

KYLA ZHAO

Award-winning author ✉ kyla@kylazhao.com

ABOUT KYLA

In the day, Kyla works in Silicon Valley's tech industry. At night, she writes novels that champion Asian representation and female empowerment.

Kyla has also written for *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Tatler*. She graduated from Stanford University in 2021 with an MA in Communication and BA in Psychology.

WORKS

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

PREVIOUS COLLABORATIONS

- **Firms & NPOs:** Twitch, Pinterest, Figma, Qualtrics, Tencent, Oracle, Girls Future Ready, etc.
- **Schools:** Harvard University, Salem State University, Foothill College, United World College, Dulwich College, Chatsworth International, Global Indian International School, etc.
- **Bookstores, libraries, book conferences:** Bay Area Book Festival, Greater Pittsburgh Festival of Books, Virginia Children's Book Festival, etc.
- **Chess organizations:** World Chess Championship, International Chess Olympiad, International Chess Federation, etc.

SPEAKING TOPICS

- Drawing on my **personal experience in competitive chess** to craft this narrative
- Tackling **gender biases & pressure to succeed**
- My **author career**: how it began & what do I do
- Publishing **three novels by age of 26** with Penguin Random House, world's largest publisher
- Juggling a **full-time job and writing novels**
- My **writing process and tips**



 kylazhao.com

FEATURED IN

- Forbes
- Good Morning America
- CBS
- ABC
- NBC
- Vogue
- Cosmopolitan
- Elle
- BuzzFeed
- Tatler
- South China Morning Post

AWARDS

- *Forbes* 30 Under 30
- *Tatler* Leader of Tomorrow
- Certificate of Recognition by California State Assembly
- American Library Association's Feminist Book Project 2025
- Mathical Award Honor Book
- US National Spelling Bee book club selection

TESTIMONIALS

More available upon request

OVERSEAS FAMILY SCHOOL

"Kyla's passion for writing and her **dynamic, interactive style** captivated our students from start to finish. Her approachable and friendly demeanor made her a **wonderful role model**, leaving a lasting impression on everyone. Her ability to **tailor her presentations to each age group** was remarkable. For younger students, she introduced complex topics like gender equality in **an age-appropriate and engaging way**, while her high school presentation delved deeper into these critical issues, **sparking thoughtful discussions**. She inspired budding writers by sharing her journey and providing practical insights into the writing process. We would **highly recommend Kyla Zhao to any school** looking to inspire their students." —Vanessa McConville, Head of School

HAYWARD PUBLIC LIBRARY

"Kyla's book event was fantastic. She not only talked about her novel, but also gave **revealing insights about the writing process**, from original idea to publication. It was **entertaining and valuable for aspiring writers and readers alike**. I would highly recommend Kyla for your next literary program" —Ricardo Antoni, Librarian

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

TWITCH

"Kyla Zhao is not only an **exciting voice in modern fiction**, but also **an inspiration** to those fortunate enough to hear her speak. A **born storyteller who is as at home on a stage as well as on the page**, Zhao **instilled in our team a desire to make something new** as she outlined her career as an author, her passion for inclusivity in literature, and how she draws from her community to craft novels that span genres and have resonated with readers of all ages." —Meg Jeffrey, Co-Lead of Women+ Guild

GIRLS FUTURE READY

"Kyla was an amazing speaker who **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

BOOK PRAISE

More available upon request

“GAME-CHANGER FOR READERS OF ALL AGES”

“This book is a game-changer for readers of all ages, regardless of whether you play chess! *May the Best Player Win* captures the thrill of competition, the weight of expectations, and the sting of naysayers. From start to finish, this book will have you cheering for May from the edge of your seat and inspired to conquer your next match in life.” —Carissa Yip, **current US Women’s Chess Champion**

“EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT WORK”

“Zhao explores gender bias as well as performance stress, and the book’s valuable life lessons will speak to anyone who’s lost their love for a pursuit... The supporting characters, both adults and peers, are well developed, and the chess games are thrilling. An emotionally intelligent work that explores socially relevant themes.” —**Kirkus Reviews**

“RIVETING STORY”

“[Zhao], who is a former competitive chess player, addresses gender bias, self-doubt, and anxiety in this riveting story.” —**The Week Junior**

“EMPOWERING, FULL OF HEART”

“Compassionate, empowering, and full of heart, *May the Best Player Win* reminds young readers that sometimes, the only limits on our potential are the ones we place on ourselves.” —Rebecca Mix, **New York Times-bestselling author** of *The Mossheart’s Promise*

“QUICKLY DRAWS YOU IN”

“*May the Best Player Win* quickly draws you in because it deals with a subject that interests and affects many people: the pressure to perform. Author Kyla Zhao handles these serious topics with humour and refreshing ease, writing pointedly, wittily and entertainingly.” —**Chessbase**

“AN INSTANT CLASSIC”

“An instant classic. I wish I read this book when I was growing up, and now that I’m a chess mom and mentor to many other kids, I am so thrilled it exists. Kyla is a wonderful writer and she paints richly detailed and emotional scenes, as she deftly handles themes that can apply to any competitive field. Gripping and fun, this is a gem of a book!” —Jennifer Shahade, **2004 and 2002 U.S. Women’s Chess Champion**
