



MY PLAYLIST

with Jasmine K Kara

CANADIAN composer, lyricist and singer Jasmine K Kara made an impact with her popular 2021 debut single *Ishq*.

She recently revisited the song, featuring the vocals of her music collaborator Sabrina Sapal by working with British music producer Rishi Rich to do a remix.

To mark the newly released version of *Ishq*, *Eastern Eye* got music maestro Jasmine to select 10 songs she loves.

Ishq (Rishi Rich remix) by Jasmine K Kara ft Sabrina: This special track is the first one I wrote, and this remix marks my vocal debut with my dream collaborator Rishi Rich. The song gets me pumped every time I hear it. The verses are all about embracing love, with feel-good vibes throughout. The music video captures real and amazing behind-the-scenes moments that went into creating this song.

Kiss Goodbye by Jasmine K Kara ft Sabrina: This track let me express the raw and complex feelings that come with a breakup in a beautiful and creative way, as a producer. I was inspired by *Sweet Dreams* (by Eurythmics) and love that *Kiss Goodbye* gives me the same rush every time it hits the drop. The track was also meaningful because it marked my mainstream English debut.

Dance With You by Rishi Rich Project: This just gets anyone dancing, no matter your background. The track, way ahead of its time, brought together eastern and western sounds like no other before it. My friends and I used to dance along to it in empty classrooms back in junior high. Many years later, I still blast this one on drives.

Mere Khwaabon Mein Jo Aaye from Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge: Who didn't want to be Kajol in this daydreamer song when it came out? I loved the dramatic irony that was created with the audience knowing there were two restless individuals perfect for each other, while they were unaware; it was simply magical.

O O Jaane Jaana from Pyaar Kiya To Darna Kyaa: I'm a total romantic

dreamer. Similar to the *Ishq* remix and *Mere Khwaabon Mein Jo Aaye*, *O O Jaane Jaana* is like the guy perspective of the same yearning sentiment. The notion of having faith that true love exists is simply beautiful and reminiscent of faith in a higher power.

Dekhte Dekhte from Batti Gul Meter Chalu: This is a beautifully poetic song, with the composition and lyrics complementing each other so well. The double-edged blade of love can be so constructive and deconstructive when wielded, and this song captures this duplicity, wonderfully.

Maahi Ve from Wajah Tum Ho: Part of what makes love so beautiful is how empty life can feel without it, and few songs capture those moments of yearning as well as *Maahi Ve*. Neha Kakkar does justice with her heartfelt vocal performance on a song with many lyrical metaphors, which resonate meaningfully throughout it.

Right Here Waiting For You by Richard Marx: This timeless classic reminds me of the undying devotion characterised in some of my favourite Bollywood movies like *Mohabbatein*. Loyalty is one of my top values, and I love that this song centres on a theme of unconditional commitment to 'the one', regardless of challenges and hardships.

Cry Me a River by Justin Timberlake: I'm a huge fan of Timbaland's production style, and JT's heartfelt vocals, which bravely turned a real personal trial and tragedy into a beautiful piece of art. I've since worked on channeling any personal trials in the same artistic direction and think back to this song's creative sampling when looking for production inspiration.

Careless Whisper by George Michael: This 1980s tune has an unforgettable saxophone riff that always gives me goosebumps. The soulful vocal performance by George Michael left an impression on generations of listeners. If anyone is to sing, it should be with an aim to feel as honestly through the vibrations of the mic as he did for this epic hit.

MY TOP 10

By Farrokh Suntook

Books

IN HIS debut novel *The People We Know*, London-based author Farrokh Suntook has told a compelling story of a Sikh woman who finds her life transformed after a shocking discovery about her Parsi husband and a chance encounter with an English couple.

Building on the author's love for literature, the story, set in India and London, deals with a unique subject and culminates in a totally unexpected denouement. When asked to select his top 10 books, the talented writer said: "It's difficult to choose just 10 books because my selection could change with time. But here are some that immediately come to mind."

