"Anne" has been received very positively by readers which can be read over at [Goodreads](#).

Reviews from online blogs can also be read at [MrsMummyPenny](#), [Joey Paul](#), and [CM Fritzen](#).

To view the reviews for earlier publications please click [here](#).

LOCAL MARKETING

While online marketing is the main method Zarina uses, various local marketing efforts in central London have been made. These include library book signings, "book swaps" with local authors and weekly promotion at poetry and literature events.

Prologue

Picture this. A room with two cosy armchairs and a brown wooden table resting between them holding a small clock, tissues, and minuscule pieces of *Celebrations* chocolate. The temperature was not cold, and not hot, but that perfect warmth you get from adjusting both the window and radiator heating. In one of the armchairs sat a middle-aged man, bespectacled, foreign — German, perhaps — with a balding patch on his head and weight around his middle. A kind smile spread across his face, his head tilted, garnering the same curiosity as an inquisitive child. In the other chair sat a girl. Fourteen, black hair cane-rolled on top and pulled up into a tight bun. Black hands, black duffel coat, black shoes, black tights. All that shed a silver lining — or a blue one — were the sapphire-crystal earrings hanging from her ears.

The girl was me.

The foreign man peered at the clock. He and the girl had been sitting in the room for forty minutes, the slight utterance of monosyllabic dialogue passing between the two. The girl was staring at the floor, her face expressionless. With only twenty minutes left, the man took his cue to pick up the bowl holding the chocolate and offered one to her. She refused.

“I do like *Celebrations*,” said the man. “Always a succulent choice.” He was definitely German. “They really melt in the mouth. Maltesers are my personal favourite, though. They’re the most popular, aren’t they?”

I grunted in response. He sighed; not in exasperation, merely in concern. “I know this is only our second session, but it would be nice to hear a little bit from you.”

I uncrossed my legs. It was amazing how interesting your shoes became when you had nothing to say.

“I’m not trying to force you,” he said gently. “I know this has been difficult for you. You have had a lot to deal with recently, and in the past. But that is why I want you to know we are here for you. When somebody close to you dies, it’s the most horrible thing in the world. That’s why we want to help you get through this challenging time.”

I closed my eyes, raising my head to the ceiling.

“How are you feeling right now?” he asked.

I shrugged.

“Anne, you are more than welcome to take your time, but remember, in here, you are safe. No one can hurt you. What we say is confidential, and you can say whatever you like.”

He was right. And yet, the clenching in my stomach wouldn’t stop. It was a reminder that no matter how awful things became, you were still left with the scars.

I spent the remaining twenty minutes in silence. So much had happened in my fourteen years of existence, I was unsure of how to form the words.

That week, I mulled over my previous two sessions and decided I was tired of being a prisoner of my past. I no longer saw the point of keeping myself closed off. Help had been offered to me, so surely now was the time to take it. I could keep the ghosts chained to me, or I could let them be released, freeing myself in the process.

When I returned to Henry — he said I could call him by his first name — that following Tuesday, I was ready to begin telling him everything.

Chapter One: Mummy and Daddy

I was born on the 7th of September 2000 at West Middlesex University Hospital. Mum was only twenty. My dad was in his mid-thirties; a self-made man.

They had met in 1998 at a club. She had been with a group of friends, dancing, slightly tipsy, wearing tight trousers, high-heels, and a crop top, unaware of the looming gentleman watching her. He softly tapped her on the shoulder, offering to buy her a drink. He had come from nowhere, shrouded in a sharp black suit and trilby hat. His gaze was intense as his razor-shaven face regarded her, carrying a self-assured coolness lacking in the boys she’d been dating.

He took her to musicals, fine restaurants, weekend visits to Paris and New York. He was a man of principle — a regular church-goer, always dressed in crisp suits. A year on, he proposed, and she said yes. They moved to Richmond, and the following year, had me. He swept her from her old life, wiping her old friends and mother away as if they were drawings on a chalkboard. She and her own mother never got on, and her father had died years prior to that. They’d lived in Clapton, miles from Richmond. Black people didn’t live in Richmond. *White* people could barely afford to live in Richmond or Ealing or Harrow.

In the space of two years, she had gone from the Murder Mile to Palace de la Special, a tiny two-bedroomed flat to a vast residence. Long gaping corridors and soaring ceilings decorated our house. Not a trace of dust garnished the window ledges or Egyptian ornaments. The garden was filled with acid green hedges sharply pruned by the gardener and blood orange poppies fearfully peeping out of their stems.

My dad owned Mason’s Units, a furniture company. They sold sofas, chairs, desks, wardrobes — everything you needed — to large branded stores and warehouses in Britain and internationally. He always said he was born a natural entrepreneur, buying sweets and magazines and selling them at twice the price to his friends in the school playground. By sixteen, he was working at a stall in Brixton Market selling hats and T-shirts. He went on to study business management at university, graduating with first-class honours. His first business was selling tie-dye clothes back in the ’80s—

“When Thatcher’s Britain was booming and London was brimming with opportunity. A black man has got to make his own way in London,” he would say. “And times were different back then. It wasn’t all nicey-nice like it is now. There were areas we couldn’t go down, where we got chased out of. Brixton was rough as hell.”

His own father had left when he was barely a toddler, and his mother was a poor Grenadian working migrant. He had sought to help his two younger brothers and sister, dreaming of days when he would no longer have to struggle.

