

# Vaseem Khan

A crime writer from East London



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Vaseem was born and grew up near Green Street in Newham. His father worked for a bakery when he arrived in the UK from India and he couldn't read and write. Vaseem's mother was born in Pakistan. She was a qualified teacher who strongly supported her children's education. Mr Dring, an English teacher at Elmhurst secondary school triggered Vaseem's passion for reading with books such as *The Famous Five* by Enid Blyton.

At 9 years old, Vaseem chose his first book by himself when he discovered libraries. He had a particular interest in fantasy books. When he was 14, Vaseem's reading expanded to include science fiction and crime fiction. At school, during writing activities, teachers helped him to think about writing a narrative with a beginning, a middle and an end.

Vaseem wrote his first novel at the age of 17 and spent 23 years writing six novels whilst he was travelling to India and China. He received a hundred letters of rejection before his first book was published at the age of 40.

He has now published seven books in a bestselling series about the adventures of Inspector Chopra and his one-year old elephant, based in India.

During his childhood, Vaseem often went to the Newham bookshop to read and buy books. It was strange – and wonderful – for him when he returned to the bookshop as a published author. In 2019, Vaseem presented Vivian, the manager of the Newham bookshop with the Independent Bookshop of the year award.

Vaseem emphasises the importance of independent bookshops by asking us 'What society do we want future generations to grow up in?'