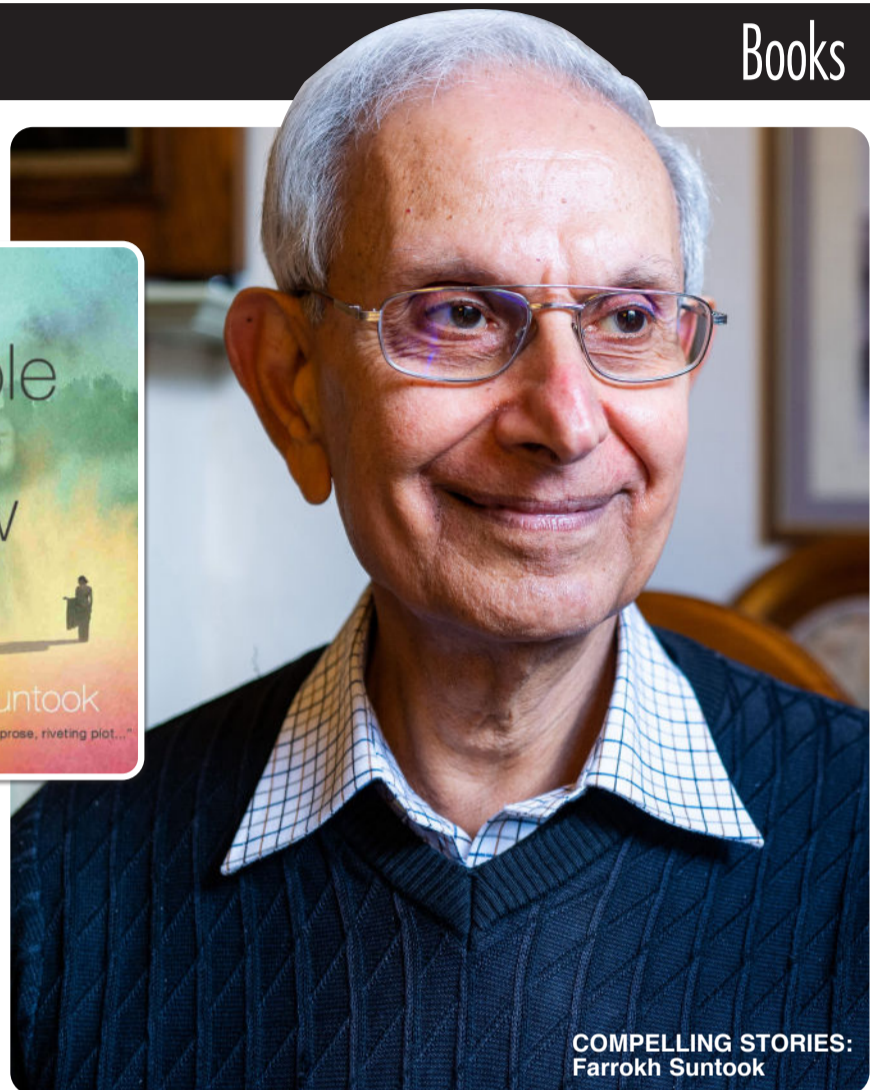
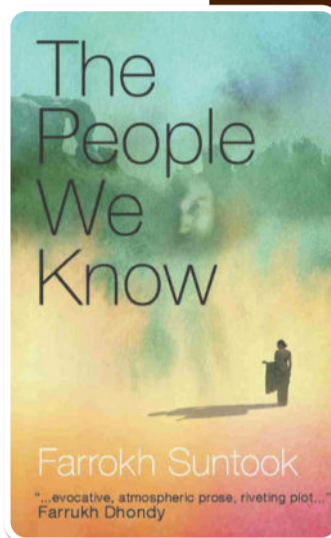
Hamlet by William Shakespeare: Shakespeare's plays are not normally described as books, but one cannot ignore *Hamlet*. Perhaps the greatest work of English literature, it has everything, including a deep insight into human nature, preceding Freud in its depiction of *Hamlet's* relationship with his mother. That understanding of the human condition is memorably expressed in immortal lines quoted even today: "To be or not to be," "I must be cruel only to be kind," "Neither a borrower nor a lender be," and many more.