We attended church every Sunday. I was baptised shortly after my birth, as were my father’s wishes. Everyone in the church loved my dad and talked about what a respected and adored member of the community he was. This old lady would bend down and tell me I was the luckiest girl in the world.

“You’ve got it all, you have. Your daddy’s rich and your mummy’s good looking,” she chortled. “What’s not to like?”

I was supposed to attend school in September 2005, when I turned five. Mum insisted I start Deer Park School, or The

Vineyard Primary School, or St. Stephen's CE Primary School — all in our catchment area. My father had scoffed.

"No child of mine is going to some comprehensive," he said. "We have the money to send Anne to private education and give her the chances we never had."

"But a comprehensive will give her an all-rounded education, both socially and academically," Mum retorted. "Why should she hang around with posh snobs when she's only a child?"

"Excuse me!" That had annoyed my father. "Martinique, you can't just assume everyone who attends private education is a posh snob. Sure, you have a few gits, but they exist everywhere. Private school students are all pushed to achieve the highest grades. You don't have any of this 'equality' nonsense about all students being treated the same. And as it's funded by the parents, we know we're paying for teachers to equip our children with lifelong skills." He nodded, feeling triumphant. My mum shook her head, her hands on her hips.

"I don't know, John. I don't want Anne to feel complacent, to feel like having a head start in life makes her better than everyone else."

Dad had laughed, then slowly walked up to her while she swallowed. He gently placed his palm against her face. I was standing in the landing, watching them.

"Now, Martinique," he said softly. "I only want what's best for our daughter. She's a bright girl, spends all day with her head in those books. What do I work so hard for, if not to provide the best chances for my family? Wouldn't you agree?"

She nodded, biting her lip and turning away from him. He kissed her on the cheek, then grasped a chunk of her thick curly hair in his hand. She pressed her lips together, a scream barely escaping from her mouth. My heart thumped.

"You agree I know what's best for our family, right, darling?" He hadn't been shouting, but his tone had been iron-strong. She nodded, tears streaming down her cheeks.

"Tell me you agree."

"I agree, John," she gasped, the words a raspy knife against her throat. "I agree, you know best."

He relaxed his grip. She grabbed her head, deeply breathing in and out and almost keeling over. He smiled at her and kissed her forehead.

"Good girl. Now, I have to go to the office. There are some meetings I must organise dealing with our exports within the European market. Hopefully Blair and his pals up in parliament have our back on this." He clasped his hands with glee. "New Labour isn't turning out as terribly as I thought they would be. Let's hope they stay that way."

He'd walked out of the living room and through the door, slamming it as he left. My mum sank to the living room floor, her head in her hands. I ran to her.

"Are you okay, Mummy?" I asked. She gazed up at me, tears streaming down her face. She wiped her eyes with her hands. "Mmm, yes, I'm fine."

"Did Daddy hurt you again?" My hands quivered. She pulled me close in a warm embrace, avoiding my eyes. "Everything's fine, hon. Sometimes, Mummies and Daddies fight, and that's normal. What matters is we both love you." She stroked the top of my fluffy hair.

"Would you like me to plait your hair for you?"

"Yes, please, Mummy. And will you read *Dimble Goes to the Moon* to me?"

"Have you already finished *Dimble Goes to Australia*?" she asked, with a touch of surprise. I nodded. She murmured

under her breath. "He's right, you are a bright one. Hmmm, maybe...I don't know. Come along then."

My father returned from work later that night. The following day, my mother told him she would compromise. She had a suggestion, and that suggestion was I be home-schooled. Taught by a suitable curriculum planned and supervised by my parents, I would learn and progress in the comfort of my home and have private tuition on a weekly basis.

"That way, we can monitor how well she's doing and push her and help her achieve," my mum said, biting her lip and blinking rapidly. He faced me, his arms folded. And then, he smiled. "Sounds like a great idea. We can hire the best tutors for English and math, though I'm sure you'll have no problem with English, will you, Anne? We can take her out to museums and art galleries...well, you can do that, Martinique, as I'll be busy working. Yes, this is fantastic. A most excellent idea. I'm proud of you."

I remember the way my mum had beamed, her shoulders sagging and fists unclenching.

We spent our days in parks, aquatic arenas, museums, galleries, cinemas, cafés, concerts, watching West End musicals. London was her haven. She adored the hustle and bustle, the chaos and colours. I did too. She would take my hand and make us dance along Southbank, our feet springing to the steps of the Steel Pans and guitar players. Coins would spill from her hands as she paraded around Covent Garden, smiling at the street performers and mime artists.

"Dance with me, Anne," she would say, twirling me around.

My dad didn't let her have her own bank account, but he gave her a generous weekly allowance. She would take me shopping in the West End, in all the big department stores like Zara and H&M and New Look. I had a wardrobe filled with colourful outfits: pink dresses, red scarves, glittery purple jeans, sky blue T-shirts, paisley leggings. She was also dressed so: tight jeans clinging to her athletic legs, short skirts, bandeau tops, little black and white leather jackets. Men would turn their heads, whistling as she walked past. She never minded, smiling and playing up to the attention.

"Don't you tell your dad about this. It's all just a bit of fun. I'm allowed to have fun, aren't I?"

BOOK COVER

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Forced to confront her traumatic upbringing, Anne learns the horrors of the past and present. Will love, hope, and inner strength prevail?

'Anne' is a powerful and dramatic YA tale about life, family and coming-of-age in and outside of London.

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