

KYLA ZHAO

Award-winning author ✉ kyla@kylazhao.com

ABOUT KYLA

In the day, Kyla works as a Silicon Valley analyst. At night, she writes award-winning novels that champion female empowerment in male-dominated spaces.

She graduated from Stanford University in 2021 with an MA in Communications and BA in Psychology.

BOOKS

- 2024: ***May the Best Player Win*** (out now!)
- 2024: *Valley Verified*
- 2023: *The Fraud Squad*



 kylazhao.com

PREVIOUS COLLABORATIONS

- **Chess organizations:** FIDE Chess in Education Commission, Business Meets Chess & Kids, etc.
- **Firms & NPOs:** Qualtrics, Tencent, Oracle, Girls Future Ready, PowerToFly, Amazon, etc.
- **Schools:** Harvard University, Salem State University, Foothill College, etc.
- **Bookstores, book festivals, book clubs, and libraries**

SPEAKING TOPICS

- Drawing on her **personal experience in competitive chess** to craft this narrative
- Confronting **sexism and gender biases in chess**
- Encouraging girls to not just start, but also **continue in chess**
- Tackling **performance anxiety** in competitive sports
- Juggling a **full-time tech job and writing novels**
- Publishing **three novels by age of 26** with Penguin Random House, world's largest publisher

FEATURED IN

- Forbes
- Good Morning America
- CBS
- NBC
- ABC
- Vogue
- Cosmopolitan
- Elle
- BuzzFeed
- South China Morning Post
- World Journal
- Tatler
- The Mercury News, etc.

AWARDS

- *Forbes* 30 Under 30
- *Tatler* Leader of Tomorrow
- Certificate of Recognition by California State Assembly

TESTIMONIALS

Part 1

BUSINESS MEETS CHESS AND KIDS

"I had the pleasure of attending the presentation of *May the Best Player Win* and it was **truly inspiring and insightful**. She **brought her book to life with insights that resonated** with me and I believe with many of the audience in attendance. There're so many deep messages that this book has that many of us female chess players failed to be vocal about and **so much that you can learn from.**" —Lishen Mentile, Secretary-General of Namibia Chess Federation

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE – CHESS ROOM

"Kyla brings her great intelligence, compassion and storytelling to girls' and women's chess and is an inspiring young star in the field of contemporary fiction. She is an important and timely voice in the world of chess and uses her personal experience as an inspiration for anyone who has ever felt performance anxiety or unwelcome at a chess tournament."

—Kathy Bella, CEO, and Alex Robins, Chess Program Manager

TENCENT AMERICAS

"Kyla's book talk at Tencent was truly engaging and thought-provoking. Her insights and reflections were both **inspiring and informative**. Kyla's **ability to connect with the audience made the event a truly enriching experience.**" —Sangeeta Bharti, DEI champion

LINDEN TREE BOOKSTORE

"Kyla is a wonderful, eloquent speaker who was able to **engage an audience of all ages**, and was able to blend serious topics with moments of levity." —Audrey M., Store Manager

GIRLS FUTURE READY

"Kyla was an amazing speaker during our recent Masterclass, which she **led with utter professionalism, preparation and openness**. By sharing her life journey and experience, Kyla profoundly inspired the participants with her enriching advice. What makes Kyla unique as a speaker, is her genuine passion for writing, honesty, resilience in spite of adversity and commitment to sharing important stories of women of colour . I highly recommend collaborating with Kyla, as she for sure will **deliver the best quality work, while remaining kind and supportive throughout.**" —Kaja Posnik, Program Director

ANNABELLE'S BOOK CLUB LA

"Kyla has spoken twice at our bookstore to celebrate the release of her novels. She is an **engaging, dynamic speaker** and graciously answered questions from the audience both times. We received such positive feedback from our customers after Kyla's first appearance, and we were thrilled to host her for the second time this year. Kyla is **wonderful to work with, as she is always organized and comes prepared**. We can't wait to collaborate with Kyla again soon!" —Annabelle Brown-Chang, Owner

TESTIMONIALS

Part 2

CADENCE DESIGN SYSTEM

"Kyla delivered an **inspiring and insightful keynote** and addressed the challenges faced by people who identify as AAPI, such as the bamboo ceiling. She also openly shared her **profound insights relevant to writing and career transitions**. In short, Kyla's speech is **authentic, passionate, and uplifting**. The talk provided **valuable insights and ways to engage positively with one another and empower us**." —Claire Ying, AAPI Inclusion Group lead

HARVARD CREATIVE WRITING AND LITERATURE SOCIETY

"Kyla's **passion for writing and perseverance in advocating for the Asian community** through her stories capture the audience's attention. Listening to Kyla speak **reignited my belief in myself and encouraged me to pursue my dreams** regardless of the statistics. She is authentically herself, and her presentation showed me that no matter what, we should not give up because we all have stories inside us that, if we dare, can change the communities we're part of."—Nathalie Zender, President 2024-2025

PLAYGROUND GLOBAL

"Kyla's **sharing of personal vignettes and her writing journey was deeply inspirational** to attendees, many of whom are young people, come from similar backgrounds, and have shared the same challenges in the past few years. Many attendees had read *Valley Verified* and there was a **vibrant discussion around the novel**. The evening was seen by all as a delightful experience and a resounding success, setting a precedent for a **high-quality gathering bridging culture and entertainment**." —Laurie Yoler, General Partner

POWER TO FLY

"For our annual DEI summit, Kyla shared with our members a **very thoughtful presentation about empowering underrepresented voices**. We also had a fireside chat with Kyla about navigating **creativity and entrepreneurship, Asian media representation, and the importance of diverse storytelling**. I know our audience of diverse professionals got so much from her session and I'd highly suggest Kyla for future events." —Rob Ribar, Director of Events & Marketing

QUALTRICS

"Kyla is not only a gifted writer but a **dynamic, generous, and compelling storyteller** who **commanded the room with her presence, power, and warmth**. Behind the scenes, she was an absolute dream to coordinate with: **organized, efficient, ultra-prepared**, and willing to jump on prep calls to ensure everything went smoothly! I hope we get to work with Kyla again very soon." —Alex Nation, Global Chair of Women's Leadership Development