A Passage to India by EM Forster: Before Forster, depictions of India by British authors tended to be romantic, with a colonialist streak. Forster, by contrast, offers two equal protagonists, one Indian (Dr Aziz) and one English (Mr Fielding), who develop a close friendship despite culture clashes and injustices resulting from the prevailing attitude of the British as the colonial power. Throw in Forster's command of language and understanding of human relationships, and you have a literary masterpiece.

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee: Like *A Passage to India*, this book, set in 1930s Alabama, is driven by a strong sense of justice against the odds, here personified by an honourable white lawyer who defends a black man wrongly accused of raping a white woman. Written from the viewpoint of the lawyer's little daughter, the story remarkably manages to enter the mind of a child without compromising the nobility of the sentiments expressed or the poetry behind the narrative.

The End of the Affair by Graham Greene: On the face of it, this is a very 'English' novel, with conventional English characters in a London setting of the 1940s. But its appeal crosses national boundaries, dealing as it does with universal themes: the interplay between love and hate, the complexity of friendship, and the dilemma of faith – believing in a God one doesn't want to believe in.

Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoevsky: This book focuses on the inner torment of the main protagonist, although here the central question is whether the end can always justify the means. But this novel is



COMPELLING STORIES: Farrokh Suntook

big in many ways: its huge narrative sweep, vast array of characters, and overtly passionate storytelling. In Raskolnikov, Dostoevsky has created an unforgettable protagonist – capable of committing a repellent crime, yet ultimately finding redemption in love.

The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy: This beautifully written novel centres on the Syrian Christian community in Kerala. A central theme running through the story is the price people pay for infringing social norms – in this book, the norms set by caste and socially acceptable sexual behaviour. In this respect, it has something in common with *A Passage to India*, which, although very different in other ways, also has as its central theme the separation forced on people because they are 'different'.

The Life of Pi by Yann Martel: Another multi-layered book connected to India. At one level, it's an adventure fantasy about the perilous sea voyage in a lifeboat of an Indian boy who must accept a tiger as a travelling companion. At another level, the story raises spiritual and philosophical questions, without ever losing its play-

ful tone. With today's ecological imperative for people to live in harmony with nature, the story about a boy having to cohabit with a tiger may resonate strongly as an allegory for our times.

Persuasion by Jane Austen: The novels of Jane Austen sparkle with wit and insight into human nature. *Persuasion* perhaps shines brightest, and is unusual among Austen's novels in featuring a relatively mature heroine, Anne Elliot, unmarried at 27. It is written very much from the perspective of Anne, once described as the 'Cinderella' among Austen's heroines because her intelligence, maturity, and steadfastness contrast sharply with the vanity and shallowness of many of her family and peers.

Middlemarch by George Eliot: Notwithstanding the quintessential 'Englishness' of its characters and settings, *Middlemarch* has worldwide appeal, having come out top in a 2015 BBC poll, conducted outside the UK, of the 100 greatest British novels. This immersive book has interlocking love stories told with an acute understanding of human foibles, all against an in-depth account of contemporary society. Eliot is clearly a woman who combines massive intellect with immense compassion. And her central character Dorothea is adorable – beautiful, naïvely idealistic, earnestly striving for good.

Wild Swans by Jung Chang: My only non-fiction choice reads like a thrilling historical novel. A story of the horrors the author and her family endured during China's Cultural Revolution, it's not only a page turner but also a thoughtful account of human behaviour in times of upheaval. Particularly telling was her observation that, whereas many Red Guards lived up to their brutal reputation, some were compassionate – leading her to conclude that individuals can make moral choices that cross the facile boundaries of 'them' and 'us'.
■ *The People We Know by Farrokh Suntook is available on Amazon: www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B09MYXX9G7*

